



September 23, 2026

Honorable Josh Stein
Governor of North Carolina

Cc: Attorney General Jeff Jackson

Subject: Duke Energy and data center developers' abuse of the public

Dear Governor Stein,

Across the state, data center developers and Duke Energy are using tools of secrecy and other tactics to buy support from local government and business leaders in order to fast-track data center approvals – and possibly new power plants – before the public learns of the plans. The secrecy extends beyond initial approvals; the negative community, economic and climate impacts of these projects are kept under lock and key by those operating in the shadows.

NC WARN is calling foul against Duke and corporate data center developers for ethical violations and a clear abuse of the public. We hope you agree that this is a deeply flawed and fundamentally unfair process for the people of the great state of North Carolina.

We have not learned of any action you plan to take in response to our [June 25 letter](#) about top Duke Energy executives' admission that they aggressively recruit the very data centers used to justify a [\\$63 billion expansion](#) of fossil fuels, nuclear power and other infrastructure in the Carolinas by 2030. Therefore, we must assume the state and Duke Energy are still spending millions recruiting data centers against the public interest.

Duke has admitted that data centers make up 80% of its projected demand growth. NC WARN has calculated that without its data center recruitment, Duke has exactly zero justification for its expensive and climate-wrecking fossil fuel plans. Meanwhile, the true costs of Duke Energy's data center enticement are largely hidden from the public behind code names, non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) and claims of "trade secrets."

Duke's secrecy extends to the very rates it plans to charge data centers for electricity; odds are strong that Duke continues to offer rock-bottom rates to entice these power-guzzling industrial customers to the state. As we noted in our [June 25 letter](#) to you, millions of state tax dollars have been used for data center recruitment, which amplifies the need for you to help break through the layers of secrecy and ongoing deception.

The harms of data centers extend well beyond soaring power bills. Data center developments have faced well-deserved backlash from communities across the state due to their anticipated

water, air and noise pollution, added burden on the electrical grid, creation of very few permanent jobs, and the lack of public notice and participation during project siting and approvals. Concerns mount about AI's role enhancing government-corporate surveillance and war-making. Recent [national polling](#) found that 70% of people oppose the construction of an AI data center in their local area.

All of this backlash is happening even before the public learns the full extent and severity of data centers' harms. Many communities targeted by developers will also be saddled with new power plants on site or adjacent to data centers, thus forcing them to bear the significant health burdens of fossil fuel power generation, all while crucial decisions are made behind closed doors.

A prime example of the corporate deception is in Richmond County, where a massive Amazon data center gained approval by commissioners [under an alias](#). No public documents or commission discussions disclosed that the project would become a data center – leaving the process completely opaque and inaccessible to the residents who will now become neighbors of the polluting development.

The subterfuge extends to many other communities. In Chatham County, the County Board of Commissioners approved a data center moratorium in February. Eco TIP, a corporation seeking to build a massive 750 MW data center in Moncure, sued the county, arguing that its project has progressed too far to be subject to the moratorium. In its lawsuit, Eco TIP cites Enbridge Gas as its fuel provider. But Enbridge, which plans for a new 28-mile fracked gas pipeline that would terminate conveniently next to Eco TIP's property, claims that the pipeline would not be fueling the data center.

Obviously, officials from at least one of those corporations are lying.

A project of this size would need a significant new source of power generation, likely a power plant built by Duke Energy to turn gas into electricity. We have reason to believe that Enbridge, EcoTIP and Duke Energy – and almost surely state officials – have been quietly planning a new gas or diesel-fueled power plant next to this data center, which would present additional and severe health impacts for the community. The electricity generated for the 750 MW data center would be nearly as large as the nearby Shearon Harris nuclear plant.

North Carolinians deserve to know what can be uncovered from the layers of secrecy – about planned water sources and usage, wastewater plans, incentives for developers, schemes to shift costs from corporations to customers, and more – around the data center developments aimed at communities across the state.

We urge you to follow other governors' actions by using your executive power to enact a 2-year statewide moratorium on any and all new data centers. This would allow the state to begin to clarify and openly debate all of the relevant impacts.

We call on you also to:

1. Stand up for the people of the state and initiate an innovative, transparent and democratic decision-making process that prioritizes the interests and voices of communities in the face of unchecked data center recruitment and development.
2. Put an immediate stop to Duke Energy's data center recruitment activities, as we [urged you](#) on June 25. State residents must stop paying millions through their power bills and tax dollars to attract projects that work against their own wellbeing.

At a time of cascading global disasters, and when scientists say humanity is barreling past crucial climate limits, we cannot afford to let Duke Energy and data center developers recklessly expand climate- and community-harming projects. The rampant secrecy underscores the immediate need for your action — before more North Carolina communities are blindsided and abused by profit-driven corporate leaders.

Sincerely,



Jim Warren
Executive Director