

To: Interested Parties

From: CCAN Action Fund and Global Strategy Group

Date: January 2026

Re: New Polling on Virginians' Views of Data Centers and Rising Energy Costs

A recent survey conducted by Global Strategy Group in partnership with the CCAN Action Fund that voters in Virginia believe data centers are a key driver of rising electricity costs and that the negative impact on energy prices and the environment of data centers outweigh their benefits. At the same time, voters hold lawmakers more responsible for the problem than utility or tech companies. These views drive strong demand for legislative action, with voters receptive to a wide range of policies, such as making data centers pay their fair share to prevent cost shifting and requiring data centers to fund renewable energy to meet their own power needs.

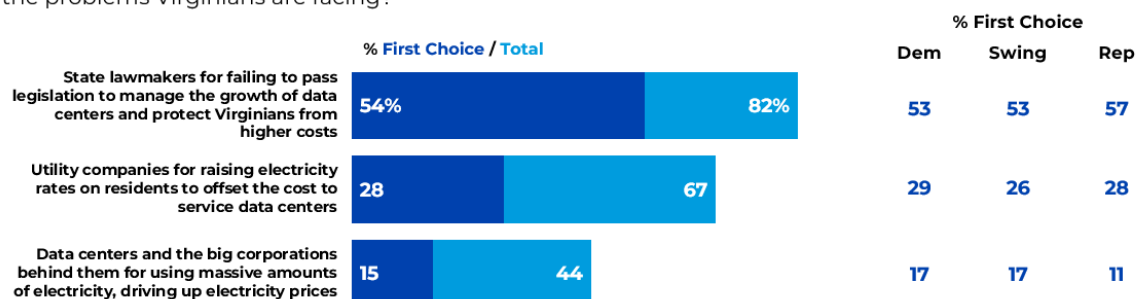
KEY FINDINGS

Voters see data centers as a leading driver of rising energy bills in Virginia. Across the electorate, voters largely associate data centers with rising electricity costs. In fact, even prior to receiving detailed information on the topic, nearly three-quarters of voters *personally blame data centers for rising electricity costs* in Virginia (73%), with nearly one-third blaming data centers “a lot” (29%).

- **Importantly, rising electricity bills and energy costs for families are also voters' top concern when it comes to data centers overall.** An overwhelming majority of voters say they are concerned about rising electricity bills and energy costs for families (94%), with a majority *extremely* concerned (54%). This concern cuts across partisanship, including Democrats (66% extremely concerned), Republicans (53%), and *soft-partisan “swing” voters (45%). **Note: soft-partisan swing voters are those who identify as independents including those who may lean toward a party but do identify with either.*

Voters across partisanship hold state lawmakers most responsible for failing to manage the growth of data centers, not utilities or the data center companies themselves. A majority of voters say state legislators bear the most responsibility for electricity cost problems, far ahead of utility companies or the data center companies themselves. This is true for Democrats, Republicans, and swing voters:

Thinking specifically about electricity costs and the electric grid in Virginia, who do you think is most responsible for the problems Virginians are facing?



Beyond costs, voters are concerned about state tax breaks for data centers. More than eight in ten voters are concerned that *big corporations are receiving special tax breaks and special treatment from the commonwealth to build new data centers* (82% concerned), including nearly a majority of voters who are “extremely” concerned by this (45%).

Voters overwhelmingly want state lawmakers to take action – citing tax breaks, higher costs, and environmental protections in their sense of urgency. Nearly nine in ten voters believe it is important for Virginian’s state lawmakers to take action to manage the impacts of data centers (89% important), with a large majority saying this is “very” or “extremely” important (65%). Messages highlighting tax breaks given to big corporations (51% extremely convincing) and higher electricity costs (45% extremely convincing) are among the top reasons for why voters want lawmakers to take action – though nearly as many cite environmental reasons, particularly the impact data centers have on Virginia’s water quality and availability (42% extremely convincing).

- **Critically, this priority translates directly into vote choice.** Voters say they would be *much* more likely to support a lawmaker who takes action on data centers, led by policies that make *data centers pay their fair share for electricity and infrastructure costs instead of shifting those costs to others* (71% much more likely), while a majority also say they would be *much* more likely to vote for a lawmaker who supports *requiring data centers to directly fund expanding renewable energy in Virginia to cover their own energy needs without compromising our climate goals* (51%).

In a simulated debate, majorities of voters side with arguments that higher energy costs and pollution from data centers outweigh the benefits. When asked to choose between competing statements about the impact of data centers, nearly seven in ten voters agree that data centers do not provide lasting economic benefits and that lawmakers should do more to limit their growth (68%).

Which of the following statements do you agree with more, even if neither is exactly right?

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| 68% | <i>Data centers don't provide lasting economic benefits. Most of the jobs disappear after the facility is built, but higher costs and more pollution hurt Virginians long-term. Lawmakers should do more to limit data centers.</i> |
| 30% | <i>Data centers support about 74,000 jobs and add more than \$9 billion to Virginia's economy each year. Given their economic benefits, lawmakers should continue supporting data center growth.</i> |

ABOUT THE RESEARCH: Global Strategy Group conducted a phone and text-to-web survey of 800 likely 2026 general election voters in Virginia between December 4 – 7, 2025. The margin of error at the 95% confidence level is +/- 3.5%. The margin of error on sub-samples is greater.