DATA CENTERS

BI-WEEKLY UPDATE

March 24, 2026

FRESH COAST
Climate Solutions

Bold Solutions. Transformative Action.

EMERGING THEMES

Investments & Market Activity

High-profile "Project Stargate" setback

- Expansion plans for Project Stargate's flagship site in Abilene, TX falter amidst OpenAI and Oracle's financing challenges, clearing the way for Microsoft and leading to market reactions

Hyperscale developments move forward

- Federal officials announce 10-GW data center at former uranium site in OH
- Google reveals itself as the developer behind two major hyperscale projects:
  - "Project Cannoli" (MI)
  - "Project BOSC" (OH)
- Stream Data Centers proposal in Alabama, NY triples capital expense projection to $19B+

Research & Technology

New reports on the politics of data center development

- Pew research shows Americans have mixed opinions on data center impacts
- Innovate Ohio publishes report urging Ohio state government to end tax incentives for data centers and require "bring-your-own-power" frameworks

Emerging energy technology trends for clean baseload power

- Fervo Energy partners with Google to provide advanced geothermal power to data centers
- Surge in US manufacturing and global deployment of long-duration energy storage (LDES) batteries

Legislation

Increasing attempts at federal oversight

- Senate Democrats launch investigation into companies using behind-the-meter gas plants to skip long grid interconnection lines

Contrasting state initiatives addressing public transparency & nuclear power

- MN's HF 4077 would prohibit NDAs between public officials and developers
- FL proposal would allow NDAs, while imposing ratepayer protections
- NY resists federal efforts to reopen Indian Point plant
- OH lawmakers propose exception to utility-ownership rules for advanced nuclear reactors

Sustainability

Long-term climate goals being stress-tested

- NY Governor Hochul says her state needs "breathing room" for 2030 climate goals

Identifying data center co-benefits and climate solutions

- Climate Mayors releases new resource providing actionable guidance on navigating data centers & climate goals
- VA community uses data center tax revenue to fund affordable housing projects
- The PA Turnpike uses solar-powered microgrid to power its own data center & generate profits
- Shifting corporate clean energy contracts landscape leaves smaller buyers to secure more local renewable energy deals

CATEGORIES OF NEWS UPDATES

Bi-weekly, Fresh Coast summarizes the latest data center industry news and assesses potential impacts across key categories for Joyce Foundation and stakeholders

1. Investments & Market Activity
2. Research & Technology
3. Legislation & Policy
4. Sustainability
5. Other

Investments & Market Activity

Article/Link	Summary	Potential Impact
Oracle & OpenAI Halt Stargate Expansion	**3/06/2026 (TX):** Oracle and OpenAI have canceled plans to expand their flagship Stargate data center in Abilene, TX due to financing challenges and OpenAI's shifting demand forecasts, ending an anticipated capacity increase from 1.2GW to 2GW. January winter weather also damaged the facilities' liquid cooling systems, taking the campus offline for a few days. The canceled expansion temporarily opened the door for Meta, with Nvidia facilitating talks and placing a $150 million deposit to help Meta potentially lease the unused Crusoe-developed capacity, but ultimately, Microsoft has agreed to lease the new capacity. See news of the agreement here.	**High** – The cancellation exposes how even high-profile, multi-GW data center plans can buckle under financial, technology, and infrastructure reliability concerns.
OH to Host Data Center at Former Uranium Site	**3/20/2026 (OH):** The U.S. Department of Energy has announced a public-private partnership to build a 10-gigawatt AI data center and matching power-generation complex—including 9.2 GW of natural-gas capacity—on the site of a decommissioned uranium enrichment plant in Piketon, Ohio. The project, part of a broader U.S.–Japan strategic initiative, includes billions in transmission upgrades and has drawn both high-level federal support and local pushback from residents seeking a statewide ban on mega data centers.	**High** – The project signals the rising scale of the AI race, with governments now repurposing federal sites for development.
Stream's Planned NY Investment Rises to $19.46 Billion	**3/9/2026 (NY):** Stream Data Centers has significantly expanded its proposed investment in an Alabama, NY hyperscale data center campus to $19.46 billion. This more than triples its original $6.3 billion estimate from spring 2025. Located at the Science, Technology and Advanced Manufacturing Park (STAMP) in Genesee County, the project is being developed in collaboration with an undisclosed Fortune 50 company and is backed by Apollo Global Management. The scale of the investment has led the developer to request an increase in tax exemptions. See clips from the most recent public hearing on the data center proposal here.	**Medium** – Stream's proposal follows a now-familiar pattern of ballooning capital costs, involvement of an unnamed "Fortune 50 tenant," and increasing public concern.
Google, DTE Advance Data Center Deal	**3/17/2026 (MI):** Google was revealed as the company behind "Project Cannoli," a hyperscale data center project proposed in Van Buren Township, MI. Google and DTE Energy have reached an agreement to power the planned 1-gigawatt development, with Google committing 2.7 gigawatts of energy resources—including solar, storage, and demand flexibility—to support Michigan's grid. As part of the deal, Google will cover all infrastructure costs, create a $10 million energy impact fund, and pursue a contested case hearing with the Michigan Public Service Commission to ensure transparency and protect existing ratepayers. See Google's announcement here; and Van Buren Township's FAQ's here.	**Medium** – The power plan shows a similar playbook to Google's recent Xcel Energy partnership in MN, and the contested MPSC case contrasts with the recent hyperscale proposal in Saline, MI.
Google's Project BOSC	**3/17/2026 (OH):** Google has been confirmed as the developer behind "Project BOSC," a $500 million proposed data center near Lima, OH. Google is committing $50 million toward regional infrastructure, including wastewater and road improvements, and has pledged $250,000 in annual funding to the local school district. In September 2025, a water ordinance was secured for the project for five million gallons daily. However, the project has drawn scrutiny from the Ohio EPA over a drafted permit for 115 diesel-fueled emergency generators and fuel storage tanks required for the site's backup power.	**Medium** – The unveiling reiterates Ohio's continued trend as a major development hub and is another example of anonymous "code-name" projects.

