

Washtenaw County Environmental Council

Tuesday, September 2, 2025. 5:00PM - 6:30PM

Virtual Meeting

Link to join:

<https://washtenawcounty.zoom.us/j/87283540017?pwd=gVEEnSyqxp4FAxM4EzR4qTbEzgf7mj.1>

SEPTEMBER 2, 2025 MEETING AGENDA

- I. Call to Order
- II. Attendance
- III. Land Acknowledgement
- IV. Approval of the Agenda
- V. Approval of the Minutes of the July 22, 2025 Meeting
- VI. Public Comment/Citizen Participation: (up to 4 minutes per speaker)
 - A. Council Responses to Citizen Participation
 - B. Acknowledgement of written Citizen Participation
- VII. Staff Reports
 - A. Acknowledgement of written Staff Reports and Communications
 - B. Beth Gibbons, Director, County Resiliency Office: *Washtenaw County Resiliency Office Report*
 - 1. Resiliency Office Report
 - 2. Resiliency Office Events since last meeting and any upcoming, including tabling or other events that the WCEC might want to also participate in.
 - 3. Other Updates
 - C. Other Staff Reports
- VIII. Chair's Report
 - A. Finance/Budget Report
 - B. Bylaws updates
- IX. Presentation: Better Bottle Bill Ballot Initiative
 - A. *Presenter: Caleb Chavez, Michigan Environmental Council*
 - B. Council Discussion
- X. Presentation: Green Energy Tax Credits
 - A. *Presenter: Katie Thomas, Congressional Progressive Caucus Center*

- B. Council Discussion
- XI. Committee Reports
 - A. Outreach Committee
 - 1. Alex Bryan & Mark Coryell
 - a) A2 Green Fair Sept. 19 5-8pm
 - b) Third Act SunDay Sept. 21 2-6pm
- XII. Old Business
 - A. Resolution: Data Centers in Washtenaw County
- XIII. New Business
 - A. Discussion: Upcoming Meetings
 - 1. September 30 Meeting: Virtual.
 - a) Note: The Council's calendar, approved in January, moved the meeting to Sept. 30 because the fourth Tuesday, Sept. 23, is Rosh Hashanah.
 - 2. Meeting and Community Listening Session Reschedule Proposal:
Move Tuesday, October 28 meeting to Tuesday, October 24 and hold in-person, followed by Community Listening Session
- XIV. Communications and Reports
 - A. Councilmembers
- XV. Adjourn

Next Meetings

September 30, 2025 (virtual)

October 24 or 28 tbd (virtual or in person tbd)

Washtenaw County Environmental Council

Tuesday, July 22, 2025, 5:00PM - 6:30PM

Virtual Meeting

Link to join:

[https://washtenawcounty.zoom.us/j/87283540017?pwd=gVEEnSyqxp4FAxM4EzR4qTbEzg
f7mj.1](https://washtenawcounty.zoom.us/j/87283540017?pwd=gVEEnSyqxp4FAxM4EzR4qTbEzg
f7mj.1)

Passcode: 565413

JULY 2025 DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

- I. Call to Order
- II. Attendance
 - a. Michelle Deatrack, Gay MacGregor, Mark Coryell, Alex Bryan, Benjamin VanGessel, Brian Geiringer, Annie Somerville, Yousef Rabhi, Andrea Pierce
- III. Land Acknowledgement
- IV. Approval of the Agenda
 - a. Moved: Alex Bryan
 - b. Second: Ben VanGessel
 - c. Approved by: Unanimous Acclamation
- V. Approval of the Minutes of the June 24, 2025 Meeting
 - a. Moved: Alex Bryan
 - b. Second: Ben VanGessel
 - c. Approved by: Unanimous Acclamation
- VI. Public Comment/Citizen Participation: (up to 4 minutes per speaker)
 - a. Council Responses to Citizen Participation
 - i. No public comment made
 - b. Acknowledgement of written Citizen Participation
 - i. No public comment made
- VII. Staff Reports
 - a. Acknowledgement of written Staff Reports and Communications
 - b. Beth Gibbons, Director, County Resilience Office: *Washtenaw County Resiliency Office*
 - i. Resiliency Office Report
 - ii. Resiliency Office Events in last month and any upcoming, including tabling or other events that the WCEC might want to also participate in
 - iii. Other Updates
 - iv. Council Discussion:
 - a. 5-year reporting cadence discussion
 - i. Concerns regarding 5-year cadence between emissions inventories as being too slow, especially given the County's goals.

