

Public Comment to the Pennsylvania DEP Citizens Advisory Council

September 1, 2026

Good afternoon. My name is Wendy Hepler, and I am a resident of Mahoning Township in Lawrence County.

I previously contacted the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection regarding a proposed large-scale data center development in our rural community. My concern is not simply one permit or one project. It is whether Pennsylvania's current environmental review process adequately considers the **cumulative impact** when enormous new industrial and energy demands are concentrated in a rural area.

Our residents depend heavily on private wells and groundwater. We have streams, wetlands, farmland and wooded properties. A project of this magnitude raises questions about construction dewatering, groundwater disruption, stormwater, air emissions associated with power generation, and the infrastructure necessary to supply an extraordinary electrical load.

Noise also deserves greater attention. Data centers operate twenty-four hours a day. Environmental review should account for continuous and low-frequency noise and for cumulative noise from an entire campus - not simply whether an individual piece of equipment meets a limit.

Residents are also being asked to evaluate projects without always knowing the ultimate operator, actual electrical demand, complete water requirements, backup-generation capacity, or the additional transmission and generation infrastructure that may follow.

I am asking the Citizens Advisory Council and DEP to consider whether Pennsylvania's existing environmental review framework is adequate for this new scale of development.

When multiple permits, facilities and infrastructure projects are functionally connected to support one enormous industrial load, **who is looking at the whole picture?**

Rural communities should not discover the cumulative environmental consequences only after the individual pieces have already been approved.

Thank you.