

# Poll Findings About Data Centers

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## The AI Landscape

Americans are pessimistic about the impacts of AI and ambivalent about the industry.

- Around half of Americans (51%) say that they are pessimistic about the long-term impact of AI on society, compared to just one-quarter (25%) who are optimistic about it. [[YouGov](#), May 2026]
- ◆ More than two-thirds of Americans (71%) believe that the pace at which AI is advancing is “too fast.”
- Voters are more likely to have negative than positive attitudes about AI companies (43% favorable / 49% unfavorable) and about data center operators (36% favorable / 46% unfavorable). [[EPC + Partners](#), June 2026]

Voters have mixed feelings about data centers in general, and feel more negatively about them when they’re directly linked to AI.

- Voters are split roughly evenly in their attitudes about “data centers” (38% favorable / 42% unfavorable), while they feel 16 points more negatively than positively about “AI data centers” (36% favorable / 52% unfavorable). [[Groundwork Collaborative + Data for Progress](#), Mar. 2026]

## Data Center Awareness & Impressions

Most voters are hearing about the possibility of data centers in their area, though many are unaware that they already live near one.

- More than three in five voters (63%) have heard at least “a little” about AI data centers potentially being built in their community, including 20% who have heard “a lot” about the topic. [[EPC + Partners](#), June 2026]
- ◆ In ZIP codes with active data centers, only around one in four (26%) can correctly say that there is an AI data center in their community.

Americans oppose local data construction by wide margins.

- A July poll commissioned by POLITICO found that Americans are 17 points more likely to oppose than support the construction of a data center within three miles of where they live (24% support / 41% oppose), while an additional 35% are either neutral or unsure. [[POLITICO](#), July 2026]
- Other public polls have shown even more lopsided opposition to data centers, particularly when they don’t provide respondents with a “neutral” response option and/or when the question explicitly ties data centers to AI. For example, Gallup found in March that 71% of Americans oppose “the construction of a data center in [their area] to support artificial intelligence, or AI, technology in the U.S.” [[Gallup](#), Mar. 2026]

Impacts on electricity prices are Americans' greatest concern about data centers.

- When voters are asked to choose the three most concerning aspects of having a data center in their community, more voters express concern about data centers raising utility costs for consumers by using massive amounts of electricity (chosen by 38% as one of their top concerns) than any other drawback. [[Climate Power](#), Apr. 2026]
- ◆ The next most common concerns are that data centers strain local water supply, especially in drought-ridden areas (chosen by 27% as one of their top concerns), and that data centers increase electricity outages by using so much energy (25%).

Voters believe that data centers have mixed impacts for local communities, with some benefits for local economies and job growth but clear downsides for the cost of living and the environment.

- Voters are split roughly evenly on whether “communities that host AI data centers generally see more good than harm done by them” (34% agree / 37% disagree). [[EPC + Partners](#), June 2026]
- Voters are particularly likely to believe that a data center in their community would have negative impacts on their utility bills (18% mostly positive / 49% mostly negative), their cost of living (20% positive / 45% negative), the environment in their community (20% positive / 44% negative), and air quality in their community (18% positive / 39% negative). [[Climate Power](#), June 2026]
- ◆ Meanwhile, voters expect that a local data center would create more positive than negative impacts on short-term job creation in their community (53% positive / 17% negative), long-term job creation in their community (50% positive / 21% negative), and the economy in their community (41% positive / 28% negative).

## Data Centers & Clean Energy

Voters believe that energy demand from data centers is one of the major causes of rising electricity bills.

- The majority of Americans (53%) blame the construction of data centers “a lot” for the rise in electricity costs. [[Heatmap](#), May 2026]
- ◆ Americans place more blame on data centers than on any other potential cause that was included in the survey, including the oil and gas industry, the war with Iran, the Trump administration and Republicans, and the aging electrical grid.

Voters are much more supportive of data centers if they're powered by clean energy rather than fossil fuels.

