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Case # 74-2026 Data Centers UDC Text Change

1 message

Dan Murphy <murphdad1975@yahoo.com>

Thu, Feb 19, 2026 at 4:50 PM

To: patrick.zenner@como.gov, david.kunz@como.gov, planning@como.gov

My name is Dan Murphy, I'm a Columbia resident and member and leader of Missouri Rural Crisis Center and was asked by that organization to provide this comment.

MRCC is opposed to data centers taking good farmland and implores decision makers across Missouri— including you all here serving on Columbia's Planning and Zoning Commission— to protect our state's water and farmland resources.

We are pleased by the progress made to the Unified Business Code, but would like to raise one concern at this time. "Power generators" are on the list of accessory infrastructure likely necessary to support the operation of a data center. While it's reasonable for data centers to have power generators on-site in order to quickly recover from temporary disruptions in power service, the City of Columbia's policy should be extra clear: Operating a data center does not imply any permission to operate a private, unregulated power plant.

This has been a problem in other places, like Memphis, TN, where data center operators have exploited loopholes in local regulations in order to run noisy diesel-powered generators as often as they wish without any responsibility for the health and well-being of surrounding communities.

Data center developers also have started promising to "bring their own power" to these projects as a tactic to ameliorate rising concerns about the impact their facilities will have on the service capacity of local utility operators. Columbia's definition of data center should be clear that any power generator or power supply accessor cannot function as a primary or permanent source of a data center's electricity.

This clarification could be quite simple and consistent with similar definitions of data centers adopted by other cities, as listed in the attachment to this proposal. Half of these example definitions mention power generators, power supplies or power equipment, and two out of every three of those definitions include the modifier "back-up" or "redundant".

We believe this change is reasonable and will set an explicit parameter for the further discussions we look forward to having about use-specific standards and criteria for conditional use permitting with respect to data center construction in our city.

Thank you.

Dan Murphy

Sent from my iPhone