

CAC 1/13/26 Comment by Ann Vинатieri

Good afternoon,

Thank you for the chance provided to comment. Thank you to the speakers on today's agenda; I appreciate your shared time and insights.

1) Amazon's discharge of warm cooling water into the Susquehanna River at the Susquehanna Steam Electric Station (Talen Nuclear facility in Salem Township, Luzerne County) poses a threat to aquatic life and the drinking water of downstream communities. These discharges may contain PFAS "forever chemicals," and the high temperatures can severely stress aquatic ecosystems, particularly at spawning times. Communities downstream pull their drinking water from the Susquehanna River, and Amazon's discharge of extremely warm, potentially PFAS-contaminated cooling water poses a direct threat to public health and aquatic life. Mounting evidence also points to an increased likelihood of higher levels of fungal and bacterial growth in cooling systems of hyper scale data centers. Even if there are instances of treatment, it is not a guarantee that the water will be totally safe upon discharge. As stated by SRBC Director DeHoff in several recent statements, hyper scale data centers are estimated to pull close to 5 million gallons of water daily for certain cooling systems. With increasing water draw requests to the SRBC, as well as municipal water authorities across the state, this should be of great concern to all state and federal regulatory boards and commissions.

2) I also have concerns about the ability of citizens to be able to request, review and have appropriate time for requesting public Q&A's and/public hearings. With a large up tick in DEP permit submissions by developers in the data center industry, plus the related energy sector, the need for careful review by both agency officials and the public has never been more critical. In my recent personal experience, there seems to be an increasing level of difficulty in obtaining timely answers from the DEP. Certainly, the sheer volume of requests and the comparative staffing likely factors into this slowing of the process. I am concerned about the possibility of corporate/regulatory capture that could arise in a situation like this, with such large corporate developers in the mix. If citizens are unable to obtain permit reviews or RTK requests within the standard 30 day time, then what recourse do they have? I feel it would behoove the CAC to look further into this matter and work to create a process where these assurances and communication with the public can happen more efficiently and transparently. I sincerely appreciate the efforts of the dedicated members of DEP staff that work on processing so many requests, and hope that going forward this will only continue to be enhanced.

Thank you for your time and attention to these matters.