

Missoula Board of County Commissioners

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES COVER SHEET



THURSDAY, JULY 09, 2026 – 2 PM

**Hybrid meeting – Missoula County Courthouse Annex Sophie Moiese
Room/Microsoft Teams**

[Click here to view the meeting recording.](#)

Time stamps (in green) correspond to meeting recording above. Please click to
the time stamps listed to view a particular item in the meeting.

ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners Present:

Chair Josh Slotnick
Commissioner David Strohmaier

Staff Present:

Cheryl Hartman, Commissioners' Office
Karen Hughes, Planning, Development, and Sustainability
Jennie Dixon, Planning, Development, and Sustainability
Kathleen Arthur, Planning, Development, and Sustainability
John Hart, County Attorneys' Office
Tim Worley, Planning, Development, and Sustainability
Anna Sheroke, Clerk and Recorder's Office
Melissa Fisher, Commissioner's Office
Flanna McLarty, Community and Economic Development
Annie Cathey, Commissioner's Office
Mattie Scott, Commissioner's Office
Erica Grinde, Chief People and Risk Officer
Jill Johnson, Planning, Development, and Sustainability
Tenzin Lhaze, Communications
Carey Powers, Communications
Anaeshia Rodriguez, Lands and Communities
John Wilke, Commissioners' Office
Kevin Dantic, Planning, Development, and Sustainability
Allison Franz, Communications
Patricia Spotted Wolf, Commissioners' Office
Katy Reeder, Planning, Development, and Sustainability
Patrick Swart, Planning, Development, and Sustainability
Kyla Lehnerz, Lands and Communities
Lauren Ryan, Community and Economic Development

Kevin Heisler, Public Works
Jacob Allington, County Attorneys' Office
Anne Hughes, Chief Operating Officer
Jordan Hulla, Grants
Chet Crowser, Lands and Communities
Vincent Pavlish, County Attorney's Office
Izzie Varley, Planning, Development, and Sustainability

1. **CALL TO ORDER** [Time stamp – 0:02]
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** [Time stamp – 0:07]
3. **LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT** [Time stamp – 0:26]

Yéttxʷa qe es yammíš
I stítúlixʷs Séliš u Qlispé
sqlqélixʷ.

Today, we are gathered together in
the homelands of the Salish and
Kalispel people.

Qe es putestm tu sqlixʷt ṇkʷuʷulmis
u smimiʷis.

We respect their tribal ways and
their stories.

Qe es lemtm tu xʷí xʷíčmuʷussis
u xʷí sqlqelixʷ yéttxʷa.

We are thankful for their ancestors
and for the people today.

Yéttxʷa qe esyaʷ u qe es čtim ye
stúlixʷ xʷí ci putis čheṇnes.

Today we are all caring for this land
for those yet coming.

4. **PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS** [Time stamp – 0:44]
 - a. Closed Captioning
5. **PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA** [Time stamp – 2:33]
6. **ADMINISTRATIVE CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS**
[None]
7. **CURRENT CLAIMS LIST**
Claims received as of June 04, 2026 to June 26, 2026 by the Commissioners' Office total of \$4,612,342.56.
8. **HEARINGS**
 - a. **Seeley Lake Rural Fire District Petition**
Anna Sheroke, Clerk and Recorder's Office [Time stamp – 3:35]

Commissioner Strohmaier made the motion that the Board of County Commissioners of Missoula County hereby adopt the Seeley Lake Rural Fire District petition for annexation.

Commissioner Slotnick seconded.

[Motion Passed 2-0.]

[Resolution 2026-092 Book: 1130 Page:1002]
 - b. **Resolution to Adopt Blackfoot Crossing Growth Policy Amendment and Rezone**
Kathleen Arthur, Planning, Development, and Sustainability [Time stamp – 5:22]

1st motion:

Commissioner Strohmaier made the motion that the Missoula Board of County Commissioners to amend the Missoula County Land Use Map, Map 18 to assign the Neighborhood Center Open Resource and Recreation Working Lands and Industrial Center land use designations to the property legally described as Certificate of Survey 6988 Tracked 1B, Section 21, Township 13 N, Range 18 W, based on the findings of fact and conclusions contained in the staff report.

Commissioner Slotnick seconded.

[Motion Passed 3-0.]

