

New details revealed for Meta's Beaver Dam data center

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Meta's new Beaver Dam data center could use up to 220 megawatts of power, according to newly unredacted portions of a proposed service contract with Alliant Energy.

That's less than other hyperscale data center campuses under construction in Wisconsin but well beyond the residential power needs of most of the state's cities.

For reference, Alliant's West Riverside Energy Center outside Beloit had an output of 730 megawatts when it began service in 2020, enough to power more than 550,000 homes.

For comparison, 220 megawatts could power over 165,000 homes, based on those same figures.

Madison has around 134,000 housing units, according to the 2024 American Community Survey's 5-year estimates; Beaver Dam had 7,831, according to the same data set.

Robert Orozco, an artificial intelligence entrepreneur and executive-in-residence at UW-Whitewater, wrote in a text message yesterday that the Beaver Dam data center's power demand would "dwarf most small cities in Wisconsin."

"The fact that they hid it means they already anticipated pushback," he wrote.

Still, the Beaver Dam facility would consume a fraction of the power needed by the state's largest data center projects.

The first phase of Microsoft's data center campus in Mount Pleasant is expected to use around 450 megawatts of power, while Vantage's Port Washington campus could use up to 3.5 gigawatts – or 3,500 megawatts – of power.

Alliant agreed in a [hearing last week](#) to unredact portions of its proposed service contract after environmental and consumer advocate groups [complained](#) about the

extent of the redactions to the utility's application.

Its application and proposed electric service agreement were posted on the PSC's online docket at 4 p.m. Friday.

Other newly available information include the length of the proposed service contract - 10 years - as well as provisions that would allow Alliant to recoup its infrastructure and service costs if the data center were to be canceled or use less power than anticipated, though specific figures associated with those provisions remain redacted.

Alliant spokesperson Cindy Tomlinson said the utility was committed to having large energy users like Meta pay for new infrastructure investments built to serve them and that this would keep costs lower for other ratepayers in the long term.

Citizens Utility Board Executive Director Tom Content said he "appreciated the transparency" the latest filing offered, given the considerable public interest in the case.

However, he said CUB would like to see more ratepayer protections in the agreement, like a stronger termination charge or a 15- or 20-year service contract to keep Meta on the hook for utility costs amid a volatile tech market.

Content noted facilities in other states have signed 15-year contracts for utility service.

PSC staff are reviewing the refiled application and electric service agreement, a spokesperson wrote in an email, after which regulators will either accept the new filings or call for more information to be made public.