POLICY BRIEF

Illinois People's Action

Data Centers' Dirty Secrets:

A Policy Brief based on the real-world proposal of a Google/Broadwing/ADM partnership in Decatur, Illinois

Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) is being "greenwashed" by industries that stand to profit by its use. This brief uses a first-of-its-kind partnership between Google, Broadwing, and ADM as a cautionary tale where data centers partner with natural gas power plants using carbon capture and sequestration to claim that their projects use "Clean Energy." This is not clean energy. And it comes with great risks. With 45Q federal tax credits making CCS highly profitable, the Google-Broadwing-ADM partnership may open the floodgate. New scientific reports highlight the risks and the public is demanding decision-makers reject this false "solution" that is, in reality, no solution at all.

A FEW KEY FACTS

- **Data centers + CCS = Threats to water**
  In the context of a large, water-intensive data-center footprint, the expansion of CCS could create a cascade of unintended consequences for communities, ecosystems, and public finances.[1][2][3][4]
- **Best Science and technology cannot protect us from the dangers inherent in CCS.**[5][6][7]
  Capturing, transporting, and storing CO_2 poses significant safety and environmental hazards, primarily from pipeline ruptures and underground storage leaks. Above ground, CO_2 is dense; it displaces oxygen causing asphyxiation. Below ground, it is buoyant and seeks any pathway upward. Sequestering causes seismic activity, which increases the likelihood of CO_2 migrating into groundwater.
- **CCS co-pollutants threaten health.** CCS increases particulate matter, mercury, and nitrogen oxides.[8]
- **It's all about the $$$**
  CCS was not popular until the 45Q tax credits made it highly profitable. The tax credits have created a "gold rush"[9] mentality for both corporations seeking to lower their carbon footprint (like Google) and those seeking to make a profit.
- **The downsides will last for generations**
  It takes 10,000 years for sequestered CO_2 to become 90% inert.[10] That's a LONG time it needs to stay put. ADM, the first "permanent" CO_2 storage company in the U.S. stored 4.5 million metric tons (MMT) of CO_2 in its first 12 years and had 2 leaks that resulted in 3 EPA-decreed violations. In Illinois alone, if the EPA approves the CCS permits in its queue, there will be 480 MMT sequestered here in the next 30 years.
- **CO2 + water = carbonic acid**- This acid corrodes metal and rock, resulting in a heavy-metal "brew" that would ruin our water forever.

---

[1] Harvey, C.F. (2025)
[2] Zemansky (2025 a, b)
[3] Carbon Capture and Storage: A Dangerous Distraction. Climate and Clean Energy Equity Fund. August 2022.
[4] IPCC (2023)
[5] Harvey ibid
[6] CCEEF ibid
[7] Carbon Capture and Storage. Center for International Environmental Law
[8] CCEEF ibid
[9] Bloomberg Businessweek. January 2023
[10] Navigator application to the EPA for a CCS Permit.

The Dangers of Greenwashing CCS as a Carbon Solution in the Buildout of AI Data Centers:

A Policy Brief based on the real-world proposal of a Google/Broadwing/ADM partnership in Decatur, Illinois

Executive Summary

This brief analyzes the growing risks of Carbon Capture and Storage projects as big AI data centers use CCS to greenwash their energy footprint.

The proposed partnership between Google, Broadwing and ADM in Decatur, Illinois is used to demonstrate industry intent. New scientific reports from experts in the field are included to highlight risks the industry is ignoring. Finally, input from residents spotlights the public sentiment that CCS doesn't solve the climate crisis; it perpetuates it. And they don't want it.

Despite the claims of industry professionals, CCS is still in its infancy. Archer Daniels Midlands launched its pilot CCS project in 2012 with money from the Department of Energy. In its first 12 years of operation, the project sequestered 4.5 million metric tons (MMT) of waste CO2 and had two accidents. If the Broadwing deal goes through and waste CO_2 accelerates, new studies indicate accidents will grow exponentially.

Data centers require copious amounts of energy. In 2025, ADM announced its plan to partner with Broadwing to build a 400MW natural gas power plant on ADM's campus in Decatur.

Google, the world's largest cloud provider[11], plans to use a large portion of the energy Broadwing produces to power its data center needs. And because Broadwing plans to sequester the CO_2 from its plant, Google is claiming its data center is "clean" energy.

This would be the first project of its kind and, with the massive 45Q tax credits at $85/ton of stored CO_2 rolled over in the "Big Beautiful Bill," it would allow the corporations to profit financially while taxpayers foot the bill and pay the price in lost water and increased health concerns.

