

MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT
S9144/A10141

Date: May 2026

Re: A proposed act which “imposes a moratorium on the issuance of permits for new data centers; requires public service commission to issue and order or order to minimize the impact of new data centers on electricity and gas rates for residential, commercial, and industrial users.”

For decades the League of Women Voters has held positions urging vigilance in protecting air and water quality. “The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that natural resources should be managed as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems. Resources should be conserved and protected to assure their future availability. Pollution of these resources should be controlled in order to preserve the physical, chemical and biological integrity of ecosystems and to protect public health.”

To this end, The League of Women Voters of NYS supports passage by the State Legislature of S9144/A10141 which is currently under consideration in the respective environmental committees. While New York already hosts data centers, it has been well documented that the escalating prominence of artificial intelligence in the IT mix exponentially increases the amount of energy and water consumed to facilitate operations than data centers New York has previously hosted. Further, the energy and water needed for these commercial operations is derived from the same finite energy supply and water resources needed by human beings and wildlife to survive.

The heavy-handed push to proliferate the number of data centers throughout New York to support artificial intelligence, without properly assessing the impacts, conjures up a déjà vu experience for New Yorkers who lived through the multiyear push fifteen-plus years ago from commercial interests to permit high volume hydraulic fracturing in our state. On a more recent note, similar issues apply here as did with the push in 2022 for consolidated operations that use proof-of-work authentication methods to validate blockchain transactions. How New York permits use of its finite land in the context of the actual and potential cumulative impacts from all relevant factors makes this legislation unequivocally critical.

Failure to act deliberatively will further threaten achievement of the goals of the 2019 Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA). Common sense dictates that unexamined decisions to advance technology while ignoring science will not address the urgent action required for our climate emergency.

Data centers supporting AI present potentially serious adverse environmental consequences including significant use of electrical energy that is instead needed to power New York State's electrification goals under the CLCPA, generation of substantial amounts of greenhouse gas emissions from production and use of natural gas, use of great volumes of water which is returned to its original source much hotter and thereby affecting fishing, agriculture and the wine industry, frequent replacement of supercomputers generating significant amounts of e-waste, and noise from fans running 24/7 that affects neighbors' health and quality of life.

Needed here is the time to perform a thorough environmental and economic impact review of the potential risk factors associated with the further permitting of data centers throughout our state to reach a sober determination of how best to move forward – to co-habit – with this hungry technology, without

making New York unaffordable or uninhabitable for human beings and wildlife and otherwise undermining property use, property value and New York's tax base.

Accordingly, it is essential for New York to embrace the moratorium on issuing new permits for data centers prescribed by this bill to give the Department of Environmental Conservation and the Public Service Commission time to study and issue appropriate reports, develop policies and implement regulations to minimize adverse impacts from further data center development.

The League therefore urges passage of S9144/A10141 which prescribes this essential deliberation.