

Tell the Newspaper: AI / Data Centers

Letter to the editor, op-ed, and press contact email templates

How to use this packet: Choose the piece that fits what you need, personalize the bracketed blanks, and paste it into a newspaper submission form or email. These are written to sound informed but plain-spoken.

Short Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Before our region welcomes large AI or data-center projects, the public deserves clear answers in plain language. These facilities are not just quiet buildings full of computers. They can require major amounts of electricity, water, land, cooling equipment, backup power, and utility upgrades.

Communities like ours know what it means when outside industries promise jobs and progress while local people are left with the noise, the bills, the traffic, the water concerns, and the long-term consequences.

Residents deserve to know how much power will be used, where the water will come from, what protections exist for streams and wells, whether rates could rise, how much noise nearby homes may hear, and what public money or tax breaks are being offered.

If a project is good for the community, it should be able to stand up to public questions. Our local newspaper can help by following the issue closely, asking for documents, and making sure regular people understand what is being decided before it is too late to speak.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Town]

Longer Op-Ed / Guest Column

When a big new industry comes to a rural or Appalachian community, it usually arrives with polished words: investment, innovation, jobs, progress, opportunity. Those words sound good. But people who live here have learned to ask what is underneath them.

AI and data centers are being promoted across the country as part of the future. They may bring some jobs and tax revenue. They may also bring major demands on electricity, water, land, roads, and public infrastructure. Before our community is asked to welcome one, we deserve to understand the full cost.

That is why the public deserves more than a sales pitch.

Before local leaders approve major AI or data-center projects, residents should have clear answers. How much electricity will the facility require? Will new transmission lines or substations be needed? Could local households or small businesses see higher utility costs? How much water will be used, and where will it come from? What happens during drought? Will backup generators add noise or air pollution? How much land will be cleared? What protections are in place for streams, wells, wildlife, and nearby homes?

These are not anti-business questions. They are community-protection questions.

Appalachian and rural communities have a long memory of extractive industry. We have seen land, labor, timber, coal, water, and culture taken in the name of progress while local people were told to be grateful for

whatever was left behind. That history does not mean every new project is bad. It means we have earned the right to ask better questions early.

Good development should strengthen a place instead of draining it. It should protect streams, wells, farms, neighborhoods, and small businesses. It should not make families wonder if their electric bills, water security, night skies, or quiet homes are being traded away in a deal they never got to read.

Local newspapers matter in this moment. They can ask the questions that ordinary residents may not know how to ask. They can request records. They can compare promises to contracts. They can explain what tax incentives mean, who benefits, who pays, and what safeguards are enforceable.

A community cannot give informed consent to something it does not understand.

If AI and data centers are coming, let them come with transparency. Let the public see the numbers. Let neighbors have time to respond. Let local officials explain the tradeoffs before approvals are finalized.

The future should not be built by asking rural communities to carry hidden costs. We have the right to ask hard questions now, while there is still time to protect the place we call home.

Press Contact Email

Subject: Local story idea: AI/data centers, power, water, and public cost

Dear [Editor/Reporter Name],

I am writing to ask whether [Newspaper Name] can take a close local look at proposed or possible AI/data-center development in our region.

This issue needs plain-language reporting before decisions are already made. Data centers can involve major power demand, water use, cooling equipment, backup generators, utility upgrades, land-use changes, tax incentives, and questions about who carries the long-term costs.

A helpful story or series could ask:

- How much electricity would the project require?
- Would new substations, transmission lines, or other utility upgrades be needed?
- Could local households or small businesses see rate impacts?
- How much water would be used, and what happens during drought?
- What noise, light, traffic, or air-quality impacts could nearby residents experience?
- What public incentives or tax breaks are involved?
- What protections exist for streams, wells, farms, and nearby homes?

This is not about being for or against technology. It is about making sure the public understands the tradeoffs and has a chance to speak before the community is committed.

Thank you for considering this story. I believe local reporting could make a real difference.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Town]

[Optional Contact Info]