United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 25, 2026

Tristan Abbey
Administrator
Energy Information Administration
1000 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Administrator Abbey:

We write to express support for the Energy Information Administration (EIA)'s reported plans to conduct a series of surveys regarding the impact of data centers on the U.S. electrical grid[1] and to urge the agency to establish a mandatory annual reporting requirement for data centers and other large loads.[2] In December 2025, you remarked that it is "important for the EIA … to be collecting data where we can to support policymakers as they understand and grapple with the issues that are raised by data centers."[3] Comprehensive information regarding the operations of data centers and other large loads is essential for accurate grid planning and will support policymaking to prevent large companies from increasing electricity costs for American families.

Data centers, particularly those used for developing and deploying advanced AI models, require enormous amounts of energy.[4] In January 2026, the EIA's energy forecast projected that U.S. electricity demand would continue to grow in 2026 and 2027, marking the "strongest four-year growth period since 2000," and identified data centers as the "driving factor" behind this growth.[5] The International Energy Agency estimates that data centers will account for roughly half of U.S. power demand growth from 2025 to 2030.[6]

---

[1] Axios, "New energy analysis boss plans data center info harvest," Ben Geman, December 5, 2025, https://www.axios.com/2025/12/05/tristan-abbey-energy-ai-data-centers-us.

[2] The North American Reliability Corporation (NERC) defines a large load as "[a]ny commercial or industrial individual load facility or aggregation of load facilities at a single site behind one or more point(s) of interconnection that can pose reliability risks to the BPS due to its demand, operational characteristics, or other factors." North American Electric Reliability Corporation, "Characteristics and Risks of Emerging Large Loads," July 2025, p. 1, https://www.nerc.com/globalassets/who-we-are/standing-committees/rstc/whitepaper-characteristics-and-risks-of-emerging-large-loads.pdf.

[3] Center for Strategic and International Studies, "The Future of the EIA: A Conversation with Administrator Tristan Abbey," December 4, 2025, https://www.csis.org/events/future-eia-conversation-administrator-tristan-abbey.

[4] U.S. Department of Energy, "2024 United States Data Center Energy Usage Report," Arman Shehabi, Alex Newkirk, Sarah J. Smith, et al., December 20, 2024, https://escholarship.org/uc/item/32d6m0d1.

[5] U.S. Energy Information Administration, "EIA forecasts strongest four-year growth in U.S. electricity demand since 2000, fueled by data centers," press release, January 13, 2026, https://www.eia.gov/pressroom/releases/press582.php.

The extraordinary energy demands of data centers and other large loads have significant implications for grid reliability, transmission planning, air quality, and electricity prices. The North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) estimated in January 2026 that, because "[p]rojections for resource and transmission growth lag what is needed to support new data centers and other large loads," ten of the country's 16 electric grids are at elevated or high risk of future electricity shortfalls, including brownouts or blackouts.[7] Utility companies rely on projected future energy demands provided by data centers and other large loads when deciding whether to build expensive new grid infrastructure and incorporate the costs of these infrastructure expansions into their utility rates, often passing the extra costs onto residential customers.[8] As electricity demand growth continues to accelerate after years of relative stagnation, the lack of reliable, standardized data on large load energy consumption poses significant risks to effective grid planning and oversight.

On March 4, 2026, seven technology companies signed the Administration's "Ratepayer Protection Pledge,"[9] promising to "build, bring, or buy the new generation resources and electricity needed to satisfy their new energy demands," as well as pay for power delivery infrastructure upgrades and "make available their backup generation resources at times of scarcity."[10] To ensure adherence to these commitments, and to better understand the current and future impact of data centers and other large loads on the electrical grid, it is critical that EIA mandate annual, comprehensive reporting for these entities. This data collection should include information regarding large load energy consumption (hourly, annual, and peak), pricing and rates paid for electricity consumed, upfront payments and security deposits, load flexibility and demand response strategies used, energy consumption of AI servers compared to energy consumption of general cloud computing workloads, and the costs of any transmission or distribution upgrades triggered by large load operations and how those costs are distributed among customers.

We welcome your December remarks that EIA "is going to be an essential player in providing objective data and analysis to policymakers" with respect to the energy demand of data centers.[11]

---

[6] Axios, "Data centers dominate rising U.S. power demand growth," Ben Geman, February 6, 2026, https://www.axios.com/2026/02/06/data-centers-dominate-rising-us-demand.

