

# Rep. Madison: Proposes “Pause to Protect” on data centers in Wisconsin

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*Bill would only allow data centers that meet strict environmental, labor and local control standards*

MADISON, Wis. – This morning, Rep. Darrin Madison (D-10) announced legislation that only allows for hyperscale data centers to operate in Wisconsin once they meet strict environmental, labor, and local control standards. In practice, this legislation would “pause” the development of new data centers until substantial changes are made to Wisconsin state law.

The bill (LRB-6377) proposes the following evidence-based requirements for hyperscale data centers to operate in Wisconsin:

1. The establishment of a statewide data center planning authority,
2. A prohibition on shifting data center energy and water costs to residential customers,
3. A prohibition on shifting data center energy infrastructure costs to residential customers,
4. The creation of a land and community recovery funding mechanism,
5. The elimination of state and local financial subsidies,
6. Mandatory data center public reporting of water and electricity usage,
7. The creation of data center specific safeguards concerning air, water, and noise pollution to protect the environment and people’s health,
8. A requirement that 100 percent of energy derived for data centers must be provided for by newly built, directly accessible renewable energy,
9. A requirement that the contractor constructing the newly built, directly

accessible renewable energy projects required for purposes of the bill pay either a prevailing wage or collectively bargained wages,

10. A requirement that the contractor constructing any data center pay either a prevailing wage or collectively bargained wages,
11. The restoration of the Public Service Commission's integrated resource planning authority,
12. A prohibition on nondisclosure agreements between data centers, data center developers, utilities, and local government officials,
13. A requirement that data centers must receive prior approval by referendum of the electors of the municipality where the data center is to be located,
14. The creation of an enforcement and penalty structure specific to data centers.

**Rep. Darrin Madison (D-10) released the following statement:**

“Right now, data centers are being presented as inevitable — as the next wave of economic development that we simply have to accept and give a blank check to. I disagree with that. Because in other states, we’ve seen what happens when guardrails aren’t in place. Energy demand skyrockets. Utility bills rise. Water systems are strained. And communities are left dealing with the consequences of deals they never had a real say in.

Today, we are excited to introduce the Pause to Protect Act, which will not allow hyperscale data centers to move forward in Wisconsin until the state has robust safeguards in place. Today, we’re saying let’s pause on data centers to protect our economy, public health, and our environment for this generation and future generations.

Data centers are part of our modern economy. Companies like Microsoft have made commitments around clean energy and union jobs. That’s important and appreciated.

But promises are not protections. If data centers are going to operate in Wisconsin, they must be true assets to the communities that host them. That means prevailing wage or union labor for construction. That means running on newly built, 100% renewable energy. That means no shifting costs onto residential ratepayers. That means real transparency and no backroom deals hidden behind NDAs.

And that means giving communities the power to approve these projects through a referendum vote. This is about accountability.

Let me be clear: this legislation is not anti-tech innovation. We can welcome innovation without sacrificing working families, clean water, or democratic voice. Technology moves fast. But democracy should move deliberately. And in Wisconsin, corporations don't get to decide the future alone — the people do.”