
Testimony regarding future Hyperscale Data Centers

From Sarah Hemme <s_hemme@outlook.com>

Date Tue 1/13/2026 9:24 AM

To Public Testimony <Public.Testimony@kcmo.org>

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Hello Ms. Parks-Shaw and members of the committee,

First, thank you for your response and the link to review the prior presentations and discussion. I waded thru the entire proceeding and thank you all for your best efforts at making sense of what your constituents are asking, what the presenters tried to convey, and asking thoughtful questions.

Evergy Presentation

The person who presented on behalf of Evergy - I did not see any identifying info about him. Is he their lobbyist? A PR rep or attorney? Besides the data center operator, Evergy is the party with the strongest financial incentive. We need to hear from independent experts and consumer advocates whose job is explicitly to challenge utility assumptions.

I dug through Evergy's own shareholder meeting documents and news releases available on their website. Let's not forget this is a for-profit, publicly traded company with the ultimate goal of maximizing long-term shareholder value while meeting strict public-utility obligations.

In Evergy's own shareholder meeting documents and news releases, they tout increases to share price, dividend payouts to shareholders and retail rates increasing 6.8% in Kansas and 2.4% in Missouri on a cumulative basis since 2017 thru November 2024. CEO and director pay is in the millions. The idea that Evergy isn't making money or that rates are decreasing isn't entirely true.

When Evergy talks about a "generational economic development opportunity" in their public documents, they are really talking about large new electricity users—especially data centers. They believe these customers will buy so much power that Evergy can justify building expensive new infrastructure and recover those costs over a larger pool of electricity sales. That helps Evergy raise total revenue and makes future rate increases easier to approve politically, because the increases can be spread across more customers and more kilowatt-hours.

In plain terms, this is not about lowering residential electric bills. It's about making rate increases less controversial by pointing to growth and economic development, even if household customers see little or no direct benefit.

I would suggest requiring Evergy to demonstrate, with detailed cost allocation and tariff analysis, whether and how projected load growth will benefit existing residential customers, and

to ensure that infrastructure investments associated with large new loads do not result in cost-shifting or higher fixed charges for households.

I heard in the presentation the implication that rising residential electric bills are driven by households plugging in more small electronic devices. That explanation does not align with how residential electricity consumption actually works. The largest drivers of household electricity use remain major appliances and systems such as air conditioning, heating equipment, water heating, dryers, and refrigeration.

While households do own more small electronic devices than in the past, the electricity use of those devices is relatively minor, and efficiency improvements in modern technology have largely offset their cumulative impact. As a result, increases in residential electric bills are far more closely tied to rate changes, fixed charges, and seasonal pricing than to growth in small device usage.

Residents can verify this themselves by reviewing their utility bills over time. Even where total household usage has remained stable or declined, the per-kilowatt-hour rates, fixed charges, and summer season surcharges have increased. This suggests that higher bills are being driven primarily by changes in pricing and cost recovery, not by changes in household behavior or the number of small devices in use.

Water Department

The presenters for the water department stated that we have plenty of water and plenty of capacity...now. This reflects a short-term view, but this isn't guaranteed forever. We may become water stressed in the future. Aquifers, rivers, and reservoirs are increasingly stressed by climate variability, population growth, and drought cycles. Regions once considered water-rich (e.g., the Southeast, Midwest, or Pacific Northwest) have experienced repeated shortages in recent years. In water management, availability today is not the same as resilience tomorrow, and industrial-scale withdrawals matter even where water seems abundant.

It still wasn't clear to me - will data center operators also pay for the ongoing maintenance for all the additional infrastructure built to accommodate them or will that burden be distributed among all users? I'm not sure it makes sense to assume that just because a data center uses X amount more water than a residential property that homeowners won't end up paying in some fashion for the increased maintenance burden.

Office of Environmental Quality

I appreciated the information provided by the Office of Environmental Quality. Two statements in particular were especially important: that the Climate Protection and Resiliency Plan did not anticipate data center growth at the scale now being proposed, and that locally, new data center demand can be several times greater than the energy use of municipal government operations.