[Resolution 2026-094. Book:1130 Page:1003]

2nd motion:

Commissioner Strohmaier made the motion that the Missoula Board of County Commissioners to adopt the resolution to amend the Missoula County zoning map to show the property legally described as certificate of survey 6988, Track 1B, Section 21, Township 13 N, Range 18 W as industrial Center, Light neighborhood center, agricultural working lands, AGW 40 and resource and open space based on the findings of fact and conclusions contained in the staff report.

Commissioner Slotnick seconded.

[Motion Passed 2-0.]

[Resolution 2026-094. Book:1130 Page:1029]

c. Data Center Moratorium Interim Zoning

Karen Hughes, Planning, Development, and Sustainability [Time stamp – 19:34]

Jennie Dixon, Planning, Development, and Sustainability

Commissioner Strohmaier made the motion that the Board of County Commissioners of Missoula County hereby approve the resolution adopting a countrywide data center Interim Zoning Overlay District in Missoula County, Montana, establishing a moratorium on permitting new or expanded data centers effective July 9th, 2026 and expiring July 8th, 2027 or when replaced by new zoning regulations

Commissioner Slotnick seconded.

[Motion Passed 2-0.]

[Resolution 2026-092 Book: 1130 Page:1002]

9. OTHER BUSINESS

[None]

10. ADJOURN

Chair Slotnick – Called the meeting to adjourn at 3:54 p.m.

BCC Public Meeting July 09, 2026 – Transcription

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Dialogue in the transcription attributed to "Sophie Moiese Room" is for all speakers that attended the meeting in person. Attendees that participated virtually are labeled individually.

0:02

Meeting for Thursday, July 9th, Would you please join me in the pledge?

0:07

Pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, One nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

0:26

Today we are gathered in the homelands of the Salish and Kalispell people.

0:29

We respect their tribal ways and their stories.

0:32

We are thankful for their ancestors and for the people today.

0:35

Today we are caring for this land, for those yet coming.

0:41

We have any public announcements?

0:44

Yes, we have a closed captioning announcement and then just a little bit different roll call today will be done for online staff and in the room staff.

0:57

Hello, everyone.

0:58

If you're joining us for this meeting virtually today, instructions for turning on closed captioning are on your screen.

1:05

If you're joining us in person, we'll have closed captioning on all the screens here in the Sophie Movies room.

1:15

Just a friendly reminder, there will be multiple chances during the meeting for public comment in person and virtually.

1:22

The chair will open discussion for public comment after each staff presentation.

1:26

Please respectfully keep your comments to 3 minutes.

1:29

If you are in Microsoft Teams, we ask that use the Raise Hand feature.

1:33

This is a small hand button at the top of your screen.

1:36

If you're calling in on the phone, you'll need to push *5 to raise your hand.

1:40

Then once called upon, you will need to push *6 to unmute.

1:43

If you have any questions during the meeting, please come and find me.

1:52

OK.

1:52

Looks like in the room we have Commissioner Slotnick Strohmeier, Karen Hughes, Jenny Dixon, Kathleen Arthur, John Hart, Tim Worley, Anna Shiroki, Mel Fisher, Flanna McLarty.

2:06

Online, we have Allison Franz and Alicia Rodriguez and Hughes.

2:12

Carrie Powers, Jacob Allington, Jill Johnson, John Wilke, Karen and Katie Reader, Kelsey Phillips, Kevin

Dantic, Kevin Heisler, Kyla Leonards, Lauren Ryan, Maddie Scott, Patricia Spotted Wolf, Patrick Swart and Sarah Cochran.

2:31

Awesome.

2:31

Thank you so much, Cheryl.

2:33

OK, before we begin, does anybody have any public comment on items not on the agenda?

2:38

So if you're here for the data center, this isn't the time to speak or if you're here for Blackfoot Crossing, this isn't the time.

2:44

This is the time to talk about anything that is not on the agenda.

2:47

You can literally talk about anything you want and you have 3 minutes and this is in the room or online.

2:52

Come on up.

2:53

I just ask everyone to speak up a loudly here.

2:58

How much of those?

3:00

That's all.

3:02

OK.

3:03

Glad to.

3:03

Glad to do that.

3:04

Thank you.

3:05

Thank you.

3:05

OK, any public comment in the room or online?

3:14

OK.

