



LAKE 100

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A Lake 100 Public Statement

TOPIC

CUP for Data Centers

STATEMENT BY

Lake 100 &
Executive Board

PUBLIC STATEMENT

Supporting Data Center Regulations Is NOT Supporting Data Centers

Protecting Lake County's future starts with understanding the facts. - There has been considerable confusion surrounding Lake 100's support for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) process for data centers. Unfortunately, misleading and partial information surrounding this issue distributed by one of Lake County's elected officials has contributed to unnecessary anger and division amongst the community. This issue deserves more than political noise and posturing. It deserves thoughtful consideration of how we protect our community.

Here's What Residents Should Know

Florida already has an established data center industry, with industry estimates identifying more than 100 facilities statewide. Most of them are small to medium sized facilities that have historically operated under existing commercial and industrial zoning rules. Most of these centers were developed "by right" under land use designations for C-3 or industrial.

In 2026, Florida passed **SB 484 (Chapter 2026-65)**, creating additional safeguards for large-scale data centers with electrical loads of 50 megawatts or more only. These include water resource protections, permitting requirements, and safeguards against shifting certain electrical infrastructure costs to other ratepayers. There are currently no operating data centers over 50 megawatts in Florida. The legislation also empowers local jurisdictions to implement additional protections through their own land use regulations.

This means... smaller and medium-sized facilities do not trigger those additional legal requirements. They remain subject to existing laws that are antiquated due to a quickly evolving industry. **The current laws do not address every concern specific to data centers.**

What Happens When the Moratorium Ends?

Lake County's data center moratorium is temporary, as intended and sometimes with expiration dates regulated by the state. When it expires, if no CUP process or additional regulations have been adopted, small and medium-sized data centers could potentially develop by right under existing C-3 and LM zoning classifications, provided they meet all applicable code requirements.

In simple terms, *by right* means a development that meets existing zoning and code requirements may proceed without a separate discretionary public approval hearing or additional restrictions. That could mean a data center moves forward without additional safeguards specifically designed for its water consumption, electrical demands, environmental impacts, or surrounding neighborhoods.

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Why a Conditional Use Permit?

Data centers are expanding rapidly, while the technology, research, and infrastructure demands surrounding them continue to evolve.

A Conditional Use Permit provides a flexible legal framework that allows local governments to update regulatory standards as new information and technology become available, through the appropriate legal adoption process. Jurisdictions in Florida and throughout the country have adopted conditional or special use permitting requirements to provide additional oversight of data centers. Other Florida communities with temporary moratoriums will soon face the same question: What protections will be in place when their moratoriums expire?

A properly written CUP ordinance will require every commercial data center covered by its provisions to undergo individual review, meet specific regulatory standards, and come before the community at a public hearing. It provides an opportunity for additional oversight instead of relying solely on existing zoning classifications.

What Does Lake County's Proposed CUP Include?

Lake County's proposed data center ordinance would establish a dedicated regulatory framework by updating its zoning classifications and permitted-use rules and creating **Section 3.14.00, specifically addressing data centers.**

The proposed framework addresses:

- **Electrical Demand & Infrastructure:** Capacity and potential impacts on existing systems.
- **Water Resources:** Water requirements and potential impacts on local resources.
- **Noise:** Noise generated by equipment and operations.
- **Electromagnetic Leakage:** Potential electromagnetic emissions.
- **Vibration Impact:** Effects of equipment and facility operations.
- **Land Use Compatibility:** Compatibility with surrounding properties.
- **Thermal Impact:** Heat generated by facility operations.
- **Fire Protection:** Fire prevention and protection requirements.
- **Emergency Response:** Emergency preparedness and response capabilities.
- **Transportation:** Impacts on surrounding roads and transportation infrastructure.
- **Decommissioning Plan:** Requirements for addressing the facility if or when operations permanently cease.

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These are the types of issues that deserve review before a project even makes it to public hearing. The proposed ordinance and related discussion can be found here:

[Lake County Data Center Ordinance – Public Meeting Materials](#) (beginning at 1:19:00).

The purpose of a CUP is not to make data center development easier. It is to ensure Lake County has meaningful oversight before decisions are made.

Our Position

Lake 100 understands the skepticism surrounding data centers. We share the concerns about protecting Lake County's water, infrastructure, natural resources, and quality of life.

But skepticism and fear alone do not create legal protection. Enforceable regulations do. Our support for the Conditional Use Permit process is not an endorsement of data center development. It is support for local oversight, responsible planning, and legally defensible safeguards.

The question is not whether Lake 100 supports data centers. The question is whether we have appropriate regulations in place if an application comes forward.

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