These observations highlight the need for a more robust and clearly defined review process for hyperscale data centers. In particular, classification and regulatory standards should be based on projected energy consumption and grid impact, not solely on building size. There are significant and material differences between large hyperscale facilities and smaller, locally owned and operated data centers, and those differences should be reflected in permitting, infrastructure requirements, and mitigation expectations.

It is important that policies designed to address very large energy users do not unintentionally burden smaller operators whose impacts are substantially different. A tiered or energy-based framework would help ensure that requirements are proportional and targeted.

I also noted the statement that there is “tremendous opportunity to seek improvements to the built environment or grid decarbonization through negotiations.” If data center projects are expected to drive substantial new demand, then those negotiations should result in concrete, enforceable commitments. Where projects propose on-site or dedicated renewable generation or other grid-supporting investments, those measures should be required and clearly tied to the scale of the load being introduced, rather than assumed to be addressed by future or unspecified technologies.

To conclude...

What distinguishes large data centers is not simply that they consume water and energy, but the manner in which they do so: at unusually high density, on accelerated deployment timelines, often with substantial tax abatements, and with limited ongoing local oversight once approvals are granted.

Community concerns about these projects should not be interpreted as opposition to technology itself. Rather, they reflect a request for responsible siting, transparent and ongoing reporting, enforceable performance standards, and long-term planning that accounts for community needs and environmental constraints.

Given the scale and permanence of these facilities, it is reasonable to expect developers to demonstrate how proposed projects align with the long-term public interest, including infrastructure capacity, environmental impacts, and community benefits, as part of the approval process.

Thank you so very much for your efforts and your time.

Sarah Hemme
Kansas City, Mo 64131

From: Parks-Shaw, Ryana <Ryana.Parks-Shaw@kcmo.org>
Sent: Monday, January 12, 2026 11:10 AM
To: s_hemme@outlook.com <s_hemme@outlook.com>
Subject: Re: Require Special Use Permits for All Data Centers

Hello Sarah,

Thank you for taking the time to share your concerns regarding data center zoning and the importance of public input.

I want to make you aware that the Neighborhood Planning and Development Committee held additional business last week focused specifically on data center infrastructure and impacts. During that session, representatives from Evergy, KC Water, and the City’s Environmental Quality Division provided briefings to the committee on power demand, water usage, environmental considerations, and system capacity. I requested this to ensure committee members and the public have a

full and accurate understanding of the technical and environmental issues before any zoning recommendations move forward.

I encourage you to review that discussion, as it provides important context about how these facilities interact with our utility systems and environmental safeguards. You can watch the full presentation and committee discussion [HERE](#).

I am committed to a thoughtful and transparent process that balances economic development, infrastructure capacity, environmental protection, and neighborhood quality of life.

Thank you again for being engaged on this issue and for advocating for our community.

Sincerely,



Ryana Parks-Shaw

Councilwoman, 5th District

City of Kansas City, Mo.

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From: Sarah Hemme <noreply@adv.actionnetwork.org>

Sent: Saturday, January 10, 2026 11:22 AM

To: Parks-Shaw, Ryana <Ryana.Parks-Shaw@kcmo.org>

Subject: Require Special Use Permits for All Data Centers

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Committee Chairperson Ryana Parks-Shaw,

Dear Neighborhood Planning and Development Committee,

At the Neighborhood Planning and Development committee meeting on January 13th, I urge you to establish a requirement for special use permits for all data centers. The zoning code proposed for data centers, as currently drafted, is insufficient in protecting the interests and health of everyday Kansas Citians.

Like most Kansas Citians, I do NOT support automatic approval of data centers in my community. Yet under the current system, there is no way for the people of KC to make their voices heard about proposed data centers. In order for our democracy to function effectively, there must be opportunities for public input. Requiring special use permits will do that.

By requiring special use permits for ALL data centers, each proposed development can be evaluated according to the direct impact it'll have on Kansas Citians.

Kansas Citians should have more say in what happens here than out-of-town data center developers!

If data center development is allowed to continue as is, Kansas Citians will be forced to bear the brunt of the cost of utility rate increases, resource extraction, and pollution associated with data centers. Do right by Kansas Citians and demand more scrutiny for data centers through additional permitting.

Thank you,

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