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Government & Regulations

Proposed constitutional amendment seeks to ban data center construction in Ohio



Amazon Web Services' data center campus in Dublin.

AMAZON WEB SERVICES



By [Zachary Jarrell](#) – Staff reporter, Columbus Business First
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A proposed constitutional amendment aims to stop data center construction in the state of Ohio, particularly in the Columbus region [where the facilities are being built at a rapid pace](#).

The Ohio Attorney General's Office last week certified the petition title and summary of an initiative called "Prohibition of Construction of a Data Center," which would add a section to Article II of the Ohio Constitution.

The petition, submitted on March 16 by five Southwest Ohio residents, defines a data center as being used primarily or exclusively for digital information services with an aggregate monthly demand or peak load of more than 25 megawatts.

Most large data centers, especially those operated by big tech companies such as [Meta](#) and [Amazon Web Services](#), easily exceed that electricity demand.

Meta confirmed last year that its Central Ohio data center campus is planned to support its gigawatt-scale supercluster, which it said would be the first of its kind in the world. One gigawatt is 1,000 megawatts.

Austin Baurichter, an attorney who is one of the leaders of the effort, said the group's primary concern is "how many intersecting concerns these data centers raise."

He said the "deleterious" short- and long-term impacts include environmental concerns and an increased risk of energy consumption overload.

"All my logic says that it will only get more tense, stressed, squeezed and uncertain," he said in an email to *Columbus Business First*. "In short, data centers are both bad and meta-bad."

He said he hopes the push gives Ohioans "an opportunity and a clear channel to use their voices."

“People need to have a direct voice in their government and their future. Period,” Baurichter said.

Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost, in a letter to the petitioners, said his certification “should not be construed as an affirmation of the enforceability and constitutionality of the proposed amendment.”

Baurichter said the group needs to collect 413,000 signatures by July 1.

As Central Ohio has solidified itself as a top data center market in the country, opposition to the facilities has grown.

At least four local governments across the region – [Jerome Township](#), [Washington Township](#), [South Bloomfield](#) and [Ashville](#) – have enacted temporary moratoriums on data center development.

West Jefferson also [passed a resolution opposing large-scale data center facilities](#).

THE LIST

Central Ohio Data Centers

Central Ohio computer rooms, square feet

Rank	Prior Rank	Business name
1	1	Cologix Johnstown Campus
2	2	5C Data Centers
3	3	Hackman Capital Partners
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