Figure 1 Archer Daniels Midlands (ADM) located adjacent to Lake Decatur in Decatur, IL

Figure 2 Schematic of proposed Broadwing Plant

Findings:

The partnership between AI data centers, Fossil Fuel Power Plants and Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) companies raises significant, multi-dimensional risks that extend far beyond project boundaries. We posit that this partnership is a harbinger of dangers to come.

[11] Moltzau, Alex. "The Lack of Data on Data Centers." Medium March 9, 2020

Gaming the System: Your Money, Their Profit

The proposed collaboration between Google, Broadwing (energy-services/marketing entity), and ADM to deploy Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) in Decatur, Illinois is a first-of-its-kind project.

The venture makes perfect sense for ADM, Broadwing and Google; they all stand to profit from 45Q taxpayer dollars. But what about the people?

The project raises questions not only for the community of Decatur but for communities across the country: **Who gets to determine what happens in our communities?**

Decatur, IL is an example where this battle is playing out in real time. Residents, by and large, do NOT want the project because of:

1) Risks to the safety & availability or their water.
2) Dangers to people & environment inherent in capturing, transporting and storing CO_2.
3) Increased co-pollutants that raise rates of asthma, cancer, birth defects and other health problems.
4) Probable increases in local electricity costs.

The opposition on the ground cuts across the political red-blue divide and the number of concerned residents grows at each city council meeting and other public meetings. Ordinary people are doing 'the math' and the benefits for them are not adding up.

The proposed collaboration adds insult to injury for Decatur residents who describe being betrayed by Archer Daniels Midlands (ADM), Illinois's second largest company. ADM operates the nation's first CCS project. Despite being touted as a blueprint for safe and successful CCS, the company has already had two notable leaks which resulted in waste CO_2 breaching the containment area designated in their EPA permit.

ADM did not disclose the first leak to the public when it happened or when ADM negotiated a new 99-year easement with the City of Decatur. ADM did not disclose it when testifying before the Illinois General Assembly that CCS was safe and the state should pass an industry-friendly CCS law (which it did). The Governor found out about the leak only AFTER he signed the legislation into law in a ceremony on the ADM campus.

Decatur received $1 million for the 99-year lease, which adds up to about $12,000 a year. But with the lease agreement and a weak state regulatory climate, costs borne by taxpayers could end up in the billions.

Figure 3: IPA Decatur Leaders meet weekly to plan strategy for winning against the ADM-Broadwing-Google project.

Decatur members of Illinois People's Action (IPA) FOIAed the City for communications between ADM and the City of Decatur during easement negotiations. The city claims there was no communication. IPA has appealed.

The group launched a public campaign with a press conference on a hot summer day outside of a Chamber of Commerce meeting where ADM was pitching their project. The Chamber denied access to the press—a "first" according to the Decatur Herald and Review reporter.[12]

This lack of transparency is strengthening opposition to the project. Public turnout was so high at the last City Council meeting, people filled the hallway outside of Council chambers.

"We demand complete transparency by all parties (Google, Broadwing, ADM and the City) and the right of residents to have a say in the future of their community."

-Verlyn Rosenberger, IPA Decatur

[12] "One year after leaks disclosed, ADM officials tout economic benefits of carbon capture." Brenden Moore. Decatur Herald and Review. Sept. 19, 2025

What about the Water?
CCS = Scarce + Dirty Water

With the changing climate, access to clean water is becoming a growing issue worldwide. Illinois is no exception.

Scarcity. Using CCS can double the water requirements of a power plant.[13]

Data centers also guzzle water. Communitie across the country are reporting water shortages due to a buildout of data centers.[14] Data centers built for AI will require millions of gallons of water daily.[15] As in many parts of the country, there are already stresses on Illinois water. A March 2, 2026 Chicago Sun Times article reports that "most of Illinois is in a drought, and the state is unprepared."[16]

"Most of Illinois is in a drought, and the state is unprepared."

Decatur and Bloomington are actively requesting voluntary reductions in water use. Sullivan recently upgraded to a temporary water emergency.

Contamination: Google, Broad-wing and ADM all pose water contamination risks.

