

March 27, 2026

Gas Data Centers are a Losing Bet: Rally for PA Residents  
Community Rally and Press Conference, 7:30—8:30 a.m. (EDT)  
Outside the PA Data Center & Energy Innovation Summit at Rivers Casino  
Casino Drive and Sproat Way, Pittsburgh, PA

**Remarks by Alison L. Steele regarding health and environmental impacts of data centers**

Good morning. My name is Alison Steele, and I am the executive director of the Environmental Health Project, a nonpartisan, nonprofit, public health organization headquartered in Pittsburgh. At EHP we believe that people should have the opportunity to be healthy wherever they live – and should have a say in the types of industrial development that take place in their communities.

With the rapid rise of proposed data center projects in our region, we are here today to share legitimate concerns about negative health and environmental impacts posed by these facilities, as well as the lack of meaningful involvement of the communities that are slated to host them.

For more than a decade, EHP has worked with frontline residents facing health risks from shale gas development: anywhere companies drill and frack for gas, transport it through pipelines and compressor stations, burn it to generate electricity, and dispose of related waste products. Residents willing to speak out have described a range of adverse health outcomes, and there are dozens of epidemiologic studies and hundreds more investigations to back up what they are saying.

The scientific community recognizes increased incidence of respiratory, cardiovascular, neurological, and reproductive problems and cancers near shale gas development. And gas-fired data centers represent shale gas development. Many of these hyper-scale data centers boasting about bringing their own energy will be “bringing” gas: more fracking, more pipelines, and a gas-fired power plant on site, representing the health risks I just listed plus more from noise and light pollution, as well as impacts on local water resources and more volatile weather in a changing climate.

We have yet to see meaningful inclusion of these risks in any major discussions about the data center buildout in our region. Gas-fired, hyperscale data centers pose very real risks to public health. Public health risks represent negative economic impacts – in the form of missed days of work, ER visits, medical costs, and moving out of the region to escape pollution. Those factors should all be considered in any conversation about data centers and their impacts on the

economy – as should the perspectives of residents near a proposed facility, before it is approved.

Fifteen years ago and more, we saw assurances of economic benefits and safety for communities hosting a booming technology—fracking—with very little opportunity to provide input or push back against unwanted development. Hindsight is 20/20, and we can now see the results: adverse health outcomes and worse economic outcomes in many of those counties. We cannot follow the same pattern of behavior now while claiming to prioritize the health and economic wellbeing of communities that frequently don't have the ability to get information about a proposed site or have their concerns addressed in the planning process.

To the extent that data center development moves forward in our region, there must be meaningful engagement of potential host communities, and they must be allowed meaningful input as to whether a data center is built within their borders, how it is powered, and how their residents and natural resources will be protected.

Thank you.

Alison L. Steele, Executive Director  
Environmental Health Project

**About the Environmental Health Project**

The [Environmental Health Project](#) (EHP) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit public health organization that defends public health in the face of shale gas development. EHP provides frontline communities with timely monitoring, interpretation, and guidance while engaging diverse stakeholders: health professionals, researchers, community organizers, policy makers, and others.