

# DATA CENTERS IN WISCONSIN: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

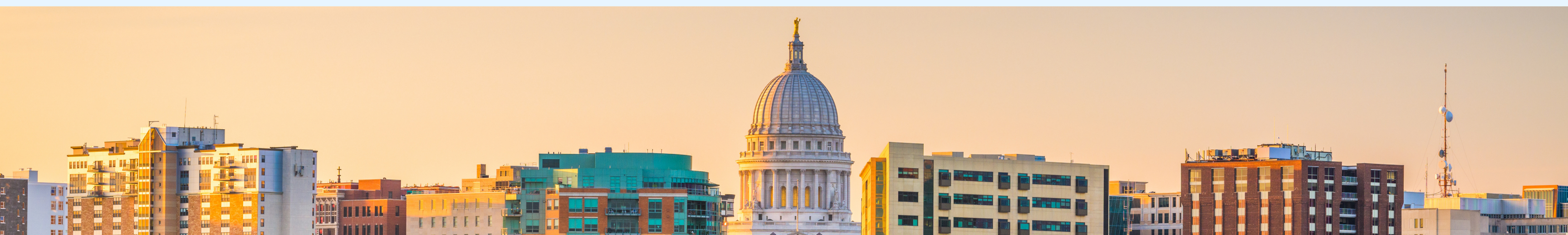
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Recently, data center operations and proposed projects have received a significant amount of attention from Wisconsin policymakers and pundits. As former Wisconsin Tech Council President Tom Still notes, “finding the kinds of people who can work in these data centers is not as much of a challenge as it might be in other places, because there are computer science schools and tech colleges and other places that can help fill those jobs.”

## PROPOSED AND PASSED RESTRICTIONS ON DATA CENTERS

- \* In January 2026, the City of Madison officially approved a temporary 12-month moratorium on issuing zoning approvals for new principal-use data centers larger than 10,000 square feet. City leaders enacted the pause to prevent sudden project proposals while municipal planning agencies and the newly created Dane County Advisory Committee complete research to establish strict permanent land-use and environmental standards. Following Madison’s lead, the city of Superior passed its own one-year data center moratorium in June 2026.
- \* State lawmakers introduced Assembly Bill 840, an onerous proposal that prohibits the construction or operation of any new data center unless its cooling infrastructure is entirely contained within a closed-loop system that continually recycles a fixed volume of water. The bill also mandates that the Public Service Commission prohibit public utilities from allocating any data center-related electrical infrastructure extension costs onto ordinary ratepaying utility customers.
- \* Data centers have become a key issue in the 2026 Wisconsin gubernatorial race. State Rep. Francesca Hong (D) has stated, “If a data center wants to operate in Wisconsin, it should be powered entirely with renewables. ... now Wisconsin has relatively loose and unfortunately weak regulatory laws when it comes to both enforcement and accountability. And so if we do not have this moratorium, we are at risk of having companies being able to build at scale with speed without accountability.” Lieutenant Governor Sara Rodriguez (D) stated, “they have got to pay enhanced energy rates. ... not just the energy that they’re using, but [also] if they need to pay for the maintenance on the grid.”