Data Centers: Unless close-looped, 80% of water used for cooling data centers evaporates into the atmosphere. The remaining 20% is discharged as wastewater, which is often contaminated with high concentrations of dissolved minerals, salts, and chemicals, requiring treatment.[17]

Partnering data centers, natural gas power plants, and CO_2 sequestration projects will stress water supplies:

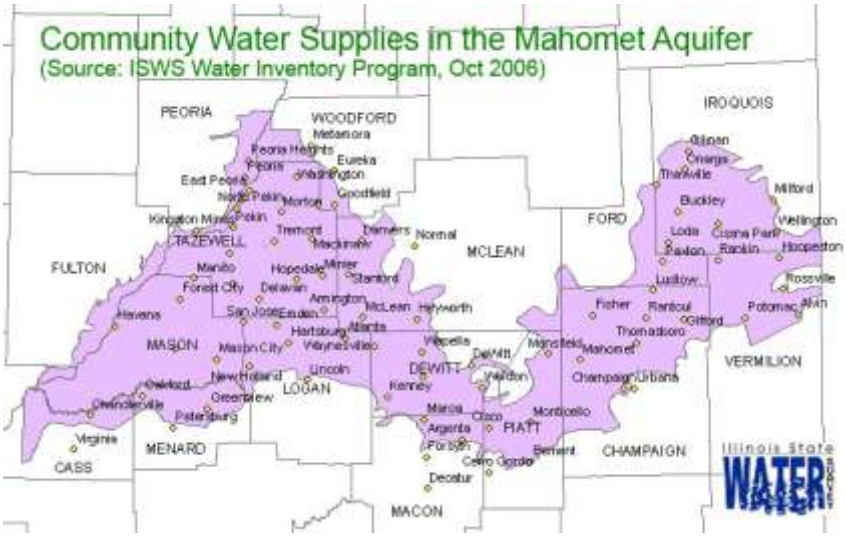
1. New AI data centers require millions of gallons of water daily.
2. Natural Gas Power Plants obtain natural gas through water-intensive fracking processes.
3. Carbon sequestration operations can double the water requirements of a power plant.

In a drought-ridden area with many communities already under mandatory or voluntary water restrictions, where will the water come from?

Where Central Illinoisans get their Water

The Mahomet Aquifer is Illinois' largest aquifer, providing water to over a million residents, and that number grows every year, even as the aquifer is shrinking.

The town of Normal gets all of its water from the Mahomet Aquifer. The Mayor, Chris Koos, has expressed concerns about CCS activities: *"The Mahomet Aquifer provides water for over a million people and the idea of threatening that aquifer gives me concern...we need to act."*[18] The City filed comments with the Illinois Commerce Commission, the Illinois entity that regulates CCS pipelines.



[13] https://energsustainsoc.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13705-018-0146-3
[14] Tan, Eli. Their Water Taps Ran Dry When Meta Built Next Door. NYT. July 14, 2025.
[15] ibid
[16] Chicago Sun Times, March 2, 2026
[17] Yanez-Barnuevo, M. *Data Centers and Water Consumption*. Environmental and Energy Study Institute. June 25, 2025
[18] Quote from WGLT radio. Oct. 3

Who Wins and Who Loses?

The battle over water is playing out in real time in Decatur, IL. When water is scarce, who determines who gets the water?

The Decatur Herald and Review ran a photo exposé of Lake Decatur droughts on Oct. 8, 2025. While the exposé focused on the drought of 2012, the city is again facing water shortages. Residents say public water should be prioritized over corporate profit.

"ADM is important, but Lake Decatur is irreplaceable." *- George Virgil, retired Chemical Engineer, IPA Leader*

Data centers have a thirst for water, and their rapid expansion threatens freshwater supplies.

Only 3% of Earth's water is freshwater, and only 0.5% of all water is accessible and safe for human consumption.

Large AI data centers use hundreds of thousands of chips, which must all be cooled. But that only takes into account the water needed once the chip is installed in the data center. Before installation, copious amounts of water are used in the process of mining, manufacturing, and transporting data chips.

A single chip installed in a data center has already consumed thousands of gallons of water by the time it reaches the site.

What About the Water? (cont.)

Power Plants: A 400 MW natural gas plant typically impacts water through thermal pollution (the plant can discharge water 60 degrees higher than the intake source), and the discharge of chemical-laden wastewater.[19] And the natural gas used to power the plant has life-cycle contamination risks due to fracking. Those may not happen in our back yard, but they are happening in someone's back yard.

Sequestration (Part A): The risk of water contamination is so great during CO_2 sequestration that the EPA requires companies seeking permits to include maps of the area most likely to be at risk of water contamination. This mapped area is known as the "Area of Review (AoR)" or the Area of Concern.

