ACTION SHEET
October 13, 2026

CLIMATE HOPE AFFILIATES

"Americans are rightly skeptical when a large company tells them not to worry about the impacts of a new data center in their community. The answer to that distrust is transparency. Communities deserve independent, reliable information about what these projects mean for their power bills, water, infrastructure, and local economy."

—Sen. John Curtis (R-UT) on the Data Center Transparency Act of 2026 and the Data Center Community Empowerment Act of 2026

Overview

During this election season, members of Congress and those running for office are feeling pressure from voters. A top concern in many parts of the country is the financial and environmental costs of data centers. During this pivotal moment, we are advocating for bills that address data centers. Our campaign will educate voters about environmental justice issues that have arisen with data centers and encourage our local media to cover this key election issue that requires urgent action. We have three national goals during this campaign: (1) to host a total of 15 video screenings and postcard writing parties, (2) to generate 30 published letters to the editor, and (3) to have 5 op-eds or editorials published. This month, local chapters will continue to talk to and send our editorial packets to editorial writers while members develop and carry out a plan for writing letters to the editor to local, regional, and national newspapers.

Laser Talk

Nationwide, communities are protesting existing and proposed data centers that consume enormous amounts of energy and water at a financial and environmental cost borne by residents. The United States has more than 3,000 data centers. Of particular concern are "hyperscale" data centers that demand at least 50 megawatts (MW) of power—enough electricity for a small city. Sixty-eight hyperscale facilities operate today, and 267 more are planned. Although data centers are found in communities with varied incomes and racial compositions, hyperscale facilities, such as xAI's facility in Memphis, illustrate a familiar pattern of environmental injustice: a powerful corporation adds pollution to an already overburdened, predominantly Black community, while the concerns of residents are discounted and environmental protection laws are flouted. Reps. Rob Menendez (D-NJ) and Greg Casar (D-TX) have introduced two bills. H.R. 6983 would require data centers to generate their own electricity and transition to 100% clean energy over time. H.R. 6984 would require reporting on data centers' air, water, energy, and consumer-cost impacts. This second bill has a companion bill, S. 5640, in the Senate introduced by Sen. Lisa Blunt Rochester (D-DE) and Sen. John Curtis (R-UT). Urge representatives to co-sponsor H.R. 6983 and H.R. 6984, while urging senators to co-sponsor S. 5640.

Faith Messaging

Earlier this year, faith communities and chapters across the country participated in our annual Climate Hope Art Contest, which invited children and youth to create art reflecting on the theme "A Future with Hope." Our theme came from Jeremiah 29:11, which says, "For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope." As we meet with our elected officials and educate the broader community, we can point to our winning artwork by 12-year-old Leah and offer this prompt: "What kind of future do we want? Don't ask AI. Ask our children."

What the Bills Do

Reps. Menendez and Casar introduced two bills together to address some of the economic and environmental harms created by data centers. The Preventing Rate Inflation in Consumer Energy ("PRICE") Act (H.R. 6983) would require data centers to generate the electricity they consume, require that electricity to be 75 percent clean by 2035 and 100 percent clean by 2040, and impose civil penalties of up to $100,000 per day on data centers that fail to comply.

The Data Center Transparency Act (H.R. 6984) would require the Environmental Protection Agency to collect and update data every three months on data centers' environmental impacts, including water

consumption, water utility costs, potential water pollutants, air pollution, greenhouse-gas emissions, and cumulative impacts on overburdened communities. It would also require the Energy Information Administration to collect and update statistics every six months on data center energy consumption, including total energy use and changes in household energy bills.

The companion bill in the Senate is titled the Data Center Transparency Act of 2026 (S. 5640). This bill is largely the same as its counterpart in the House, with one notable exception. The Energy Information Administration will collect information not only on data center energy consumption but also on grid expansion related to data centers, including the types of energy being built out. An important aspect of this bill is that it was introduced as a bipartisan bill by Sen. Lisa Blunt Rochester (D-DE) and Sen. John Curtis (R-UT).

Public Health Impacts of Data Centers

Emissions from power generation using methane and diesel have significant impacts on both the climate and public health. Of particular concern is fine particulate matter, which is especially harmful to human health. Notably, it increases one's risk of heart disease, respiratory illness, stroke, and premature death. One model used by researchers in 2024 estimated that data centers in the U.S. could contribute to "approximately 600,000 asthma symptom cases and 1,300 premature deaths in 2030, exceeding 1/3 of asthma deaths in the U.S. each year."

Take Action This Month

In addition to talking with and sending editorial packets to local newspaper editorial writers, this month we are focused on reaching our goal of 30 published letters to the editor by Election Day. Letters to the editor are a good way to let your members of Congress know we are watching how they address data centers. Writing letters increases the likelihood that your member of Congress will become a co-sponsor of one or both bills for which we are advocating. To increase the number of letters to the editor published and to increase the number of Congress members we can reach, we are going to devote time in our meetings to strategizing and acting upon letter-writing opportunities for local, regional, and national news outlets. Examples of regional newspapers include San Francisco Chronicle, The Boston Globe, LA Times, The Chicago Tribune, The Philadelphia Inquirer, The Sacramento Bee, Detroit Free Press, and The Columbus Dispatch. Examples of national publications include The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, Time, The New Yorker, USA Today, Christian Science Monitor, The Nation, The Christian Century, and National Catholic Reporter. Half of your chapter might write to a local newspaper, while the other half writes to a regional or national newspaper. Select an article to which you will respond, and read the submission guidelines. (In the national webinar, we will also provide some recent articles to which you might respond.) Use this five-step formula below for writing your letter to the editor:

(1) First Sentence: Cite the article and briefly describe the article in a way that relates to what you want to discuss.
(2) Second Sentence: Pivot to what you want to discuss.
(3) Two or Three Sentences about the Bills: Draw from summaries and facts listed in action sheet.
(4) Second-to-Last Sentence: Express how your faith and values lead you to the position you are taking.
(5) Final Sentence: Call to action that invites readers to join Climate Hope Affiliates in contacting their members of Congress. (For example, "Readers should join with organizations like Climate Hope Affiliates in calling congressional offices at (202) 224-3121 to urge Representative _____ to co-sponsor H.R. 6983 and H.R. 6984, while urging Senators _____ and ____ to co-sponsor S. 5640.")

If your letter is published, share it on social media. Send it to your members of Congress and call their aides to make sure they saw it. Finally, report your published letter in our action tracker: https://www.powr.io/form-builder/i/39544676#page