

AI Data Center Pollution Can Make People Sick.

Instead of protecting Americans' health, the EPA is making the health risks worse.



The Science Is Already Clear on Health Risks

Powering AI takes a lot of electricity. Getting that electricity from coal and gas plants, and diesel generators, releases pollution linked to **asthma, heart and lung disease, and early death**.

A 2026 academic study modeled the health toll of data-center pollution. Under a high-growth scenario, the annual health costs could rise to **\$20.9B** by 2028.

And that study doesn't even factor in the federal rollbacks EPN's new report documents.

Why Are the Health Risks Growing?

The EPA is supposed to protect us. Instead, former officials and health experts say it and other federal agencies are taking 30+ actions that increase pollution related health risks in three ways:

- **Gutting pollution safeguards.** Keeping fossil-fueled power online longer while weakening protections against soot, mercury, air toxics, interstate smog, oil and gas pollution, coal wastewater, and coal ash.
- **Side-stepping permitting and public review.** Letting projects move forward before pollution requirements are resolved, and cutting the public's chance to learn about and weigh in on them.
- **Reducing monitoring and enforcement.** Cutting monitoring and reporting requirements for some power sources and putting new constraints on enforcement staff.

Americans Are Left With Less Information, Less Say, and Less Recourse

In the face of unprecedented growth, federal actions are also weakening disclosure and public-participation rules, telling enforcement staff to go easy on energy cases, and trying to make it harder for citizens to sue polluters when regulators don't act.

Where Does the Pollution Come From?

- **Power plants, even far away.** More than 90% of the modeled health impacts come from power plants that supply data centers – not from generators at the data centers themselves
- **Diesel generators.** Some large data centers rely on fleets of diesel generators with combined capacity comparable to a power plant, sometimes near homes and schools.
- **Old coal plants** that are staying open longer to meet demand.
- **New gas plants.** 74+ gas plants are proposed just for data centers.

We shouldn't have to pay for the AI boom with our health.

We're calling for a Data Center Health Protection Pledge.

Read the full report, *The Hidden Health Costs of AI Data Centers*, at **SaferNotSicker.org**.

Sources: EPN "The Hidden Health Costs of AI Data Centers."