Sequestration (Part B): A 2025 EPA report urged Congress to address risks of CCS projects that are placed in close proximity to each other. The pressure is additive and "represents not only a potential increase in risk to USDWs but also a greater likelihood of induced seismicity, which could put all involved projects at risk."[20]

[19] U.S. EPA identifies chlorine, phosphorus, zinc and heavy metals in power plant effluent.
[20] Pocker, R. et al. Assessment of Pressure Interference in Alberta's Proposed Carbon Storage Hubs. Geoconvention. Calgary, Canada. June 17-19, 2024

Carbon Capture and Sequestration/Storage is the process of capturing CO_2 waste from manufacturing or power production, compressing it under extremely high pressure and transporting it to a site for underground storage. CO_2, a biproduct of burning fossil fuels, is a leading cause of climate change. As the climate crisis grows, possible remedies emerge, not all of which are safe, viable or environmentally sound.

$$$ Why Is This Happening Now? $$$

- Biden admin raised the subsidy payout for CO_2 sequestering from $50 to $85/m ton. Trump admin kept it in the "Big Beautiful Bill."
- CCS is marketed as "planet-saving" but, in reality, it perpetuates fossil fuel use. This is a perfect example of "greenwashing."
- Sequestration = Safe Storage[21]
- CCS is a money-maker for corporations and a very small subset of impacted landowners.
- CO_2 Credits are marketable to 3rd parties (i.e. Google, Broadwing) for CO_2 reduction mandates.

The Power of Money

Industry experts insist the massive CCS projects are safe. But independent research indicates a strong, consistent correlation between industry sponsorship and pro-industry study outcomes, aka "funding bias."

Why HERE?

The Illinois Basin has porous limestone rock that looks like a sponge deep underground. Industry geologists say these porous rocks provide the perfect space to deposit waste CO_2. **Non-industry experts say not so fast:**
The porous space isn't empty; it already contains saline.

A new (2025) report[22] by G.M. Zemansky concludes that:

1. Saline water from the deep bedrock in the Illinois Basin is upwelling through natural faults and into the Mahomet Aquifer.
2. Injection of CO_2 under pressure would increase the amount of saline fluid reaching the aquifer, contaminating drinking water.
3. Leakage of CO_2 and associated contaminants—even if outside the Aquifer boundary—could impact the Aquifer downstream through surface/ground-water connections.

☛ Zemansky reports that One Earth Sequestration failed to report the vulnerability of its area to induced seismicity, the effect that would have on upward migration of waste CO2, and the fact that deep underground saline (where they want to store CO2 waste) is already finding its way into the Aquifer.

"Neither our best science nor our best engineering can guarantee containment of CO_2"[23]

Charles Harvey Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

[21] Oxford English Dictionary definition

[22] Zemansky, G.M. Emeritus Professional Geologist, Certified Groundwater Professional. *"Comments On the Potential Impact of the One Earth Energy Proposed Carbon Capture and Sequestration Project on the Northern Mahomet Aquifer Recharge Area." May 2, 2025*

[23] Harvey, Charles F. Limitations of Science and Engineering relevant to Protecting Drinking Water.

Effects on Our Communities

Community Risks and Regulatory Gaps

CCS poses risks to any community:

1. where CO_2 is captured,
2. through which highly pressurized CO_2 is transported, or
3. above where CO_2 is stored including the pressure front surrounding the underground plume of CO_2.

Risks grow with the size of the project. The pressure front of ADM's proposed expansion (also known as the Area of Review, AoR) covers 224 square miles—all of the city of Decatur and surrounding communities, Lake Decatur and rural areas (see Figure 4).

The CO_2 plume of the proposed project is directly under Lake Decatur. Any pathway to the surface would leak CO_2--and the heavy metals dissolved in it–right into the Lake.

These **risks will not be felt equally by all residents.** Communities that already have environmental-justice challenges—like those close to the existing ADM plant—will have their risks compounded. Projects like the Google-Broadwing-ADM partnership will entrench inequities rather than rectify them.