- Majorities say that they would support a data center in their community if it were powered by new solar farms with battery storage (61% support / 23% oppose) or with new wind energy (61% support / 24% oppose). [\[Climate Power, Apr. 2026\]](#)
  - ◆ Meanwhile, around half of voters say that they would support a local data center if it were powered by new natural gas plants (48% support / 34% oppose) and only around three in ten would support a local data center powered by new on-site diesel and natural gas generators (31% support / 49% oppose) or new coal plants (31% support / 52% oppose).
- Nearly three-quarters of voters (74%) support requiring data centers to use clean energy sources like solar and wind to meet their electricity needs rather than fossil fuels. [\[EPC + Partners, June 2026\]](#)
  - ◆ This proposed clean energy requirement is supported by large majorities of Democrats (80%), independents (68%), and Republicans (69%).

## Policies & Regulation

Voters support virtually any policy proposal to regulate data centers, including a moratorium.

- Each of the proposals below are supported by at least seven in ten voters, including more than two-thirds of voters of every party affiliation and even majorities of AI optimists (those who believe that AI will mostly be good for society): [\[EPC + Partners, June 2026\]](#)
  - ◆ Establishing regulations that ensure data centers don't threaten or pollute water sources used by nearby communities - 82% support overall
  - ◆ Requiring data center companies to transparently publish information about their water and energy usage - 82%
  - ◆ Requiring data centers to reduce their energy use during power grid emergencies so that homes and businesses are not at risk of losing electricity - 80%
  - ◆ Establishing special rates for data centers to make sure their energy costs are not passed on to consumers in nearby communities and increase energy costs - 78%
  - ◆ Repealing or limiting tax incentives so that data centers don't strip funding away from local services like public schools - 77%
  - ◆ Requiring data centers to use clean energy sources like solar and wind to meet their electricity needs rather than fossil fuels - 74%
  - ◆ Temporarily pausing construction of new AI data centers to give the government time to assess their impacts - 71%

## Trends Over Time

Americans have turned against data centers since the start of the year.

- Polling by POLITICO found a 26-point shift in net support for local data centers between January and July. While Americans were nine points more likely to say that they would support than oppose a data center in their area in January (37% support / 28% oppose), they opposed the idea by a margin of 17 points in July (24% support / 41% oppose). [\[POLITICO, July 2026\]](#)

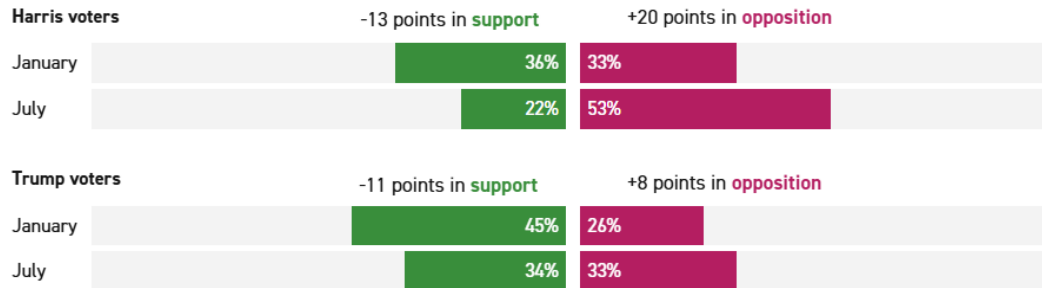
Data centers are politically polarizing, with Democratic-leaning voters more opposed to them than Republican-leaning voters, and have also created a rift within the Trump coalition.

- Voters who supported Kamala Harris in 2024 oppose local data centers by a 31-point margin (22% support / 53% oppose), while voters who supported Trump in 2024 are split (34% support / 33% oppose). [\[POLITICO, July 2026\]](#)
  - ◆ Both of these groups have shifted significantly in opposition to data centers since January. Harris voters were actually slightly more supportive than opposed to the idea of a local data center in January (36% support / 33% oppose), while Trump voters said that they would support a local data center by a 19-point margin (45% support / 26% oppose) in January.
- While self-described “MAGA” Trump voters are 14 points more likely to support than oppose a local data center (43% support / 29% oppose), non-MAGA Trump voters are 14 points more likely to *oppose* a local data center project than to support it (26% support / 40% oppose). [\[POLITICO, July 2026\]](#)

