

**Irvin, Ian**

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**From:** Sherri Homanko [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, January 12, 2026 9:15 AM  
**To:** Irvin, Ian  
**Subject:** [External] DEP Citizens Advisory Committee Testimony: Water Resources and Data Centers in PA

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1/12/2026  
Sherri Homanko

My name is Sherri Homanko, and I live in Hazle Township, Luzerne County. I am here today as a concerned citizen to strongly oppose the approval of NPDES permits that would allow Amazon or any data center to discharge cooling water into the Susquehanna River.

Promotional materials often emphasize potential jobs and economic investment. However, evidence from across the country shows that data centers create very few permanent jobs, while leaving long-term environmental and public health consequences that communities must bear long after the promises fade.

We cannot ignore the real, documented impacts experienced elsewhere. In Morrow County, Oregon, a major agricultural region, Amazon data centers have been linked to a growing water crisis. These facilities withdraw millions of gallons of groundwater to cool servers and then return water that is more highly concentrated with contaminants. This is not necessarily due to intentional pollution, but because the cooling and evaporation process increases concentrations of existing pollutants, including nitrates. As a result, nitrate levels in local wells have risen far above safe drinking standards, contaminating household water supplies.

Residents have been forced to rely on bottled water trucked in by the state, and serious health concerns have emerged. Local doctors, farmers, and former public officials have reported nitrate concentrations sometimes exceeding six times the legal limit, along with troubling increases in miscarriages and cancer diagnoses. Families are no longer safe drinking water from their own taps.

While legacy agricultural pollution plays a role, experts and local leaders have made clear that data center water withdrawals and discharges have accelerated the problem, overwhelming local resources and placing additional strain on public health systems. Here in Luzerne County, the Susquehanna River is the lifeblood of our region—supporting drinking water supplies, recreation, agriculture, and ecosystems far beyond our municipal borders.

Approving permits that allow ongoing industrial discharge without a full, independent evaluation of cumulative impacts risks repeating the same mistakes seen in Oregon—this time in our river and our aquifers.

We deserve a transparent, science-based review before any permit approval. That includes enforceable limits on water withdrawals, strict discharge standards, and a comprehensive environmental impact study that considers long-term and downstream effects.

Citizens should not be forced to pay the price for poor decision-making that puts corporate profit over people—especially when that price includes preventable illness, pregnancy loss, and financial devastation from medical costs including cancer treatment.

I urge the DEP to deny these permits. Our water, our health, and our future are not expendable.

Sources:

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