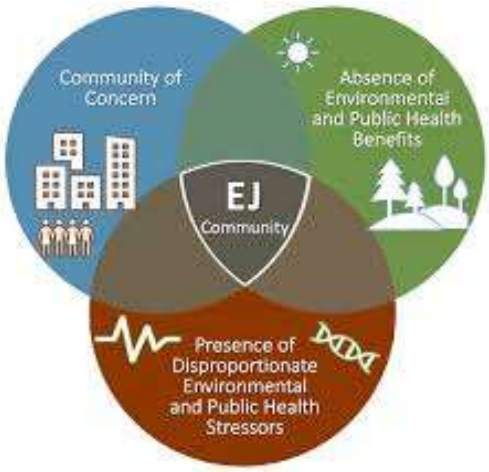


Figure 4 From the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

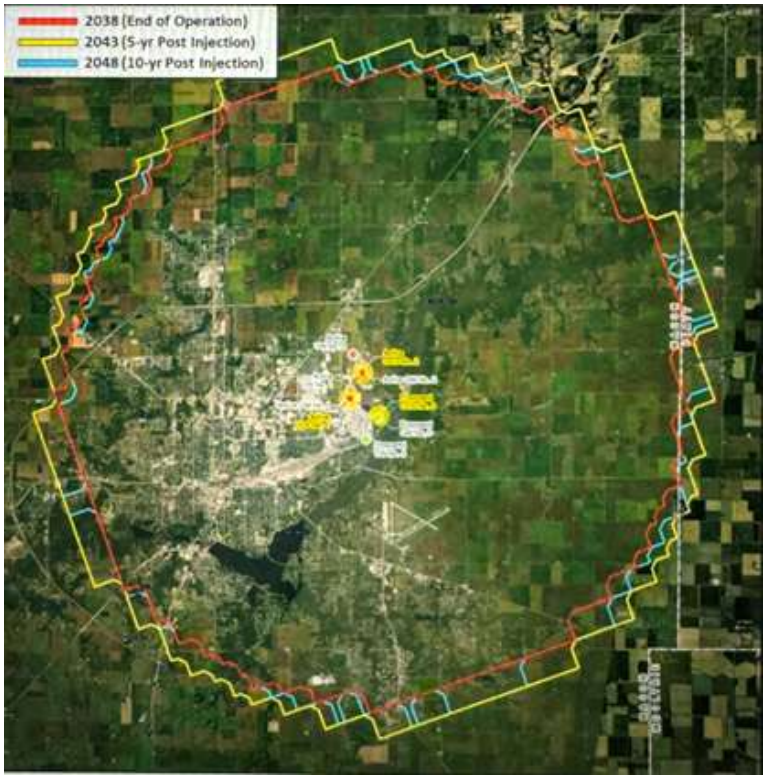


Figure 5 Area of Review of ADM's Proposed Sequestration Project. The entire City of Decatur is the lighter shaded area on the left of center. The 3 red dots surrounded by yellow are the sequestering well bore holes. The Area of Review is the area within the large circle of yellow, blue and red. The lake is the dark area in the lower left quadrant.

No residents we spoke with believe that any agreement would be beneficial, binding—or even transparent. This is why they want the city to rescind the 99-year lease that ADM negotiated with the city. Most of the residents we spoke with believe ADM, the city, or *both* participated in unethical behavior at best and fraud at worst.

> *"We, the residents who live within ADM's Area of Review, are not willing to be Guinea Pigs in ADM's science experiment when they have already shown themselves to be unethical scientists."*
>
> *Doris McKay, IPA Grassroots Leader*

Not the Climate Solution being Promised

The inequity extends beyond impacted neighborhoods caught in a CCS Area of Review. The cumulative impacts of allowing fossil fuel companies to dictate the future is felt worldwide.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) AR6 (2022) highlights that **greenhouse gas removal technologies are no substitute for emission reductions and moving to truly clean energy.** The report emphasizes the need for equitable strategies.

The top 1% worldwide are responsible for 50% greenhouse gas emissions. Large-scale projects like the Google/Broadwing/ADM CCS project would only amplify those inequities.

Wealthy corporations and the 1% who use their technologies at scale will reap the monetary rewards while small rural and economically challenged communities will be offered "the opportunity" to store the toxic CO2 waste and to live with the cascade of calamities that we know will come with time.[24]

The top 1% worldwide are responsible for 50% greenhouse gas emissions. Large-scale projects like the Google/Broadwing/ADM CCS project would only amplify those inequities.

Financial liability and stranded-asset risk.
During the EPA public hearings on the Marquis CCS plant along the Illinois River north of Peoria, IL, property owners learned that their property deeds would contain language noting that the property was used to sequester carbon dioxide.[27] Similarly, some home insurance companies have alerted homeowners that they won't cover property above CO_2 waste storage. Note: At the request of homeowners who shared those notices with us, IPA is not making those notices publicly available.

Greenwashing and public trust.