- ii. Interest by Council in identifying metrics that can be tracked on an annual or more regular basis between emission inventories.
 - iii. Council members recognize the value of coordinating with regional partners to have aligned data and for cost-savings purposes.
 - b. Prioritization of decarbonization strategies
 - i. Recommendation for the Policy Committee to lead on development of the prioritized decarbonization strategy.
 - ii. The Resiliency Office will work with the Policy Committee to identify a date in late September/early October to convene and review the potential decarbonization pathways and provide recommendations for actions. Those recommendations will go to the Council Planning Committee and onto the full Environmental Council for review.
 - c. Utilization of county-owned and public lands in reaching emission reduction goals
 - i. Council members expressed the importance of assessing the value of natural lands for their ecosystem service value and intrinsic value
 - ii. Commissioner Rabhi recommends working with Parks Commission to integrate climate score or benefit into the selection process for purchasing lands and/or development rights.
 - d. Connecting Council members with RO resources and social media accounts
 - i. Resiliency Office will share the event list, social media accounts, and newsletters with the Councillors. Councillors should be added to the newsletter distribution list.
- 2. Council members expressed questions and interest in learning more about the sustainability curriculum and KPI and reporting

Other Staff Reports

VIII. Chair's Report

- a. Finance/Budget Report
 - i. Motion to approve expenditures to date
 - 1. Moved: Andrea Pierce
 - 2. Second: Alex Bryan
 - 3. Approved by: Unanimous Voice Vote
- b. Bylaws proposal
 - i. Council Discussion

1. BG: question about process
 2. YR: clarifying question about process
 - c. Reminder of committee assignments
- IX. Old Business
- a. Proposed Data Centers in Washtenaw County
 - i. Council Discussion
 1. Conversations and concerns regarding data centers are coming up throughout the County. Most notably at a recent HRWC meeting. There are serious concerns about land management and impact from the planned data centers in Ypsilanti Township and Augusta Township.
 2. Chair Deatrick reminded the Council members of the role of the council on public issues – the Council is advisory to the Board of Commissioners and cannot represent the County publicly.
 - ii. Motion to advise Board of Commissioners to take stance of opposition against AI data centers in the county
 1. Moved: Brian Geiringer
 2. Second: Andrea Pierce
 3. Council Discussion:
 - a. GM: comment on procedure and importance of including background information for resolutions to Commission
 - b. Commissioner Geiringer recognized that this motion may be unusual, but there is urgency to send a message to the Board of Commission as this topic has increasing importance.
 - c. Commissioner Rabhi offers a friendly amendment:
 - d. "The WCEC expresses strong concerns with the series of data centers that have been proposed in Washtenaw County. The Council will be compiling a more complete resolution with research and data focused in part, but not exclusively, on the impacts on land, water, rate payers and the County's Climate Resiliency plan, to inform future board decisions with recommendations for future action."
 - e. Motion passes by unanimous acclamation
 4. Motion to task policy and recommendations committee with drafting a resolution regarding data center development in Washtenaw County, which will be reviewed by the planning committee, and brought to the full council for approval
 - a. Moved: Brian Geiringer
 - b. Second: Andrea Pierce

- c. Approved by: Unanimous acclamation
- X. New Business
 - a. Discussion: Upcoming Meetings
 - i. August 26 Meeting: Proposal to cancel
 - 1. Motion to move meeting to September 2, 2025
 - a. Moved: Alex Bryan
 - b. Second: Andrea Pierce
 - c. Approved by: Unanimous acclamation
 - ii. September 23 Meeting: Discussion
 - 1. Proposal to hold in person and/or hold a Community Listening Session
 - 2. Motion to authorize the Chair to hold in person September meeting at community center with community listening session
 - a. Moved: Brian Geiringer
 - b. Second: Ben VanGessel
 - c. Approved by: Unanimous acclamation
- XI. Communications and Reports
 - a. Councilmembers
 - i. Andrea Pierce: Pipe Up Paddle Out and Line 5
 - ii. Other
- XII. Adjourn
 - a. 6:33 PM
 - b. Moved: Michelle Deatrick
 - c. Second: Yousef Rabhi
 - d. Approved by: Unanimous acclamation

