

FAYETTEVILLE DATA CENTER POLICY BRIEF

Protecting Residents, Ratepayers, and Neighborhoods

Fayetteville is facing growing interest from data center developers. While these facilities are often promoted as economic development opportunities, they can place significant demands on local infrastructure while creating relatively few permanent jobs.

Data centers require large amounts of electricity and water, generate noise from cooling systems and backup generators, and can increase pressure on utility systems. Without proper safeguards, residents may bear the costs through higher utility rates, environmental impacts, and reduced transparency in local decision-making.

Key Concerns for Fayetteville

- High electricity demand that can strain the power grid
- Significant water consumption during hot summer months
- Noise impacts on nearby neighborhoods
- Limited long-term job creation
- Potential infrastructure costs shifted to residents
- Lack of public transparency and community input

State Action

North Carolina lawmakers are currently considering legislation that would require large data centers to pay more of their infrastructure costs, increase reporting requirements, conduct environmental reviews, and limit the burden placed on ratepayers.

Policy Recommendations for Fayetteville

1. Adopt a temporary moratorium of up to one year while impacts are studied.
2. Require public hearings and full disclosure of water, energy, and noise impacts.
3. Ensure data centers pay their fair share of infrastructure costs.
4. Establish clear zoning and setback requirements to protect neighborhoods.
5. Align local policies with emerging state regulations.

Conclusion

Data centers are not traditional development projects. They are large industrial facilities that can affect utility costs, water resources, and quality of life. Fayetteville has an opportunity to create a thoughtful, transparent framework that protects residents while carefully evaluating future proposals.