CCS is marketed as a safe, "clean" or near-zero-emission solution to the climate crisis. But those claims don't reflect the lived experience of residents in the already impacted communities that are slated to house the new projects.

Google's long-term "carbon free" by 2030 goals sound good but a new Kairos report[25] shows that Google's claims are an accounting technique that only reports a slice of their CO_2 emissions. In actuality, Google emitted 21.9 MORE million metric tons of CO_2 in 2024 than it did in 2010. Their emissions are rising; they have risen 1,515% in that same time frame. Publicly, Google has used select data or vague claims to mask the massive energy consumption of their data centers which are increasingly reliant on fossil fuels.[26]

"You can fool all of the people some of the time, and some of the people all of the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time."

Abraham Lincoln, Sept. 2, 1858
Clinton, Illinois

Brent Lage lives in rural McLean County with his wife and 4 boys. He is the 5th generation on his family farm and hopes to pass it on to the 6th. He farms the land between two proposed CCS wells where high pressure pipelines will run if the project is approved. In March, 2026, Brent shared his concerns with the EPA during a "listening session." EPA staff told Brent and other participants that they were "heard."

[24] Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change AR6; IPCC 2023; Jacobson et al. 2025.
[25] Google's Eco Failures. Kairos Fellowship as cited by the Guardian. July 2, 2025
[26] "Greenwashing on Google." Climate Action Against Disinformation. January 27, 2023
[27] See 40 CFR (Code of Federal Regulation) 146.93(g)

Policy Considerations and Recommendations
For Data Centers

Policy Consideration #1: **CLEAN ENERGY.** Google is already publicly saying that a partnership between it, Broadwing and ADM will be "clean energy." But, as proposed, it will not be clean energy. It is dirty energy combined with sequestration. The 400 MW Broadwing plant will burn natural gas. Natural gas is dirty all along it's life cycle, from fracking to the point of use. Sequestering the carbon doesn't make natural gas clean.

Recommendation #1:

- Part A: **Data Centers must be powered by truly clean renewable energy and not fossil fuels.**
- Part B: **No industry—data centers included—will be allowed to claim they are powering with "clean energy" if they are pairing natural gas power—or other fossil fuel power—with carbon sequestration.**

Policy Consideration #2: WATER. Data centers are water intensive. And, if powered by traditional power plants, those are also water intensive. Outside of the Water Use Act passed by Congress in 1983, there are currently few protections to ensure residential users and existing businesses are prioritized over new water-intensive industrial corporations like data centers. As noted in this brief, Decatur has a history of droughts and most of Illinois is currently in a drought. The proposed "Protecting Our Water, Energy and Ratepayers" (POWER) Act, or HB5513. would require data centers to obtain a "Water Impact Permit." The permit requires data centers to pay for water impact assessments conducted by the Illinois EPA. The outcome of that assessment must indicate that the building and operations of the data center won't have an adverse impact on water sources. The bill also requires data center disclosure of their water use and its impact on other users.

These are necessary measures. The future of water across the country looks different due to climate change. Illinois is no exception. Decisions cannot be based only on past water availability. Decisions must be made on future predictions of decreased water availability.

Recommendation #2: Data centers and their power generation sources must not be permitted to use diminishing water sources regardless of their willingness to pay. Residential and existing business water use must be prioritized over new water-intensive data centers and their power generation sources. The policy outlining this must be made with sound scientific predictions, community input regarding priorities, and 100% transparent decision-making. To help achieve these priorities:

- **IPA supports the POWER Act** that, among other things, establishes "sustainable water use, transparent reporting and consumer protection requirements to ensure Illinois' water resources are used responsibly."[28] As mentioned above, the bill requires data centers to obtain what is essentially a "water permit," engage in transparent reporting, water efficiency requirements, consumer protections and engagement with the Illinois State Water Survey (ISWS) to plan and report likely impacts.
- **As the POWER Act is negotiated**, *we ask that it prioritize residents and existing businesses over new data centers and generators, and that it ensures that jurisdictions cannot be sued for putting human consumption first.*

[28] "Support the Power Act (SB4016/HB5513): Protecting Our Water, Energy and Ratepayers from Data Center Impacts." Illinois Clea Jobs Coalition. www.ilcleanjobs.org

Policy Consideration #3: ELECTRICITY COSTS. Data centers are resulting in soaring electric bills for consumers. The POWER Act HB5513 includes a transparent and publicly accessible Community Benefits agreement that includes many standard options (weatherization, LIHEAP, energy saving devices, etc.) These options will help mitigate rising costs of electricity. We propose that data centers using 100% renewable energy and making millions to billions in profits (after taxes), can—and should--contribute to bringing clean renewable energy to the communities in which they are located.

