



Montanans Need Data Center Transparency

Montanans need answers:

Water

- How much water will be used daily, monthly, annually, and over the life of the project? Where will the water come from? What infrastructure is needed to acquire water? Who pays to build and maintain the system? What will happen to existing water users if the project does impact their water resources? If it's groundwater, what is the depth of the aquifer? What are the existing uses of the aquifer? Has the aquifer been adequately characterized? Will the aquifer be depleted over time? Is the aquifer a potential source of fresh water for existing uses?

Water Treatment

- What is the chemical composition and temperature of incoming and discharged water? What type of treatment is needed? Where will the wastewater be discharged? Is the municipal treatment system capable of treating wastewater volume, temperature, and chemical constituents that are added by the data center (surfactants, biocides, etc.)? Who will pay for wastewater treatment or necessary upgrades?

Electricity

- How much electricity will be needed? What type of electricity will be used? If using a gas plant, how large will the facility be and what are the infrastructure needs and what will the air emissions be and the water needs? Will renewable energy resources be used, and where will the renewables be located? Where is the data center in the interconnection and development process? What is the timeframe? Will the data center be operational prior to renewable generation being operational?
- What backup generation is expected (type and megawatts)? How many backup diesel generators will be needed? What air pollution will these generators release? What will the concentration of these pollutants be when the generators are being used? How could that impact nearby or downwind homeowners or businesses?
- How will existing customers' electricity bills be impacted? How will residential and small business ratepayers be protected?
- Does the data center developer support a separate electricity customer rate class for data centers? If so, what is it doing to show its support? Does it support electric tariffs to protect existing customers from stranded assets or cost shifting? Has the data center supported any of these measures at the Governor's Energy Task Force, legislative interim committees, and Public Service Commission?
- How will reliability of the system be protected during peak demand? If it's the use of backup generators, how frequently could these backup generators operate? Is there a limit in their operations? What noise and pollution is associated with these generators?
- Who will pay for the transmission and distribution infrastructure when it connects to NWE's existing system and will the data center pay for the maintenance costs over time or will those be spread across all utility customers?

- Is the data center considering undeveloped, experimental small modular nuclear reactors (SMRs)? Where will the radioactive waste be stored? How much water would be needed for the SMR system?
- Will data centers be served by NWE's acquisition of increased shares of the Colstrip plant, which has increasing costs? Will data center pay its full share of operation, maintenance, fuel and capex for the Colstrip plant? How will that be guaranteed? Will those costs be transparent so the public can guarantee it isn't subsidizing the cost of the data center?
- What is the contract term and price for electricity from NWE? How will the data center provide full transparency regarding the contract terms and price to ensure it pays the full costs of electricity from NWE? Data center should refuse to hide behind NWE's desire to redact contracts and notices of intent at PSC.

Project specifics

- What is the true scale of this project over time? How many megawatts will the facility be and how much land area will it require?
- Are there any intentions to expand the data center operations after it is constructed beyond the initial proposal? If so, what is the long-term plan?
- Does the data center intend to sell any of its operations to a third party over time? What guarantees are there that all promises are kept but subsequent owners?
- Who will pay for new infrastructure and upkeep of infrastructure over time? Roads? Wastewater treatment? Power plants? Fuel? Community impacts?
- Will the data center pay to improve capacity of local services such as the local fire department?
- If the data center leaves the area before the full costs of its impacts are paid, who will pay?
- What exactly will the data center do to reduce noise levels for people in the area? What will the sound level be in decibels at the fence line and how can that be enforced? Will the data center agree to and pay for real-time monitoring of noise levels that is readily available to nearby residents?
- What vibrations will be associated with the facility and how can they be limited?
- What will the lighting be at the facility and how will the impacts to neighbors and wildlife be minimized?