Next Meeting

September 2, 2025

September 23, 2025

Washtenaw County Environmental Council September 2, 2025 (Rescheduled August 2025 Meeting)

Resiliency Office Report

Beth Gibbons, Washtenaw County Resiliency Office Director

1. Staffing/Support Status

- During the summer of 2025, the Resiliency Office engaged four interns who contributed meaningfully to several strategic initiatives:
 - Development of external communications materials, including curated social media content and a video presentation articulating the concept of resiliency within Washtenaw County
 - Preparation of a comprehensive handbook designed to provide actionable guidance for developers, planners, and code officials in adopting high-performance building standards
 - Integration of the County's 2019 Community-wide Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventory into ICLEI's ClearPath 2.0 platform
- From September through April, the Resiliency Office will host a Ginsberg Center funded University of Michigan intern. The intern will assist with communication and outreach.
- The Resiliency Office plans to submit an application to Round 3 of the MI Healthy Climate Fellows (MHCF) program to secure a year-long fellow who will support the Office's expanding portfolio of initiatives.
- The office has submitted a budget request for general fund support of a permanent Communication and Engagement Coordinator for the office.

2. Projects Underway

- County-wide Annual Business Meetings: The Resiliency Office participated in annual planning meetings with more than twenty County departments. These engagements facilitated the identification of collaborative opportunities and provided valuable insights into departmental operations. The Office's own business meeting, convened on August 5, 2025, served as a forum to present implementation progress related to the Resilient Washtenaw Plan and to articulate areas requiring support from County administration and auxiliary services.
- MICHAP Project: Washtenaw County is partnering with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services and MSU to address local climate-related health challenges. The project will inform design strategies for the redevelopment of Ecorse Road in Ypsilanti Township. The Resiliency Office is coordinating with County staff and Township officials to facilitate community engagement and assess additional potential project sites. Public meetings are anticipated to take place in late 2025.
- Renewable Energy Zoning Technical Assistance: The Office continues to provide technical assistance to municipalities in the development of renewable energy zoning frameworks. Recent efforts have included sharing updates regarding Public Act 233 and promotion of an

online resource library curated by the EGLE and the University of Michigan's Center for EmPowering Communities.

- **WC Climate Resilience Network:** The Resiliency Office has contracted Non-Profit Enterprise at Work (NEW) to facilitate the formation of the Washtenaw County Climate Resilience Network. This regional convening body will foster collaboration among municipalities, organizations, and institutions, enabling the exchange of resources and best practices. The next Network meeting is scheduled for October 17, 2025.
- **Social Media Accounts:** Last month, the Resiliency Office launched our Facebook and Instagram accounts. Our first campaign has focused on sharing the work of the office and about the Resilient Washtenaw Plan. We also plan to advertise WCEC meetings each month. Upcoming posts include sharing about the expiring federal tax incentives, office partnerships, and county programs. We ask that you please follow our accounts and interact with posts to help boost engagement!
 - Facebook: [Washtenaw County Resiliency Office](#)
 - Instagram: [washtenawresiliency](#)

3. Grants & Funding Update

- **EGLE's Challenge #2: Unlocking Elective Pay** - The Resiliency Office is partnering with Washtenaw 2030 District and the City of Ann Arbor on two proposals. One supports establishing a Direct Pay Ambassadors Hub in Washtenaw County, the second focuses on accelerating establishment of renewable energy projects in Washtenaw County and across SE-Michigan, including deploying financing tools (e.g. a loan-loss reserve) that will ease access to capital for nonprofits, tribal governments, public schools, and houses of worship.
- **Climate Migration Planning Proposal** - The WRDSF Fund has invited the Resiliency Office to submit a \$50,000 proposal to initiate planning and narrative development around demographic shifts driven by climate change. This project will explore: Municipal and social service preparedness for supporting an aging population in a changing climate; institutional readiness for an influx of newcomers; identifying data, resources, and strategies needed to better plan for future demographic changes.