Research & Technology

Article/Link	Summary	Potential Impact
American Viewpoint of Key Data Center Impacts	**3/12/2026 (National):** A recent survey from the Pew Research Center shows that while 75% of Americans have heard of data centers, public sentiment remains highly skeptical regarding their non-economic impacts. Out of respondents that have heard of data centers, the majority believe these facilities negatively affect the environment and home energy costs. While the public views the impact on local jobs (25% optimism) and tax revenue (23% optimism) more favorably, these are still relatively low. The study found that individuals who are most familiar with data centers, as well as younger adults under 30, tend to have the most critical views across all surveyed categories.	**Medium** – Public perception of data centers as environmental and financial liabilities could lead to stricter laws and increased political pressure on tech companies to provide more community benefits.
Innovation Ohio Report Urges Lawmakers to Regulate Data Centers	**3/16/2026 (OH):** Innovation Ohio, a progressive advocacy group, has released a report urging state lawmakers to eliminate tax breaks for data centers and mandate that developers build their own power generation. The state's sales tax exemption (initially costing less than $1 million annually) now results in nearly $150 million in lost revenue each year. Critics argue that subsidies effectively pay the world's wealthiest companies to strain Ohio's grid. The report comes as the Ohio House prepares to vote on overriding Governor DeWine's veto of a budget provision that would have cut these tax exemptions. Several bipartisan legislative proposals (such as HB 710 and HB 706) seek to prohibit data center incentives entirely, restrict siting, and require facilities to either provide behind-the-meter power or prepay for all grid expansion costs. Read Innovation Ohio's report here.	**Medium** – If enacted, these policies would force tech giants to become independent energy producers, potentially accelerating deployment of private natural gas or nuclear.
Google & Fervo Energy Partnership	**3/12/2026 (National):** Google has partnered with Fervo Energy to deploy next-generation enhanced geothermal systems (EGS) to power its data centers. By applying horizontal drilling and fracturing technologies from the oil and gas industry, Fervo can access heat from deeper underground than traditional geothermal. Their first pilot project in Nevada is already operational and providing carbon-free electricity into the local grid.	**Medium** – This partnership could prove that geothermal can evolve into a scalable clean energy solution.
Global LDES Deployments Rose 49% in 2025; U.S. Manufacturers Produce More Grid Batteries	**3/10/2026 (National):** Global long-duration energy storage (LDES) deployments grew by 49% in 2025, reaching a total capacity of over 15 GWh. China accounted for 93% of these installations. To meet net-zero goals and maintain grid reliability, experts indicate that average energy storage durations must eventually increase from the current 2.5 hours to ~20 hours to balance with intermittent renewable energy. **3/23/2026 (National):** The U.S. has rapidly built out domestic manufacturing of grid scale batteries and is currently on track to fully meet its own demand for energy storage systems and battery cells, marking a major shift from reliance on imports. The surge is partly due to lingering Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) incentives and growing needs from AI-driven data center growth.	**Medium** – LDES is vital for stabilizing the grid and can help phase out fossil fuel reliance and incorporate new renewables to enhance grid resilience.