## Charts

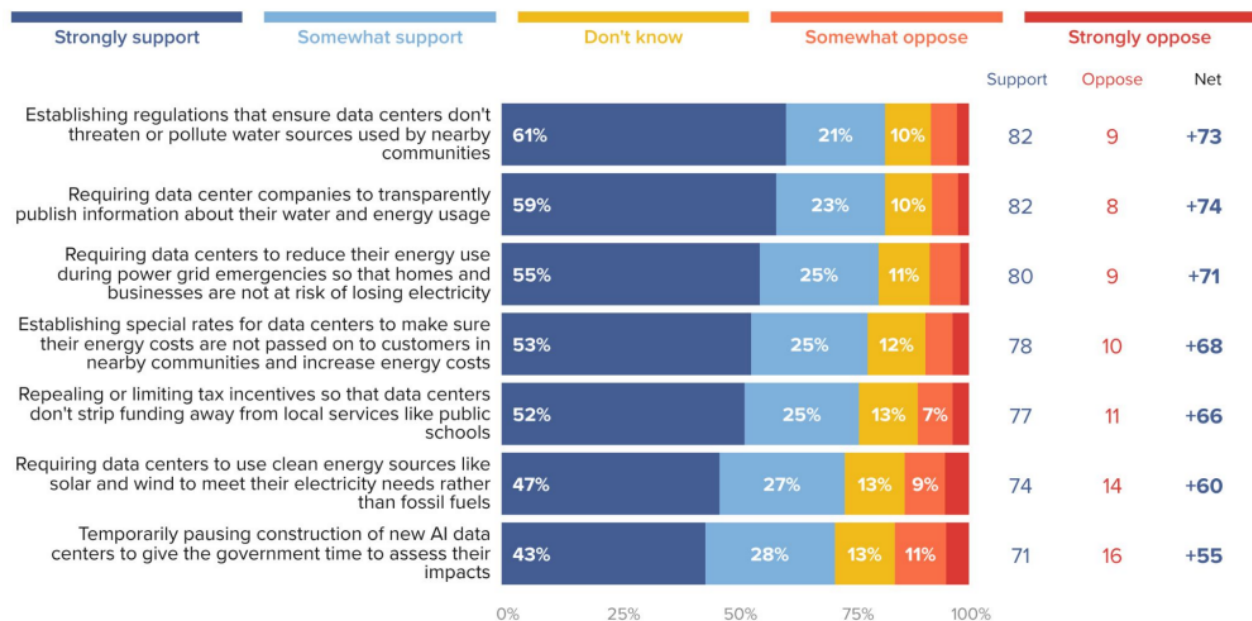
### Harris voters were split on data centers; now Trump voters are undecided

Share of American adults who support or oppose building a data center within three miles of where they live, by 2024 vote



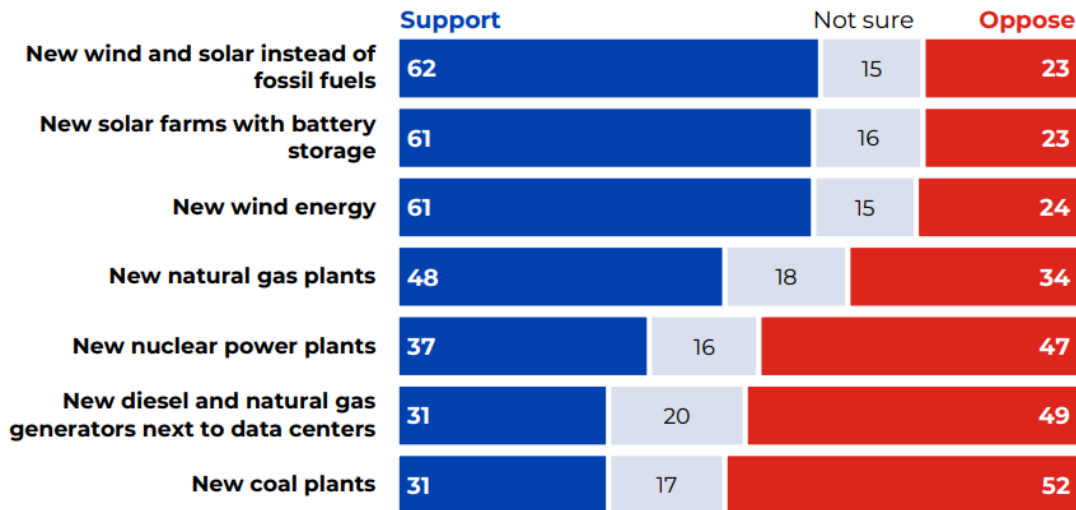
[POLITICO](#), July 2026

Below are some policies that state lawmakers could pass to address the impact of data centers on local communities.