4. Outreach Updates - (New events added since last meeting)

Date	Event (linked to page)	Host	Location
September 9	Community open house about data center site	UM	UM North Campus
September 9	(resharing) Michigan Climate Summit	MICAN	Lansing
September 28	Refugia Festival	Refugia	The Arb
September 29	Michigan Environmental Justice Conference	EGLE	Detroit
September 27-October 5	UM Climate Week	UM	Ann Arbor
September 30	Earthfest (part of climate week)	UM	The Diag

Date	Event Type	Training/Event	Location	Organization
Thursday, September 4, 2025	Public Meeting	E. Huron River Drive Sidewalk Study Meeting	AADL-Traverwood Branch	Ann Arbor District Library
Friday, September 5, 2025	Field Day	2025 Washtenaw Field Day	Plymouth, MI	Washtenaw County Conservation District (WCCD)
Monday, September 8, 2025	Public Meeting	Geddes Road Sidewalk Study Meeting	AADL - Malletts Creek Branch	Ann Arbor District Library
Tuesday, September 9, 2025	Public Meeting	UM Open House on Data Center Site	UM North Campus	University of Michigan
Tuesday, September 9, 2025	Conference	Michigan Climate Summit	Lansing, MI	Michigan Climate Action Network
Friday, September 19, 2025	Fair	A2ZERO Green Fair	Ann Arbor	City of Ann Arbor OSI
Wednesday, September 24, 2025	Gala	13th Annual Michigan Energy Innovators	Detroit	Michigan Energy Innovation Business Council's
Thursday, September 25, 2025	In-person	Huron River Days	Ypsilanti	Ypsilanti Parks Committee
Thursday, September 25, 2025	Conference	2025 Great Lakes Conference	Rochester, NY	Healing our Waters
Friday, September 26, 2025	Public Engagement	Park Adoption Workday	Ann Arbor	City of Ann Arbor OSI
Saturday, September 27, 2025	In-person	U-Mich Climate Week	Ann Arbor	SEAS U-Mich
Sunday, September 28, 2025	In-person	Refugia Festival	Ann Arbor, MI	Refugia
Monday, September 29, 2025	Conference	The Sustainable Future Forum	Ann Arbor, MI	Ann Arbor SPARK
Wednesday, October 1, 2025	Banquet	77th Annual WCCD Celebration	Cobblestone Farms	Washtenaw County Conservation District (WCCD)
Sunday, October 5, 2025	In-person	Scio Township Sustainability Fair	Scio Township	Scio Township
Friday, October 17, 2025	Public Engagement	Park Adoption Workday	Ann Arbor	City of Ann Arbor OSI
Monday, October 20, 2025	Conference	Midwest Climate Resilience Conference (MCRC)	Milwaukee, WI	University of Minnesota CAP
Thursday, November 6, 2025	Conference	Michigan Sustainability Conference	Grand Rapids, MI	EGLE
Wednesday, November 12, 2025	Conference	State of the Huron Conference	Ann Arbor, MI	HRWC
6/1-7/2025	In-person	A2Zero Week	Ann Arbor	Ann Arbor OSI

ACCOUNT DETAIL HISTORY FOR 2025 00 TO 2025 13

ORG YR/PR	OBJECT JNL	PROJ EFF DATE	SRC	REF1	REF2	REF3	CHECK #	OB	AMOUNT	NET LEDGER BALANCE	NET BUDGET BALANCE
10101104	805400			Special Events - Envr. Council							
							REVISED BUDGET				5,000.00
25/04	2356	04/10/25	APM	288563		294269	457550		225.00	225.00	
	modify acc	BRIAN GEIRINGER				MICHIGAN STATE OF -					
25/04	2357	04/10/25	APM	288563		294268	457550		225.00	450.00	
	modify acc	GAY MACGREGOR				MICHIGAN STATE OF -					
25/04	2358	04/10/25	APM	288563		294267	457550		225.00	675.00	
	modify acc	LAUREN SARGENT				MICHIGAN STATE OF -					
25/05	997	05/21/25	BUA		WCEC		T		5,000.00	675.00	
	AA										
LEDGER BALANCES --- DEBITS:						675.00	CREDITS:	.00	NET:	675.00	
GRAND TOTAL --- DEBITS:						675.00	CREDITS:	.00	NET:	675.00	

4 Records printed

** END OF REPORT - Generated by Andrew DeLeeuw **



**LET'S MAKE A
BETTER BOTTLE BILL
FOR A CLEANER
MICHIGAN!**



LESS LITTER, A CLEANER MICHIGAN

Today, nearly half of the bottles we buy don't have deposits, so they end up as litter or in landfills instead of getting recycled. Michigan's Bottle Bill worked great when voters passed it in 1976, but nearly 50 years later it's time for an upgrade.