Recommendation #3: Data centers not only must supply their own renewable energy, if they are uploading that energy onto the grid in one location and removing it from another, they must also pay for grid modernization and provide tangible power and grid benefits to the community. If the data center is powering with solar, it's community benefit agreement could include 10% of its power going to the community in which it will be located. This should be made in a manner that benefits those most impacted first. The community benefits agreement must be negotiated with the input of the public, not just elected officials, with all documents available for full review by the public. Costs will be borne by the corporation but benefits must be shared with the public.

Policy Consideration #4: LOCATION. Even in the best scenario, data centers would have to rely on generators to power their facilities in an emergency. Because of this, they should not be placed in locations that are already burdened by past and current industrial practices and pollution. The POWER Act would require that no data center be located within 3 miles of an Environmental Justice or Equity Investment Eligible Community unless an Illinois EPA cumulative impact assessment demonstrates that the project will not disproportionately increase health, welfare, or environmental risks to the community.

We support the POWER Act and encourage language that would add additional protection to ensure that a corporation, city or county government cannot "game the system" in the currently deregulated environment. Elected officials may have one view of a data center (it will increase our tax base, help us improve infrastructure, etc.) while the populace holds an entirely different point of view (we don't want our water polluted or used up, we don't want the additional air pollution, the noise, etc.)

Environmental Justice and Equity Eligible Communities have been on the receiving end of unjust and polluting processes for generations. But we also want to ensure that we do not create NEW environmental justice areas. We must stop polluting and repair areas that have already been degraded while we AVOID creating new sacrifice zones.

The voices of the people who will be impacted by decisions regarding this new Proof-of-Concept Google/Broadwing/ADM proposal MUST be heard. In organizing, we have a saying, "Nothing about us without us." Environmental Justice communities, Equity Eligible residents and those living in any proposed development zone or the Area of Review for CO_2 sequestration must be included in these decisions.

Recommendation #4: The health, safety, well-being, rights and interests of residents cannot not take a back seat to the interests of private for-profit corporations. No Data center may be located within 3 miles of an Environmental Justice or Equity Eligible Community regardless of an EPA impact assessment. And no data center may be built without the full support of potentially affected people. Robust community and rural resident meetings that are well-pubplicized must be held in locations and at times accessible to all members of the community. The burden of "proof-of-no-harm" will be assigned to the corporate data center entity and the associated power source/utility for the data center. All costs of meetings will be borne by said corporation(s).

Policy Consideration #5: PROFITS AND COMMUNITY BENEFITS. Industry has increasingly privatized profits and socialized losses. Data centers are projected to be huge money-makers and should be a turning point

for doing business in a new way. A 100 MW data center (according to Google's own Gemini) would have an annual operating budget of $98,376,000/year with an estimated "high $80-millions after-tax profit per year."

The United States used a progressive (bracketed) corporate income tax system in the 1950s. The top federal corporate tax rate was about 52% for much of the early to mid-1950s (e.g., around 1952–1954). While the exact brackets changed over the decade, the highest marginal rate remained near that level. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 set a flat 21% federal corporate income tax, effective for tax years after 2017. But corporations now hold many rights of U.S. Citizens, with the claims that "Corporations are people too." If they are "people too," then they should be taxed like people. Because this issue is unlikely to be settled soon, data centers should be required to invest in the communities in which they exist. A company making "high $80-millions after-tax profit per year" could certainly afford to build community solar, improve the grid, invest in public infrastructure, support reforestation, and employ the most climate-friendly practices.

The Power Act (HB5513) includes a transparent and publicly accessible Community Benefits agreement that includes many standared options (weatherization, LIHEAP, energy saving devices, etc.) These will help mitigate rising costs of electricity but don't go far enough in improving the quality of life for residents.

Recommendation #5: Communities in which data centers are located must experience direct benefits in addition to not being harmed. We suggest that the Community Benefits Agreement include investments to renewable energy buildout, grid modernization, community and rooftop solar, water infrastructure modernization, etc. in addition to those outlined by the Power Act. Environmental Justice, Equity Eligible communities and affected residents should be prioritized for these investments. These types of investment build community wealth so that when or if LIHEAP or other assistance programs are cut or risk being cut, the neighborhoods and residents in them will already have investments that reduce costs and improve the quality of their lives.