[7] North American Electric Reliability Corporation, "Long-Term Reliability Assessment," January 2026, p. 7, https://www.nerc.com/globalassets/our-work/assessments/nerc_ltra_2025.pdf.

[8] Harvard Law School, Environmental & Energy Law Program, "Extracting Profits from the Public: How Utility Ratepayers Are Paying for Big Tech's Power," Eliza Martin and Ari Peskoe, March 5, 2025, https://eelp.law.harvard.edu/extracting-profits-from-the-public-how-utility-ratepayers-are-paying-for-big-techs-power/.

[9] The White House, "Fact Sheet: President Donald J. Trump Advances Energy Affordability with the Ratepayer Protection Pledge," March 4, 2026, https://www.whitehouse.gov/fact-sheets/2026/03/fact-sheet-president-donald-j-trump-advances-energy-affordability-with-the-ratepayer-protection-pledge/.

[10] The White House, "Ratepayer Protection Pledge," March 4, 2026, https://www.whitehouse.gov/articles/2026/03/ratepayer-protection-pledge/.

[11] Center for Strategic and International Studies, "The Future of the EIA: A Conversation with Administrator Tristan Abbey," December 4, 2025, https://www.csis.org/events/future-eia-conversation-administrator-tristan-abbey.

EIA's statutory mandate obligates the agency to provide independent, rigorous, and authoritative data on energy demand growth to Congress, state and local regulators, utility companies, and the public.[12] EIA further has explicit authority under the *Federal Energy Administration Act of 1974* to require energy consumption and related data from "operating facilities … engaged in … major energy consumption,"[13] and the agency already requires annual reporting on electricity sales and pricing from distribution utilities.[14] To establish confidence in EIA's surveys, we recommend that EIA make the collected information available to the public.

Comprehensive, annual energy-use disclosures by data centers and other large loads will inform federal, state, and local policymaking and ensure technology companies operating these large loads comply with their commitments to pay for their own electricity and infrastructure upgrades.[15] Without this data, policymakers, utility companies, and local communities are operating in the dark. Accordingly, we ask that you provide answers to the following questions no later than April 9, 2026:

1. When does the EIA expect to use its authority to begin collecting energy and infrastructure data on data centers and other large loads, as previewed by the Administrator in December?
    a. Which specific entities or classes of entities will be covered under the EIA's planned surveys?
    b. Will these surveys include configurations where data centers are generating power "behind the meter"?
    c. Will these surveys be mandatory? If not, why not?
    d. Will these surveys be conducted annually? If not, how often will they be conducted?
2. What information does the EIA plan to collect regarding data centers and other large loads?
    a. For each information category, which entity (e.g., large load operator, utility company, or other entity) does the EIA plan to survey to obtain this information?

[12] 15 U.S.C. 772. This section of the U.S. Code provides this authority to the Administrator of the Energy Information Administration under DOE: "The Administrator shall collect, assemble, evaluate, and analyze energy information by categorical groupings…of sufficient comprehensiveness and particularity to permit fully informed monitoring and policy guidance."

[13] 15 U.S.C. 772. This section of the U.S. Code provides this authority to the Administrator of the Energy Information Administration under DOE: "All persons owning or operating facilities or business premises who are engaged in any phase of energy supply or major energy consumption shall make available to the Administrator such information and periodic reports, records, documents, and other data…as the Administrator may prescribe by regulation or order as necessary or appropriate for the proper exercise of functions under this chapter."

[14] U.S. Energy Information Administration, Form EIA-861: Annual Electric Power Industry Report, https://www.eia.gov/survey/form/eia_861/instructions.pdf.

[15] Office of U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren, "Warren, Senators Secure New Commitments from Big Tech on Electricity Costs, But Companies Dodge Accountability for Hiking Families' Utility Bills," press release, January 22, 2026, https://www.warren.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/warren-senators-secure-new-commitments-from-big-tech-on-electricity-costs-but-companies-dodge-accountability-for-hiking-families-utility-bills.

3. Will the EIA commit to establishing a mandatory annual reporting requirement for data centers and other large loads?
4. Will the EIA commit to making information available to the public about the power consumption of data centers and other large loads?

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

Josh Hawley
United States Senator