Imagine being able to return **any beverage container**, whether it's water, juice, or sports drinks, at any store that sells beverages. Imagine **smarter recycling systems** for faster and cleaner returns. Imagine **better support for environmental initiatives** like cleanups and water security. We're not just improving bottle returns, we're creating a cleaner, greener future for Michiganders and our land.

MORE TYPES OF BOTTLES



CARBONATED
SOFT DRINKS



CARBONATED
WATER



BEER & MALT
BEVERAGES



SPORTS
DRINKS



WATER
BOTTLES



ICED
TEAS



LIQUOR
BOTTLES



WINE
BOTTLES

CURRENTLY COVERED

COVERED UNDER BETTER BOTTLE BILL

A Better Bottle Bill will expand the 10-cent deposit to include more bottles, including water bottles and sports drinks.



EASIER RETURNS

Universal redemption means you can return any bottle with a deposit to any store that sells beverages, simplifying the process and boosting participation.

PLASTIC & CANS





CLEANER MICHIGAN

WATER SECURITY FUND

Money from unclaimed deposits will help make drinking water more affordable by directly supporting the research, development, and implementation of water affordability programs throughout Michigan.

CLEANUP REDEVELOPMENT TRUST FUND

The Better Bottle Bill will use unclaimed deposits to establish a trust fund that will support even more pollution cleanup in the future.



**LEARN MORE,
DONATE &
SIGN UP TO HELP!**



MIBETTERBOTTLEBILL.ORG



CLEAN ENERGY CREDITS UPDATE

WHAT WAS ELIMINATED BY THE OBBA AND WHAT OPPORTUNITIES STILL EXIST

KATIE THOMAS CAROL, ESQ.

DIRECTOR OF LIVABLE FUTURES, CPC CENTER

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2025 6PM ET



**CONGRESSIONAL
PROGRESSIVE
CAUCUS CENTER**

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WHO WE ARE

The CPC Center exists to harness federal policy and process knowledge & our convening power to bolster our movement's fight for an inclusive clean energy transition by prioritizing worker power, and racial, economic, climate, reproductive, and gender justice—*regardless of who controls the levers of power.*



DEMYSTIFYING GOVERNMENT



**FOSTERING CROSS-MOVEMENT
SOLIDARITY**



**BUILDING TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE INFRASTRUCTURE**



**INCLUSIVE CLEAN
ENERGY TRANSITION**



OUR WORK ON CLEAN ENERGY TAX CREDITS

We have drawn upon
our expertise and
institutional
knowledge to:



Authored over 15
educational publications
on clean energy.



Created a community of
hundreds of eligible
entities, elected
champions, and advocates.

Provided direct technical
assistance to over 250
eligible entities and
grassroots advocates.



Hosted over 20 briefings,
presentations, &
trainings.

TAX CREDITS FOR SOLAR AND WIND

- All projects applying for tax credits* should **commence construction by December 31, 2025** to avoid one of the new “prohibited foreign entity” rules.
 - Credits will still be available for projects that commence construction by July 4, 2026, BUT will have to comply with complex “material assistance” restrictions starting January 1, 2026.
- Per [guidance](#) from Treasury, these projects **must be placed in service within four years** of the commence construction date.

**Tax credits for wind and solar include the tech neutral Investment Tax Credit (48E) or Production Tax Credit (45Y). Learn more about the phase-out dates for clean energy credits [here](#).*

HOW DO I COMMENCE CONSTRUCTION?

Must either:

- A) **Start physical work of a significant nature** (Includes eligible work completed on or off-site by the taxpayer or by a contractor or subcontractor if done under a binding contract).
- B) **Paying or incurring at least five percent of the total project cost** (we advise 12-15 percent to account for overages).
 - a) Due to Treasury rules changes, this safe harbor is no longer available to wind, or to solar 1.5 MW or larger.

Learn more about commence construction from [NYU Tax Law Center](#) and [Lawyers for Good Government](#).

