

August 23, 2026

Hello and thank you for reading and considering public comments regarding the Sabey data center in East Wenatchee. Our family moved to East Wenatchee 18 years ago and we have enjoyed the low cost, clean hydropower since then. Living in a community that generates electricity from hydropower made East Wenatchee very attractive to our family.

I am writing to express my strong concerns regarding the addition of more diesel generators to the Sabey data center in East Wenatchee. Our air quality has been very poor due to ongoing wildfire smoke this summer. This unfortunately has become increasingly common in the late summer and Fall here in North Central Washington. As far as I am concerned anything that further deteriorates the air quality is completely unacceptable, especially when we find ourselves in a hazardous air situation so often each year.

We live in a valley here in East Wenatchee. Smoke from wildfires gets trapped in our valley and persists for days if not weeks or months. Unfortunately even when the fires are out, we still have pollution concerns. In the winter it is not unusual for us to have inversions where pollution remains close to the ground and trapped in the valley. Sometimes, when we ski up on the mountain at Mission Ridge, it is possible to see a brown layer of pollution over our town in the winter. This may not be scientific but the obvious brown layer is pollution. I'm sure your scientists can follow the air quality index to get concrete data. During these occurrences, the air is often better quality on the mountain top and not in our town.

This past week, our air quality was so poor that my son who has asthma is essentially trapped inside our home. If he goes outside for any length of time into the smoke, his asthma is triggered and he develops respiratory symptoms. I do not have asthma and the wildfire smoke gives me headaches and sore throats even though I severely limit my time outside as well. I must oppose any situation here in our community that would further pollute our air. I cannot imagine why an ecologist wouldn't agree. The kids heading back to school will find their outdoor sports activities limited due to air quality this year.

Also, I have worked in health care here for several years. It is unbelievable how many people are diagnosed with new cancers here on a regular basis. I think evaluating public health is essential in assessing risk when looking at pollution and potential health effects on communities. How can ecology even believe they are submitting a correct assessment if they are not even considering the current health situation of our residents? How can they consider an accurate assessment based on data from the 1950's?

I was disappointed during the hearing that we were not allowed to ask a wide range of questions. The gentleman from Sabey was present and clearly could have answered my questions but did not. I felt it was unfortunate that there was just a narrow range of acceptable questions. I wanted to know if this data center would benefit us in East Wenatchee? Considering the significant cost, I think determining if there is any benefit is important. It is not clear there is a benefit to us.

I would like to know if these centers are being converted to generative AI data centers and if that is the reason for this growing and seemingly insatiable demand for power throughout the US. We all need to wake up to the climate catastrophe that is unfolding around us and realize what the results of our actions will be in 50 and 100 years. Yes, we can think beyond ourselves and consider future generations. I do believe this has become an ethical dilemma.

Considering the expected climate impacts of generative AI and how these agents or whatever we should refer to them as have gone rogue and violated laws, doesn't make me feel like adding pollution to our air is worth it. I do believe this explosion of data center growth reflects poor planning and severely lacks long-term insight. Do we have any idea what the impacts of all this will be in 20 years? With a situation like this we need to slow down the greed and consider the health and wellness of future generations.

All of that aside, it makes no sense for the department of ecology to allow more diesel generators in a town that is already overburdened with poor air quality. As a resident of East Wenatchee, I say no thank you.

Thank you for listening to the public on this very important matter,
Sincerely,

Melinda Johnson
826 Briarwood Terrace
East Wenatchee, WA 98802