Legislation & Policy

Article/Link	Summary	Potential Impact
Senate Democrats Investigate Gas-Powered Data Centers	**3/13/2026 (National):** Senate Democrats have launched an investigation into nine major tech firms (including Meta and OpenAI) over 12 data center projects planned to be powered by behind-the-meter natural gas plants. Lawmakers are questioning why these companies are bypassing their net-zero pledges to build fossil fuel generation. The investigation focuses on local health risks from nitrogen oxide and the massive carbon footprint of these projects.	**High** – This federal scrutiny challenges the tech industry's use of private gas plants to circumvent slow utility interconnections.
NY Opposes Reopening Nuclear Power Plant	**3/10/2026 (NY):** Governor Hochul's administration has formally rejected a push from President Trump's administration to reopen the Indian Point nuclear power plant. Pressure to revive the facility comes as AI and data center energy demands rise. Federal officials argue that the plant is essential for grid reliability. However, NY state officials cited costs, safety risks, and the legal finality of the plant decommissioning agreement from 2021. The state plans to prioritize its existing offshore wind goals and new transmission lines to bring Canadian hydropower to New York City.	**Medium** – The refusal to reopen the plant highlights a growing conflict between federal mandates for growth and state-level climate and safety precautions.
Minnesota's Bill Against NDAs	**3/11/2026 (MN):** The Minnesota House Elections Finance and Government Operations Committee unanimously passed HF 4077 with bipartisan support. The bill would prohibit cities, counties, and other political subdivisions from making non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) with private developers. The legislation aims to end corporate secrecy around data centers by making NDAs void and unenforceable. The bill also requires municipalities to publicly disclose any existing contracts that violate these new transparency standards. Community members have argued that deals occurring behind closed doors took away public trust and allowed developers to bypass critical typical audits.	**Medium** – Banning NDAs takes away one of the industry's tools for avoiding public pushback and could compel developers to create better community benefits agreements.
Potential OH Bill to Let Utilities Own Power Plants	**3/12/2026 (OH):** Newly drafted legislation in Ohio aims to reverse a ban on utility-owned generation by making an exception for advanced nuclear technology including small modular reactors. This proposal would allow major utilities to build and operate their own nuclear plants. These could potentially be created on brownfield sites or former coal mines. Profits would be guaranteed through rate-based cost recovery. While the bill suggests that large industrial customers like data centers would initially fund these projects through 20-year agreements, critics warn that the broader public could eventually be held responsible for decommissioning costs if these companies fail.	**Medium** – Ohio's proposed carve-out for nuclear underscores growing enthusiasm for the technology, despite scalability and cost concerns.
Florida Moves to Limit Data Center Transparency Requirements	**3/13/2026 (FL):** Florida lawmakers have approved a bill that removes requirements for public disclosure of new data-center projects and allows state agencies to enter nondisclosure agreements with developers, meaning residents may not know when large facilities are planned near their communities. The measure still ensures that developers—not ratepayers—cover utility costs, and it commissions a state study on data-center impacts as Florida positions itself for rapid AI-driven infrastructure growth.	**Medium** – The shift highlights growing tension between economic development priorities and public oversight.