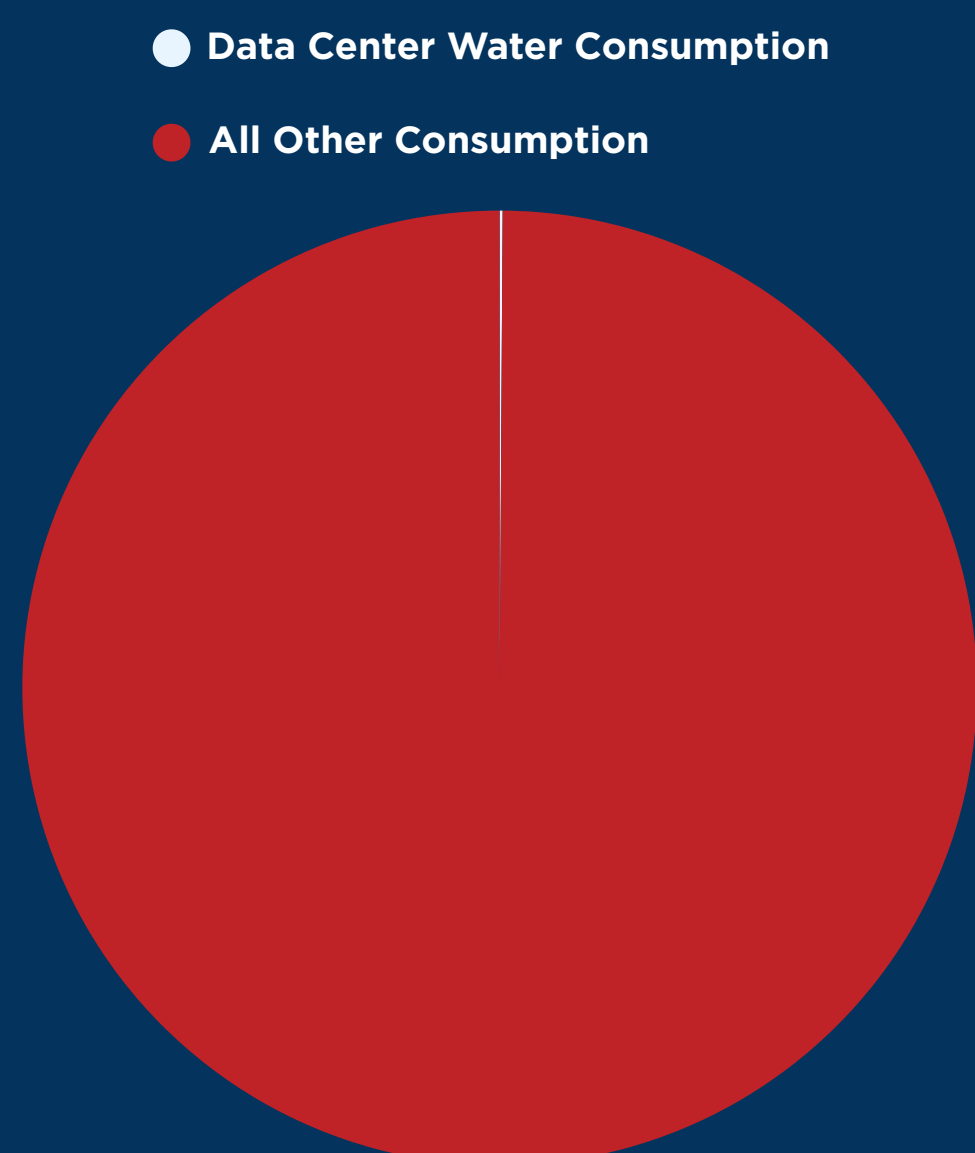
## DATA CENTER DANGERS SIGNIFICANTLY OVERSTATED

Advocates of bans or restrictions often cite supposedly excessive water or electricity consumption by new data center operations. For example, environmental groups such as Clean Wisconsin have claimed that data centers use an inordinate amount of natural resources. This is simply not supported by the evidence.

# DATA CENTER MYTH V. REALITY



## WISCONSIN WATER USAGE, 2025



### MYTH:

Data centers are using up a significant percentage of water.

### REALITY:

In Wisconsin, data centers accounted for **0.1 percent** of all water consumption in 2025.

Brookings Institution data center water use estimates; Baxtel data center count; U.S. Geological Survey state-level aggregate water consumption figures.

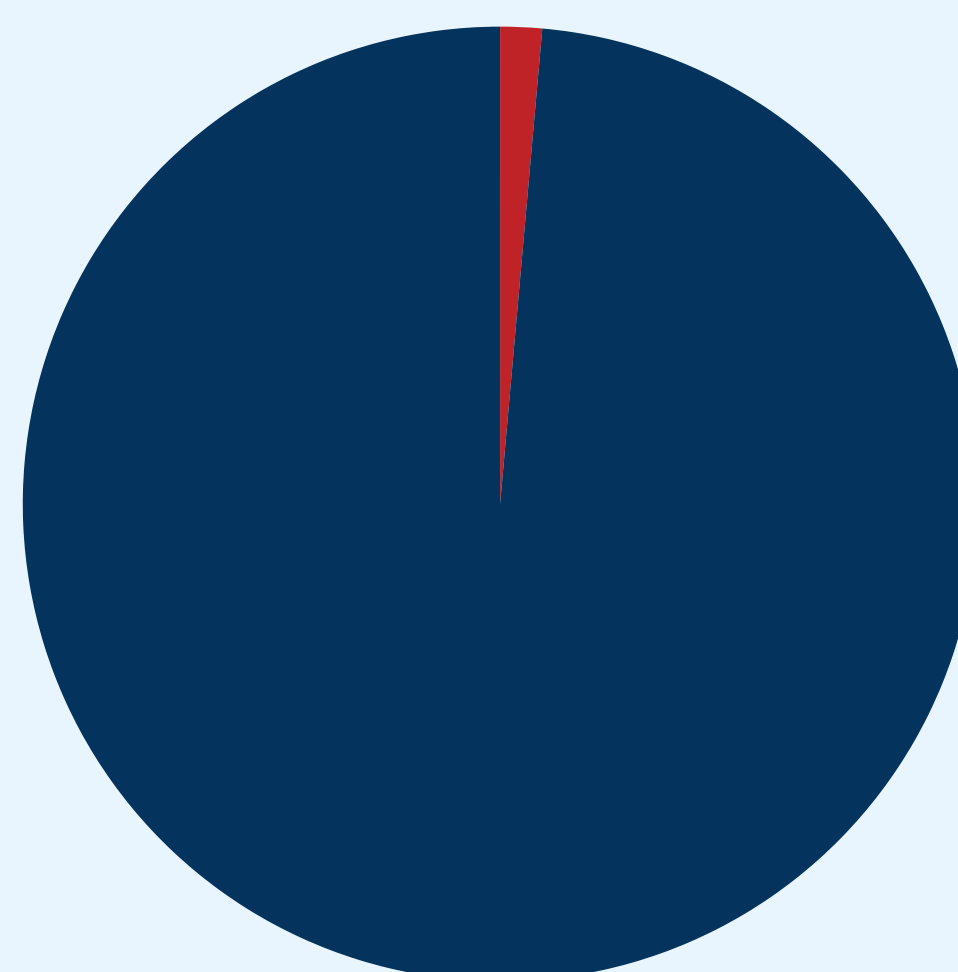
## WISCONSIN ELECTRICITY USAGE, 2025

### MYTH:

Data centers are using up a significant percentage of electricity.

### REALITY:

In Wisconsin, data centers accounted for **1.4 percent** of all electricity consumption in 2025.



Electric Choice data center power consumption figures; U.S. Energy Information Administration state-level net generation figures.

To learn more about the long-term projected water and electricity demands of data centers, visit the Q&A section at [protectingtaxpayers.org/datacenters](https://protectingtaxpayers.org/datacenters)

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