WHAT ARE FEOC/PFE RESTRICTIONS?

- Prohibited Foreign Entities (PFE) restrictions (previously known as Foreign Entity of Concern (FEOC)) will make most project eligibility unworkable for projects *commencing* after December 31, 2025.
- Places requirements on projects that have connections to certain nations and entities deemed as a national security threat.
- This includes:
 - Having a share of ownership or influence.
 - Making effective control payments*.
 - Sourcing materials.

*Payment restrictions apply to tax years that begin after July 4, 2025. Learn more [here](#).

TAX CREDITS FOR OTHER TECHNOLOGIES

- Full tax credits* are **still available for geothermal electricity, energy storage**, and others that commence construction by January 1, 2033.
 - 75% credit in 2034, 50% in 2035 and full elimination thereafter.
 - Subject to material assistance FEOC/PFE restrictions starting on January 1, 2026.
- Full ITC tax credits will be available for ground-source heat pump projects that **commence construction by January 1, 2035**.
 - **Will NOT be subject to FEOC/PFE restrictions.**
- Safe harbor is still available to commence construction.

**Tax credits include the tech neutral Investment Tax Credit (48E) or Production Tax Credit (45Y)*



OTHER TAX CREDITS

- Commercial Clean Vehicle Credit (45W) will **sunset on September 30, 2025 and EVs need to be acquired* by this date to qualify.**
- Alternative Fuel Vehicle Refueling Property Credit (30C) will **sunset on June 30, 2026 and technology needs to be placed in service by this date to qualify.**
- Neither will be subject to FEOC/PFE restrictions.

** The IRS states that “For purposes of sections...45W, a vehicle is “acquired” as of the date a written binding contract is entered into and a payment has been made. A payment includes a nominal downpayment or a vehicle trade-in.”*

SO WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN?

CLOSING WINDOW FOR DIRECT PAY IN 2025



PIS: "Placed in Service" or complete until project can perform intended purpose



BOC: "Beginning of Construction." According to guidance, you must PIS within 4 years after BOC date.

8.15.25 Treasury released guidance on definition of BOC for 48E and 45Y for wind and solar

2025						2026					
JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
 Electric vehicles acquired by 9.30.25 to claim 45W											
 Electric charging infrastructure PIS by 6.30.26 to claim 30C											
 Wind and Solar BOC by 12.31.25* to claim ITC 48E/PTC 45Y and avoid Material Assistance Requirements						 All ITC 48E/PTC 45Y projects that BOC in 2026 and on are subject to Material Assistance Requirements					

**Wind and Solar that BOC in 2025 and wish to claim 48E may be subject to PFE Entity Level Restrictions (including "effective control" payment restrictions) depending on their PIS date and tax year*

BOTTOM LINE

- **Complete or commence construction on as many solar and energy storage projects as possible by the end of 2025.**
- Ground-source heat pump tax credits remain unchanged and are great option until at least 2035.
- Know your filing deadlines relative to your fiscal year (we can help you figure that out).
- If you have any questions or need help strategizing, the Congressional Progressive Caucus Center is here to help!

RESOURCES

- More information on changes to tax credits:
 - Sign up for CPC Center's [Unrig the Rules](#) updates
 - Lawyers for Good Government "[Updates to Certain Elective Pay Eligible Credits Under H.R. 1](#)"
 - Lawyers for Good Government "[Beginning of Construction for the 48E & 45Y](#)"
 - [Bluegreen Alliance's "What Survived?"](#)
 - [NYU Tax Law Center's Navigating OBBA Guide](#)
 - [S2 Strategies' Reconciliation Bill Energy Overview](#)
 - [UndauntedK12's Updates to Energy Tax Credits Overview](#)
- How to claim tax credits before the deadline:
 - [CPC Center's Step-By-Step Guide for Pre-Registration Requirements](#)
 - [L4GG's Clean Energy Tax Navigator](#)
 - [How to Claim the \\$40,000 Tax Credit for Your Electric School Bus](#)

QUESTIONS?

Contact me

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DRAFT

**Resolution Recommending That the Washtenaw County Board Of Commissioners Act on
Serious Public Health, Energy, Water, Worker and Climate Concerns Related
To Proposed Data Centers in the County**

WASHTENAW COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

September 2, 2025

The Resolution was developed by the WCEC Advisory and Policy Committee and Chair Deatrick.