Policy Consideration #6: UNINTENDED EFFECTS. To date, the U.S. has not collected data regarding the compounding affects of two or more injection wells operating at the same time when they are in close proximity to one another. We know from the Decatur project that injected CCS can (and will) move out of it's "assigned" containment zone. Harvey[29] notes that the volume of CO_2 in permits before the EPA total more than 100 times the amount injected in Central IL to date. He notes that "pressures continue to rise as long as CO_2 is injected and so the subsurface experiences more and more severe risks of induced fracturing and seismicity as the project continues." He asserts, *"It is impossible to use observations [taken] at lower pressures to predict what will happen as pressures continuously rise."*

Policy Recommendation #6: Charles Harvey summarizes his 2025 report by saying, *"Our descendants will still drink water and use water for agriculture. Geologic carbon dioxide storage is an experimental project. Allowing private interests to risk the safety of public resources is not a risk that can be justified by our current state-of-the-art science or engineering."* Illinois People's Action members concur and recommends that state and local decisionmakers heed this one final reminder of what is at stake if projects like the Google/Broadwing/ADM are allowed to proceed. **We recommend that the time to stop these projects is NOW, before the first project gets its foot in the door, paving the way for others. And BEFORE we have to learn from the mistakes made by corporations who are only in it for the money.**

*****

Illinois People's Action is a grassroots faith and community organization in downstate IL. Founded in 1996, IPA organizes on kitchen-table issues surfaced by our own members who are experiencing them first-hand.

[29] Harvey, ibid

References/Sources

1. Harvey, C.F. (2025). "Limitations of Science and Engineering Relevant to Protecting Drinking Water: The Mahomet Aquifer as a Case Study." Note: Dr. Harvey is a Professor of Science and Engineering at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Founding Member of the Science Roundtable on Carbon Capture and Storage.
2. Zemansky , G.M. (2025 a, b)
    a. Feb. 7, 2025. "Basis for Including Mahomet Aquifer Recharge Areas in Sole-Source Aquifer Sequestration Ban."
    b. May 2, 2025. "Comments on the Potential Impact of the One Earth Proposed Carbon Capture and Sequestration Project on the Northern Mahomet Aquifer Recharge Area
3. "Carbon Capture and Storage: A Dangerous Distraction. " Policy Brief: Energy Concerns. The Climate and Clean Energy Equity Fund (CCEEF) (August 2022)
4. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. IPCC (2023)
5. Harvey, C.F. ibid
6. CCEEF ibid
7. "Carbon Capture and Storage." Center for International Environmental Law
8. CCEEF ibid
9. Bloomberg Businessweek. January 2023
10. Navigator application to the EPA for a CCS Permit.
11. Moore, Brenden. "One year after leaks disclosed, ADM officials tout economic benefits of carbon capture." Decatur Herald and Review. Sept. 19, 2025
12. Moltzau, Alex. "The Lack of Data on Data Centers." Medium March 9, 2020
13. https://energsustainsoc.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13705-018-0146-3
14. Tan, Eli. Their Water Taps Ran Dry When Meta Built Next Door. NYT. July 14, 2025.
15. Tan, Eli. ibid
16. Chicago Sun Times, March 2, 2026
17. Quote from WGLT radio. Oct. 3
18. U.S. EPA
19. Yanez-Barnuevo, M. *Data Centers and Water Consumption*. Environmental and Energy Study Institute. June 25, 2025
20. Pocker, R. et al. Assessment of Pressure Interference in Alberta's Proposed Carbon Storage Hubs. Geoconvention. Calgary, Canada. June 17-19, 2024
21. Oxford English Dictionary definition of sequestration
22. Zemansky, G.M. Emeritus Professional Geologist, Certified Groundwater Professional. *"Comments On the Potential Impact of the One Earth Energy Proposed Carbon Capture and Sequestration Project on the Northern Mahomet Aquifer Recharge Area." May 2, 2025*
23. Harvey, Charles F. Limitations of Science and Engineering relevant to Protecting Drinking Water.
24. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change AR6; IPCC 2023; Jacobson et al. 2025.
25. Google's Eco Failures. Kairos Fellowship as cited by the Guardian. July 2, 2025
26. "Greenwashing on Google." Climate Action Against Disinformation. January 27, 2023
27. See 40 CFR (Code of federal Regulation) 146.93(g)
28. "Support the Power Act (SB4016/HB5513): Protecting Our Water, Energy and Ratepayers from Data Center Impacts." Illinois Clea Jobs Coalition. www.ilcleanjobs.org
29. Harvey, C.F. ibid