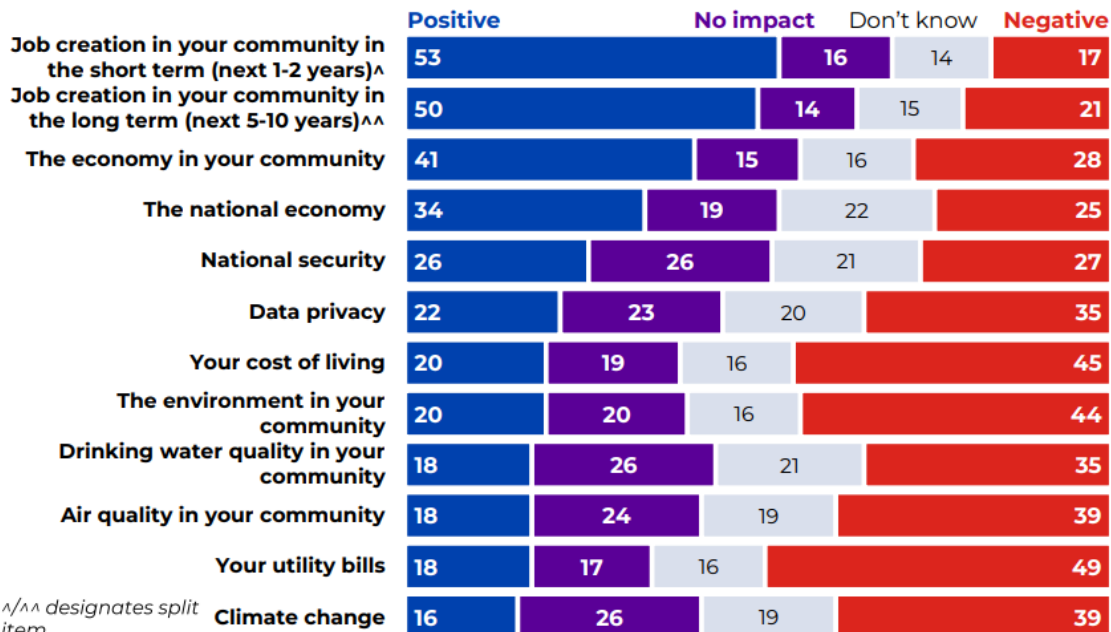
[EPC + Partners](#), June 2026

To what extent would you support or oppose a data center being built in your community if it was powered by each of the following energy sources?



[Climate Power](#), Apr. 2026

Indicate whether you think a local data center would positively impact, negatively impact, or not impact each one.



<sup>^</sup>/<sup>^^</sup> designates split item

[Climate Power](#), Apr. 2026

## Additional Resources

[\*EPC Community Poll Wave 5 Briefing: Data Centers & Trump Administration Environmental Actions\*](#)

EPC + Partners, July 2026

[\*A Growing Political Reckoning is Coming for Data Centers. POLITICO Poll Shows\*](#)  
POLITICO, July 2026

[\*Data Centers & Affordability: How the Landscape Has Shifted between April and July\*](#)  
Climate Power, July 2026

[\*AI and Data Center Survey\*](#)  
Climate Power, June 2026

[\*Americans Now Blame Data Centers for Their Rising Power Bills\*](#)  
Heatmap, May 2026

[\*Americans Oppose AI Data Centers in Their Area\*](#)  
Gallup, May 2026

[\*New Polling: As Trump's War Drives Up Energy Prices. Americans Call for Corporate Profiteering Crackdown\*](#)  
Groundwork Collaborative + Data for Progress, Mar. 2026

[\*Research on AI Data Centers, Costs, & Pollution\*](#)  
Climate Power + Blue Rose Research, Feb. 2026