



August 3, 2026

The Honorable Greg Abbott
Governor of Texas
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 12428
Austin, Texas 78711

Subject: Coalition Urgently Requests a Special Session to Address the Rapid Hyperscale AI Data Center Buildout and Preserve Texas Farms, Ranches, and Rural Communities

Dear Governor Abbott,

Texas is undergoing one of the largest industrial transformations of its rural landscape in modern history. The rapid expansion of hyperscale AI data centers and their supporting infrastructure is reshaping farmland, ranchland, and rural communities at an unprecedented pace. As organizations dedicated to protecting Texas' agricultural foundation, natural resources, and rural way of life, we write respectfully to urge your immediate action.

We represent a broad coalition of Texas farmers, ranchers, rural landowners, groundwater conservation districts, and community organizations. Together, we respectfully ask that you exercise your constitutional authority to convene a Special Session of the Texas Legislature before additional irreversible decisions are made regarding the siting and expansion of hyperscale AI data centers across our state.

The scope and pace of this development are well documented. A June 2026 Texas Tribune analysis of at least 248 planned data center projects found that nearly half are proposed in unincorporated areas, a dramatic increase from the relatively small share of existing facilities located there today. In these communities, county governments have limited authority to address land use, extraordinary water demands, or the impacts of massive new electric infrastructure. Thousands of acres of productive farmland and ranchland are already being converted to industrial use, often alongside private power generation facilities operating outside traditional planning processes.

These concerns are neither narrow nor partisan. A University of Texas and Texas Politics Project poll found that a majority of Texans oppose the construction of data centers in their communities, including nearly two-thirds of rural Texans. These concerns reflect values Texans have long held: protecting private property rights, preserving local decision-making, safeguarding water resources, maintaining a reliable electric grid, and ensuring responsible stewardship of our agricultural heritage.

Without timely legislative action, Texas risks permanently reducing its capacity for food and fiber production, placing additional strain on already limited water supplies, shifting infrastructure costs onto rural ratepayers, and committing billions of dollars in taxpayer-supported incentives before Texans have had a meaningful opportunity to determine whether current policies serve the long-term interests of our state.

We cannot afford to wait until the regular 2027 legislative session. Every month, additional land is acquired, permits are approved, infrastructure is financed, and communities lose opportunities to shape decisions that

will affect them for decades. By the time lawmakers reconvene, many of today's most consequential decisions will already have been made.

A Special Session would provide the Legislature with the opportunity to hear directly from agricultural producers, local officials, groundwater experts, electric reliability specialists, and affected communities before irreversible decisions are made. This is not a call to halt innovation, economic development, or the AI data center build out as a whole. Rather, it is a call to ensure that Texas continues to lead by adopting thoughtful, common sense policies that protect our working lands, water resources, taxpayers, and rural economies while providing certainty for responsible development.

Accordingly, we respectfully urge you to convene a Special Session before the end of August 2026 to address the following priorities:

- Establish siting and permitting standards for hyperscale AI data centers in unincorporated areas.
- Strengthen groundwater protection and long-term water planning for high-volume industrial users.
- Protect electric grid reliability and ensure that infrastructure costs are not shifted onto Texas households, farmers, ranchers, and small businesses.
- Review state and local sales tax abatements, Chapter 312 and other tax incentives, and additional taxpayer-supported subsidies provided to hyperscale AI data center developments.
- Increase transparency and public notice requirements for major AI data center projects and related infrastructure.
- Preserve Texas farmland, ranchland, rural infrastructure, and the long-term viability of our state's food and fiber production.

Our coalition stands ready to assist your office and the Legislature by providing technical expertise, research, local perspectives, and testimony. We believe Texas can continue to lead in innovation while protecting the land, water, and rural communities that have long been the foundation of our state's prosperity.

Thank you for your continued leadership and your consideration of this urgent request. We look forward to working with your office to ensure that Texas remains both an economic leader and a responsible steward of its natural and agricultural resources.

Respectfully,

Cathy Latham

Texas State Director, Humans First

Ted Croy

Heart of Texas Conservatives

Margaret Hill

Don't Drain Texas Coalition

Jet Parker

Save Rural Texas Coalition

Julie Waters

Texans United Against Data Centers

Mike Rice

Citizens for Responsible Growth in Leon County

Anita Thomas

Lavon Families Against a Hyperscale Data Center

Payla Seydel

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Mike Jackson

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Melanie Martinez

Partner in Multiple Coalitions

Titles and organizations are for identifying purposes only.