Sustainability

Article/Link	Summary	Potential Impact
Hochul Seeks Delay on NY Climate Targets	**3/12/2026 (NY):** Gov. Kathy Hochul said New York needs "breathing room" to meet its 2030 climate mandates, citing high projected compliance costs, the pandemic's lingering effects, offshore-wind setbacks, federal policy reversals, and the broader energy-affordability crisis. She indicated that upcoming state budget negotiations are the most likely vehicle for modifying the 2019 Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, which currently requires 70% renewable power and a 40% emissions cut by 2030.	**High** – The move underscores how rising energy costs and implementation challenges are forcing even climate-ambitious states to reassess timelines.
Data Center Climate Action Resource for Mayors	**(National):** A resource by Climate Mayors, "Data Centers and the Climate Landscape: An Actionable Resource for US Mayors," provides a framework for local leaders to align the expansion of AI with community sustainability goals. It identifies critical policy levers to help cities negotiate community benefits agreements and updated zoning codes (land use, electricity rates, water conservation, air/noise pollution, and economic development). By showcasing existing proactive city ordinances, the resource empowers mayors to transition from reactive permitting to setting enforceable standards for renewable energy use and infrastructure protection. Download the full resource here.	**Medium** – This resource serves as a vital blueprint to provide local policy tools needed to enable communities to navigate the environmental and economic impacts of data centers.
Data Centers Help Fund Affordable Housing in VA	**3/13/2026 (VA):** Henrico County, Virginia is using tax revenue from its data-center cluster to fund a $60 million affordable-housing program, enabling dozens of middle-income residents—like teachers—to purchase homes well below market value. The county has rejected proposals for new data centers while turning revenue from existing ones into subsidies that have already supported 383 affordable units and helped 30 buyers close on new homes.	**Medium** – This model shows how communities can convert data-center growth into tangible public benefits, offering a template for other cities balancing multiple priorities.
PA Turnpike's Data Center Powered by Solar Microgrid, Energy to Spare	**3/16/2026 (PA):** The Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission constructed an 800 sq ft data center designed to process the large data from its new automated tolling systems. Starting in June, this facility and the nearby office will be powered by an on-site solar microgrid that is expected to generate far more electricity than the agency needs. Officials estimate the data center and office will only consume about 20% of the microgrid's output, so the Commission can sell the remaining 80% back to the regional power grid. This self-sustaining model is projected to pay for itself in just 5-6 years. A similar solar project at the nearby Greensburg maintenance facility has saved the company $400,000 annually since 2021.	**Low** – The Commission is creating resilient and carbon-neutral infrastructure that offsets energy demands while providing a new revenue stream and stabilizing the local electrical grid.

Other Industry News

Article/Link	Summary	Potential Impact
Creative Renewable Energy Solutions for Small Buyers	**3/4/2026 (National):** As contract prices for solar and wind projects climbed about 9% in 2025 and large tech companies dominated the market, small and midsize buyers began shifting toward simpler, local clean-energy deals, emphasizing on-site generation and nearby suppliers. These organizations are also navigating expiring federal incentives, grid-interconnection backlogs, and new emissions-accounting rules, prompting them to rethink virtual power-purchase agreements and pursue more flexible, community-aligned procurement strategies.	**Medium** – This shift shows how rising costs and grid constraints are reshaping the clean energy landscape, potentially enabling smaller buyers to drive more localized renewable energy development.
Europe's First Microgrid-Connected Data Center	**3/11/2026 (Global):** Because Ireland's national grid has placed a moratorium on new data center connections in Dublin, Pure Data Centres and AVK have partnered to build a 110 MW microgrid. This facility will bypass the traditional grid entirely, utilizing its own on-site power generation to support the intense energy demands of AI and high-performance computing. To maintain reliability without a grid connection, the site will rely on a combination of gas turbines and battery storage. This $1 billion investment highlights a growing global trend where tech companies are forced to become their own utility providers to sustain the growth of AI.	**Medium** – Operating independently of the public utility avoids straining local power for residents but risks increasing local emissions with on-site gas combustion.
A 'Great Recession for White-Collar Workers'	**3/7/2026 (National):** Anthropic researchers have released a study on AI's labor market impacts introducing a metric called "Observed Exposure." This measure compares what AI can theoretically do with its actual real-world usage. The report finds that while AI is currently used for only a fraction of tasks, its potential coverage is vast. Highly educated professionals (particularly in roles like programming, financial analysis, and customer service) are the group most vulnerable to job disruption. The report warns of a potential "white-collar" recession, as the entry-level job-finding rate for workers aged 22–25 in AI-exposed roles has already dropped ~14% since 2022, suggesting that AI is beginning to absorb entry-level job tasks rather than experienced staff. Read the full report here.	**Medium** – By automating entry-level job tasks, AI could have the potential create a long-term job talent gap and displace large numbers workers.
Data Centers as Targets	**3/6/2026 (Global):** Iranian drones have reportedly struck three Amazon Web Services data centers in the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain. These attacks caused structural damage and permanent server loss. This marks the first time commercial AI/cloud infrastructure has been targeted by military. The strikes affected millions of residents. AWS has since advised regional customers to shift critical workloads to hubs in the U.S. and Europe.	**Medium** – The attacks on data centers create massive environmental, economic, and safety risks.

FRESH COAST

Climate Solutions

THANK YOU

Let's make bold changes together

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