

DATA CENTERS IN GEORGIA: WHAT SHOULD COMMUNITIES KNOW AND ASK?

Executive Summary | A free educational toolkit from Drawdown Georgia

THE PROBLEM

Data center development is moving faster than most Georgia communities can keep up with. Georgia Power has reported 12,400 megawatts of committed demand through the mid-2030s, and data centers are now operating, under construction, or proposed in at least 51 of Georgia's 159 counties. Local governments are already responding: more than 80 Georgia cities and counties have adopted new ordinances addressing data center construction and operation; others have passed moratoriums.

That scale of activity means local officials and residents are being asked to make high-stakes decisions, often with limited time, technical expertise, or trusted information. Existing resources tend to serve one narrow slice of that audience: county officials, or advocacy groups organizing opposition. Few speak plainly to the resident trying to understand what's actually happening in their own community.

THE RESPONSE

Drawdown Georgia created a free toolkit to fill that gap: a resource that takes no position for or against any specific project, but equips any Georgian to understand data centers and participate in the decisions being made about them.

WHAT MAKES IT DIFFERENT

- ➡ Designed to educate. The toolkit doesn't advocate for or against development, a deliberate departure from most existing Georgia resources on this topic, which tend to be explicitly pro- or anti-development.
- ➡ Built for a general audience, not just officials or organizers. Plain language, mobile-friendly, no technical background assumed.
- ➡ Video-forward. A six-part series hosted by Melissa Nord, an Emmy-winning meteorologist and Georgia climate educator, makes the material accessible to residents who prefer not to read a long report.
- ➡ Connects to Drawdown Georgia's core mission. It's the only resource in this space that frames data center energy demand as potential leverage for clean energy investment, not just a risk to manage.

REACH AND FORMAT

- A six-episode **video series** with Melissa Nord
- Access to an interactive, regularly updated **map of data** center activity statewide
(developed by Science for Georgia)
- A **full web guide**, organized around the real questions Georgians are searching for online
- **Four downloadable resources**: a one-page quick brief, a printable community meeting checklist, a directory of Georgia organizations and agencies that can help, and a two-page Community Benefits Agreement overview developed with Georgia WAND

CONTENT AND DATA PARTNERS

Southern Environmental Law Center, Science for Georgia, and Sustainable Newton