WHEREAS, on November 18, 2018, the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners (“BOC”) established the Washtenaw County Environmental Council (“WCEC” or “Council”) by a unanimous vote; and

WHEREAS, the Council was tasked with “developing recommendations for environmental policy and organizational recommendations for Washtenaw County government in order to: achieve net-zero emissions for County operations, reduce county contributions to climate change; protect the County’s air, land, water, food network, and both mental and public health as related to the environment; and prioritize environmental justice, and intergenerational justice related to the environment”; and

WHEREAS, the Council is also tasked with developing and maintaining “input and dialogue with the wider Washtenaw County community”; and

WHEREAS, the Council has a dedicated Labor seat, and the *Resilient Washtenaw* plan commits the County to working with community partners from labor; and

WHEREAS, in a presentation to the WCEC made on May 27, 2025, Michelle Martinez of UM SEAS summarized the potential harms of data centers:

- Rapid growth in direct and indirect energy consumption associated with data centers high energy use can put a strain on existing local infrastructure leading to prices hikes, overload, resource prioritization issues, and increased emissions from downstream power sourcing
 - **This additional energy consumption would make the county’s goal to achieve carbon neutrality by 2035 much harder, and possibly impossible, to reach.**
- With wholesale electrical costs rising on average 20% in areas which have data centers, Washtenaw County will likely see large increases in energy usage. Without guardrails in place, the burden of paying for this will fall on County rate payers.
- Data center operations rely on both the significant intake and outflow of water for system cooling leading to unregulated issues of resource consumption, water quality impairment, or run-off. For instance, a data center in Newton County, GA is using 9 million gallons per day, equal to 30,000 households (NYT)
- Data centers generators can run from 85-100 dBA (a dBA is a measure of sound levels). That far exceeds safe levels which are capped at 70 dBA. The sound can be detected up to 3 miles away. These high levels can impact surrounding communities, causing headaches, stress and

sleep disturbances, as well as anxiety, memory, concentration issues, increased diabetes risk, and cardiovascular risks.. In children, the sound levels can decrease growth hormones. Wildlife are also harmed by the sound levels, which disrupt animal communication and can force new migration patterns.

- Data centers are projected to cause nearly 1,300 deaths annually in the U.S. by 2030, resulting in a public health burden of over \$20 Billion; and

WHEREAS, at least four data centers — two in Ypsilanti Township, one in Saline Township and one in Augusta Township — are known to be proposed or in development in Washtenaw County at the time this Resolution was approved by the WCEC; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Washtenaw County Environmental Council recommends that the Board of Commissioners direct staff to prioritize development, with review and input by the Washtenaw County Environmental Council, of informational outreach materials for local governments, which have the relevant zoning authority, in order to support their due diligence in reviewing rezoning requests and proposed site plans for data centers. Those materials are to include recommendations that local municipalities require petitioners to:

- Submit data on expected water use and water sources,
- Submit data on energy use and planned sources for their operation,
- Submit an environmental impact statement detailing potential impacts on water resources, (including surface water and groundwater quality and quantity), air quality, surrounding wildlife
- Submit a noise study detailing impacts of noise on surrounding property owners,
- Hold at least two accessible, well-publicized public hearings, prior to which they release the above data, statements and studies; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the WCEC recommends that the Board of Commissioners direct staff to develop an outreach plan for the above materials, to be implemented with some urgency, to implement it, and to brief both the WCEC and the BOC on the outreach; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Council recommends that the Board of Commissioners urge local governments, as part of any approval process for data centers:

- Require data center developers and operators to publish Water Use Effectiveness measurements at least quarterly,
- Require data center developers and operators to source 100% of their energy from wind, solar, battery, or geo-thermal sources,
- Require data center developers and operators to pay their fair share of any energy consumption over and above their own sources,
- Require data center developers and operators to pay for grid infrastructure, including but not limited to, new or additional electrical substations,
- Require data center developers and operators to commit to union agreements and local hiring targets,
- Require data center developers and operators to provide resources to local governments for their provision of any extra first responder/emergency services and all initial and ongoing

infrastructure costs, with particular attention to cases in which the data center may be exempt from local taxing authority.

Sources:

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