

Public Comment Regarding Sabey Data Center Building E Expansion – East Wenatchee

I am submitting this comment in opposition to the proposed expansion of the Sabey Data Center in East Wenatchee and to request a more comprehensive evaluation of the long-term and cumulative impacts of continued data-center development in the Wenatchee Valley.

My concern is not based on opposition to technology, economic development, or responsible business investment. It is based on a basic principle: **large industrial developments that consume extraordinary amounts of public resources and impose environmental and infrastructure burdens should be required to demonstrate that their long-term benefits to the community outweigh their costs—and that those costs will not ultimately be transferred to local residents.**

Electricity and the Long-Term Interests of Local Ratepayers

Perhaps my greatest concern is the enormous electrical demand associated with data centers.

The Wenatchee Valley has benefited for generations from an extraordinary public asset: locally generated hydroelectric power. Affordable and reliable electricity is not simply another commodity in this community. It is one of the resources that makes this region livable and economically competitive for families, farms, small businesses, manufacturers, schools, and public institutions.

Before additional large electrical loads are approved or encouraged, the public deserves clear answers about their cumulative effect on our electrical system.

What happens when the combined demand of data centers approaches or exceeds the amount of inexpensive power historically available to local customers? Will additional electricity have to be purchased on regional wholesale markets? What transmission, substations, generation resources, or other infrastructure will eventually be necessary to serve these loads? Who pays for those investments?

Most importantly, can the public be assured—in enforceable terms, rather than projections or promises—that residential customers and existing local businesses will not experience higher rates in the future as a consequence of serving extremely large industrial loads?

These questions deserve analysis over decades, not merely the first few years of a project's operation.

I strongly believe that existing residents and businesses should have priority protection when it comes to the affordability and reliability of our publicly generated electricity. Any costs associated with serving unusually large electrical loads should be borne by those customers and not socialized across ordinary ratepayers.

Air Quality and Diesel Generator Emissions

I am also concerned about the proposed installation and operation of numerous large diesel emergency generators.

Even when generators are characterized as "emergency" equipment, they require testing and maintenance and may operate during outages or other qualifying conditions. Each individual period of operation may be limited, but the relevant question for the community is the **cumulative impact of emissions from this facility together with existing and future data centers and other industrial sources in the Wenatchee Valley.**

Our geography matters. The Wenatchee Valley can experience periods of stagnant air and severe air-quality problems, particularly during wildfire season and temperature inversions. Adding additional sources of nitrogen oxides, particulate matter, diesel exhaust, and other pollutants deserves careful scrutiny.

I ask Ecology to evaluate these emissions in the context of the air our community actually experiences—not simply whether this individual facility satisfies a regulatory threshold when considered largely in isolation.

Water Resources and Water Quality

I am additionally concerned about the direct and indirect effects of continued data-center development on water resources.

The public deserves clear information about exactly how much water this facility will consume under normal conditions and during periods of peak cooling demand; what source will supply that water; what chemicals, treatment processes, cooling systems, and wastewater streams will be involved; and what safeguards will prevent contamination of groundwater, surface water, and municipal systems.

If the facility uses little water because of its particular cooling technology, that should be clearly documented. If significant water is required, the public should know the maximum anticipated demand—not merely an annual average.

Our region faces hotter summers, drought risk, wildfire, agricultural water demands, population growth, and competing demands on infrastructure. Water availability and water quality should therefore be evaluated as long-term community resources rather than treated as secondary considerations.

Noise and Quality of Life

Noise is another legitimate concern that should not be minimized.

Data centers can contain substantial mechanical equipment, including cooling systems, fans, transformers, electrical infrastructure, and backup generators. Low-frequency or persistent mechanical noise can affect nearby residents differently than ordinary daytime commercial noise, particularly at night when background noise is lower.

I request that the responsible agencies require a comprehensive noise study that evaluates not only compliance at the property line but also potential impacts at nearby residences, including nighttime conditions, low-frequency noise, generator testing, simultaneous equipment operation, and cumulative noise from surrounding industrial development.

Compliance with a numerical noise limit does not necessarily mean that there will be no meaningful effect on people's ability to sleep, enjoy their homes, or use their property.

Cumulative Impacts Matter

My broader concern is that these projects cannot continue to be evaluated as though each exists in isolation.

One additional data center may appear manageable when its electricity demand, generators, water requirements, traffic, infrastructure, noise, and emissions are considered individually. But approving one project after another can fundamentally change the character and resource demands of an entire region.

At some point, the appropriate question is no longer simply, "**Does this particular project meet the minimum requirements for a permit?**"

The appropriate questions are:

How many data centers can this region sustainably support?

What are their combined impacts on electricity rates and electrical reliability?

What are their combined demands on water, transmission infrastructure, land, roads, and emergency services?

What are the cumulative air-quality and noise impacts?

How many permanent local jobs are created relative to the amount of electricity, land, and infrastructure dedicated to these facilities?

And who receives the economic benefit while carrying the long-term environmental and financial risks?

Those questions should be answered before our community becomes committed to a level of industrial development that may be difficult or impossible to reverse.

Requested Action

For these reasons, I respectfully ask Ecology and all other agencies with jurisdiction over this project to apply the highest level of scrutiny permitted by law before approving this expansion.

At minimum, I request:

1. A thorough cumulative-impact analysis considering existing, approved, proposed, and reasonably foreseeable data-center development in the Wenatchee Valley and surrounding region.
2. A transparent analysis of long-term electrical demand and the potential consequences for residential and small-business electricity rates, reliability, transmission capacity, and future power acquisition.
3. Enforceable protections ensuring that the infrastructure and power-supply costs attributable to exceptionally large electrical users are not shifted to ordinary ratepayers.
4. Detailed disclosure and evaluation of water consumption, wastewater, cooling systems, chemical use, spill risks, groundwater protections, and potential cumulative effects on regional water resources.
5. A comprehensive noise analysis addressing nighttime conditions, low-frequency sound, cooling equipment, transformers, generator testing and operation, and cumulative industrial noise.
6. Careful consideration of the cumulative health and air-quality consequences of diesel particulate matter, nitrogen oxides, fine particulate matter, and other emissions — particularly given our valley's geography and periods of already poor air quality.
7. Meaningful consideration of alternatives and mitigation measures that would reduce reliance on diesel generation and minimize impacts on surrounding residents.
8. Clear documentation of the tangible, long-term public benefits of this expansion relative to the public resources and infrastructure it will require.

I recognize that data centers are part of the modern economy. That fact, however, does not mean that every proposed expansion is automatically in the best interest of the community where it is located.

The Wenatchee Valley's inexpensive hydroelectric power, water resources, clean environment, and quality of life are valuable public and regional assets. They should not be treated as unlimited resources simply because they make this area attractive to very large industrial electricity users.

Economic development should improve the long-term lives of the people who already call this valley home. Residents should not be asked to accept increased environmental burdens, industrial noise, infrastructure demands, or the possibility of higher future utility costs so that private companies can take advantage of resources that generations of this community have built and protected.

Once large amounts of electrical capacity, land, water, and infrastructure are committed, those decisions can shape this valley for decades.

For that reason, I urge decision-makers to look beyond whether this individual application can technically satisfy minimum permitting requirements and instead consider the larger question of what continued data-center expansion means for the future of the Wenatchee Valley.

Until those cumulative impacts have been thoroughly evaluated and meaningful protections for local residents and ratepayers are in place, **I respectfully oppose approval of this expansion.**

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