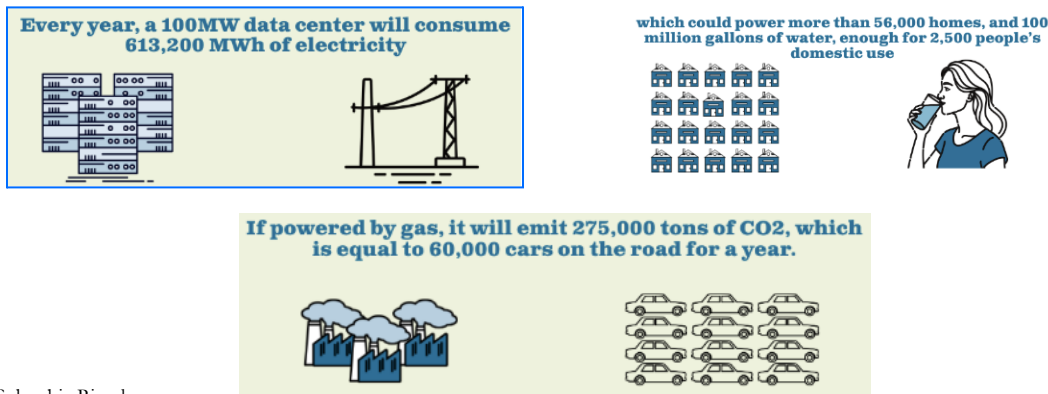


Why we don't want data centers in the Wenatchee Valley – Fact Sheet



Source: Columbia Riverkeeper

- Chelan and Douglas Counties are rapidly becoming one of Washington's hyperscale data center hubs, with **over 16 existing and planned facilities** ([WA State EESEC](#)).
- Microsoft's Malaga campus is authorized up to 288 MW and Sabey's East Wenatchee capacity is 170 MW. No publicly disclosed information exists on the planned capacity of Microsoft's East Wenatchee campus. **Facilities of this scale require millions of gallons of water each day** for cooling, in addition to the hydropower needed to operate them ([Control Associates Inc.](#)).
- Chelan PUD's 1,428 MW interconnection queue now exceeds the hydropower generation of Chelan & Douglas County dams, which produce an average 1,419 MW of hydroelectric energy ([Data Center Workgroup Report](#)).

Environmental Concerns

- **Electricity Usage:** Data centers are among the fastest-growing electricity users in the Pacific Northwest, **projected to consume up to 24% of regional electricity and up to 13% of Washington's electricity by 2030**, straining the grid and slowing decarbonization ([Sightline](#)).
- **Higher Electricity Costs:** Rapid data center growth could **increase electricity rates, reduce grid reliability, and increased blackout risk while exposing communities to diesel and other pollution** ([Department of Revenue](#); [National League of Cities](#), [Department of Ecology](#)).
- **Water Use:** Data centers require substantial water for cooling ([DGTL Infra](#)). Washington has experienced **four consecutive years of statewide drought declarations**, increasing pressure on limited water supplies ([Department of Ecology](#)). "Water positive" pledges rely on replenishment projects and do not eliminate local water withdrawals or wastewater impacts ([ASCE](#)).
- **Ecological Harm:** Data center water and hydropower demand **competes directly with river flows needed for salmon and steelhead recovery and treaty-protected Tribal water rights** ([EESI](#), [Department of Revenue](#)).
- **More Fossil Fuels:** Growing data center demand is **driving greater reliance on new gas infrastructure**, including an 158 mile-expansion of the Williams gas pipeline and a proposed gas plant to serve Vantage Data Centers in Quincy ([Columbia Riverkeepers](#), [Department of Ecology](#)).
- **Nuclear Buildout:** Tech giants are pursuing small modular nuclear reactors (SMNRs) along the Columbia River to power data centers, including at the Hanford Nuclear Site, despite the technology

remaining 10+ years from commercial deployment. Investments in SMNRs divert funding from proven renewable energy technologies that are safer, less expensive, and faster to deploy ([IEEFA](#)).

- **Climate Goals at Risk:** AI electricity demand has prompted Microsoft to reconsider parts of its 2030 clean energy commitments, including its 2030 goal of matching its hourly electricity use with renewable energy purchases ([Seattle Times](#)), challenging Washington's own climate goals.

Who Benefits Economically? Who Bears the Cost?

- **Taxpayer Subsidies:** Washington state provided **\$584 million** in tax exemptions to data centers from 2012-2023, including over **\$118 million in 2023** ([Department of Revenue](#)). Since 2018, **~65%+ of those tax exemptions flowed to Microsoft**, a company worth over \$3T ([ProPublica](#)).
- **Underwhelming Job Requirements:** Data centers receiving tax incentives must create as few as **35 family wage jobs** or 3 jobs per 20,000 sqft of space([ILARC](#)). **This is extremely low for capital-intensive industries.** In comparison, a typical manufacturing or tech facility of comparable size would employ hundreds of workers per 20,000 sqft.
- **Poor Return on Investment:** The only audit of Washington's data center tax exemption program in 2017 found that incentives created as few as 260 total jobs across all facilities, costing taxpayers \$205,000 per job - **making this one of the most expensive and least effective job creation programs in the state** ([ProPublica](#)).
- **Taxpayer Land for Corporations:** Grant County PUD has invoked eminent domain to acquire farmland for transmission lines serving new data centers, raising concerns about proper compensation and public input for buildout that benefits private companies ([Seattle Times](#)).
- **Steals from Creatives:** Many AI models are trained on copyrighted works without creators' consent or compensation, reducing paid opportunities and prompting widespread lawsuits by artists, writers, publishers, and musicians ([ChatGPTisEatingtheWorld](#)).
- **Loss of jobs:** AI was responsible for almost 55,000 layoffs in the US in 2025 ([CNBC](#)).

Key Decision-makers in Wenatchee Valley

Chelan County Commissioners --
Could stop the data centers at any time by passing county-wide policies that prevent them from being built here.

Chelan Douglas Regional Port Authority -- Brought the data centers into our community in the first place.

Douglas County Commissioners --
Could stop the data centers at any time by passing county-wide policies that prevent them from being built here.

Chelan County PUD -- Serves power to Microsoft's data center in Malaga. Agreed to hand over our hydroelectric power to Microsoft.

Douglas County PUD -- Serves power to Microsoft's data center in East Wenatchee. Agreed to hand over our hydroelectric power to Microsoft.

Resources

WAAIR.net. – [Washington Artificial Intelligence Resistance](#)

Ainowinstitute.org – [AI Now Institute](#)

ColumbiaRiverKeeper.org – [Columbia Riverkeeper](#)

All other links can be accessed at [waair.net](#)