



Protect Public Health, Climate, and Affordability:

Petition to Ensure Data Centers in New York State Run on 100% Clean, Renewable Energy

We, the American Lung Association, and the undersigned organizations, urge Governor Kathy Hochul to add to the approval process of any existing and new data center construction or permitting in New York State that they must demonstrate 100% renewable, non-combustion energy operations for both baseline and backup power. This request reflects and builds upon the data center commitments Governor Hochul presented during her recent State of the State address.

As organizations dedicated to protecting public health, safeguarding clean air, and advancing climate solutions, we are deeply concerned about the rapid growth of large, energy-intensive data centers, particularly AI computing and cryptocurrency facilities, especially in the absence of clear, enforceable clean energy standards. These facilities place enormous and, in some cases, unprecedented demands on the electric grid, comparable in scale to the energy demand of entire cities. When this demand is met with combustion-based power generation or backup generators, it may contribute to extending the life of old, polluting infrastructure, triggering new combustion infrastructure, and adding significant cumulative pollution burdens to surrounding communities.

The public health implications warrant careful consideration. Increased combustion to meet data center energy demand contributes to smog, soot, fine particulate matter, and other harmful air pollutants that worsen asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), lung cancer, heart disease, and other serious health conditions. Nearly half of Americans live in areas with unhealthy air pollution, and New York continues to face unacceptably high asthma rates, particularly among children, older adults, low-income communities, and Black and Brown New Yorkers. Without appropriate safeguards, data centers could further strain communities already facing disproportionate air pollution impacts.

In addition to health and climate harms, the massive electricity demand of data centers threatens to increase utility costs for everyday New Yorkers. Families, small businesses, and local governments risk shouldering higher energy bills, while large corporate facilities may receive preferential access to power. Rising energy costs can force households to choose between basic needs and healthcare, further straining New York's healthcare system and vital Medicaid programs.

New York has been a national leader on climate action, with landmark commitments under the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) to reduce emissions, transition to renewable energy, and prioritize disadvantaged communities. Approving data centers without requiring them to rely entirely on renewable, non-combustion energy would create further obstacles in meeting these commitments, and risks locking the state into decades of avoidable pollution, infrastructure costs, and public health harms.

We are not calling for a halt to innovation or economic development. Rather, we call for responsible, health-protective growth. Data centers should be required to meet the highest clean energy standards, minimize local air pollution, avoid combustion infrastructure, and be developed with further transparency and meaningful opportunities for community engagement in siting and permitting decisions.

Governor Hochul, we respectfully urge you to use your authority to protect New Yorkers' health, uphold the state's climate laws, and ensure that technological progress does not come at the expense of clean air, affordable energy, and healthy communities. Data centers need strong, enforceable, 100% clean, renewable, non-combustion energy requirements in place as an important and necessary step forward.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Max Micallef

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American Lung Association

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Organizations:

- Albany Unitarian Universalist—Green Sanctuary Team
- Alliance for Clean Energy - New York (ACE-NY)
- Alliance for a Green Economy (AGREE)
- Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments
- American Lung Association
- Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA)
- Capital Region Interfaith Creation Care Coalition
- Concerned Health Professionals of New York
- Environmental Advocates New York
- Hudson Valley Air Quality Coalition
- Indivisible - Mohawk Valley - Climate Crisis Working Group
- New York Lawyers for the Public Interest
- New Yorkers for Clean Power
- Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York
- New York State Council of Churches
- New York League of Conservation Voters (NYLCV)
- Physicians for Social Responsibility - New York
- Sane Energy Project
- Surfrider Foundation—Eastern Long Island Chapter
- Third Act—Upstate New York
- Transition Town Port Washington