

**To:** Planning, Building, Zoning and Environment Committee (PBZE)  
**Date:** June 3, 2026  
**Subject:** Proposed legislative actions relating to the establishment of data centers in unincorporated Lake County.

Data centers are a unique and evolving type of land use that have generated increasing scrutiny in recent months. These facilities, typically designed to store, process and manage digital information, are becoming more well known as the technology these facilities support continues to grow and expand. Given the substantial infrastructure demands and operational impacts that have been associated with these uses, there has been increasing interest and concern regarding how and where they are developed.

At present, data centers are neither specifically defined nor directly regulated under the Lake County, Illinois Code of Ordinances (Lake County Code). As such, there is a need to establish regulations over development within unincorporated Lake County to mitigate potential impacts associated with these developments as well as to serve as a model for other local jurisdictions. Given the complexity and potential long-term implications of data center development, staff believe that a comprehensive evaluation is a necessary pre-condition for developing regulations. This evaluation needs to include research into best practice-based standards already adopted by other jurisdictions, assessment of the potential environmental, infrastructure, and land use impacts, and an analysis of zoning and land use compatibility considerations.

To provide sufficient time for this research and policy development process, staff recommends amending the Lake County Code of Ordinances to establish a temporary moratorium on new data center applications and approvals within unincorporated Lake County. To implement this recommendation, staff has prepared two actions for the Committee's consideration:

1. A resolution for the County Board directing the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) to conduct a public hearing on proposed text amendments to the Lake County Code. The proposed amendments, upon final adoption, would both define data centers and establish an eight-month temporary moratorium on such uses in unincorporated Lake County.
2. A committee action, effective immediately upon adoption of the ZBA resolution, authorizing the Planning, Building and Development Director to impose a Temporary Administrative Deferral on all applications materially affected by the proposed amendment, for a period not to exceed 120 days. To be clear, this Temporary Administrative Deferral – if authorized and instituted – would be in effect during the process of reviewing the proposed text amendments related to the proposed moratorium.

The moratorium-specific text amendment process is expected to take several weeks to several months to complete. Accordingly, the temporary administrative deferral is necessary to bridge that interim period. Together, these actions would provide county staff with sufficient time to evaluate and develop appropriate definitions, zoning classifications, performance standards, and review procedures for data centers before development proposals move forward.