

Nicole Waltermire

As a long-time resident of Southern New Mexico and the parent of a child who sees a breathing specialist, I vehemently oppose the Yucca Growth Infrastructure LLC Fuel Cell Air Quality Permit at Project Jupiter. My brother used to work for Bloom Energy, so at first, I was pleased to hear that Project Jupiter had withdrawn its original air permit application and had pivoted to a plan to use fuel cell technology to create and supply data center electricity. A deceptively cheerful public relations campaign has infiltrated our local media, promising that Project Jupiter will deliver clean water and green energy for our communities.

However, the reality is that this campaign is a shameful greenwashing scam. Fuel cells are not the solution we need when faced with data centers' insatiable appetites for electricity. The proposed fuel cells, which have never been deployed at the scale proposed, will use methane gas to generate electricity, releasing a projected 10 million metric tons of polluting carbon dioxide, or more than the PNM and EPE electric grids combined. This is simply unacceptable.

The Microgrids Oversight Act, sponsored this year by Southern New Mexico legislators, would have held private energy microgrids to the same standard as the public utilities under New Mexico's Energy Transition Act. Preventing private energy sources from bypassing state renewable energy standards is simply common sense. This piece of legislation might have passed had we had a longer legislative session this year, and we will be fighting hard for data center regulation in future legislative sessions.

Nothing less than a commitment to power these monstrous centers with truly green and renewable energy will suffice. I urge the Air Quality Bureau to reject this application for an air permit and protect our families and communities from polluting and exploitative data center projects like Project Jupiter.