3:14

Seeing none, we'll jump right to our first hearing, which is about the Seeley Lake Rural Fire District petition and Anna will present.

3:22

Can you hear me?

3:31

Hello.

3:31

My name is Anna.

3:32

I think you better lean right in, though.

3:34

Lean right in.

3:34

OK.

3:35

My name is Anna Shiroki and I am a property records specialist with the Missoula County Clerk and Recorder's Office.

3:42

A petition to annex land into the Seeley Lake Royal Fire District has been submitted to the Clerk and Recorder.

3:50

The property proposed to be annexed is legally described as Tract A1 of Certificate of survey #5237, located in the southwest 1/4 of Section 21, Township 16 N, Range 15 N, in Missoula County, Montana.

4:09

This property does not have a physical address.

4:13

The petition has been signed by property owner owners who represent at least 40% of the acreage and 40% of the taxable value of the property to be annexed.

4:22

A notice of hearing has been published twice in the Missourian and all property owners have been notified of this hearing.

4:28

The petition is now presented to the Board for your decision.

4:31

Thank you.

4:33

Thank you.

4:36

Have any questions?

4:40

Anybody want to speak to this?

4:41

Any public comment, please, Sir.

4:45

Come on up.

4:49

I can talk pretty loud.

4:52

I'm David Castle.

4:53

I'm the owner of the property, so I just wanted you to know I'm here if you had any questions.

4:57

Thank you, Mr.

4:58

Castle.

4:59

You bet.

5:03

OK.

5:03

I will make a motion.

5:04

I would move that we adopt the Seeley Lake Rural Fire District petition for annexation.

5:11

I will second that and call for any public comment.

5:15

OK, seeing none all in favor, Aye.

5:18

Thanks, Anna and thanks, Mr.

5:19

Castle.

5:22

Next up is a resolution to adopt Blackfoot crossing growth policy amendment and rezone and Kathleen Arthur from planning development and sustainability.

5:30

We'll present.

5:36

My name is Kathleen Arthur.

5:38

I work for Missoula County Department of Planning, Development and Sustainability, and today we are for your consideration.

5:47

We have the final resolution to adopt amendments to the Missoula County Growth Policy Map and Zoning Map.

5:57

This is for the Cos 6988 Tract 1B parcel in the W Riverside neighborhood.

6:07

It's about 107 acres proposed by Blackfoot Crossing.

6:13

Just as a refresher, this is the zoning that was approved with the Resolution of Intent, Industrial Center, Light Neighborhood Center, Agriculture, Working Lands and Resource and Open Lands.

6:31

On March 5th is when the resolution of intent was adopted.

6:36

We did noticing and the Mizzou lien on May 30th and June 6th.

6:42

June 29th was the end of the 30 day comment period for that and we did receive some comments.

6:51

There were a couple of comments just with general concerns about the development and its density and then there were several comments about the development being on the Blackfoot River and just being concerned with water quality and that and that is it.

7:09

Thanks, Dave.

7:12

Any staff questions?

7:15

Anybody want to speak to this?

7:17

This is Development Board.

7:21

Come on up to the microphone, Sir.

7:24

Yeah, we're not doing.

7:26

Oh great.

7:27

Sorry man is is the applicant here or the applicant's representative and then we'll do public.

7:32

I got it's on me getting the come on up Jamie.

7:38

Thank you Commissioners Jamie Erbacher with WGM Group representing Blackfoot Crossing LLC just appreciate staff for continuing to take this forward.

7:47

Just regarding density of the development, the NC zone that does require that we develop at a density of eight dwelling units or acre, 8 dwelling units per acre or greater.

8:00

As of right now, what we are working on is a layout for a townhome exempt development on what would be Lot 8 of Blackfoot Crossing riverfront and that right now are the only plans that we are currently working on.

8:15

So that would be all housing and it's kind of the the center of Kathleen's screen here on the South side.

8:25

As far as water quality and quantity, all of that is going to be reviewed by DEQ.

8:29

We are or we do have approval to drill the new public water supply wells.

8:35

So that should be happening in the next few weeks and I think that's all I have right now unless there are future questions.

8:42

Thanks.

8:43

Thank you.

8:46

Anybody else want to do you have any questions?

8:48

Anybody else want to speak to this come on up.

8:56

So I am Gary Matson, a 60 year resident of W Riverside and ioffer my strongest support for the growth policy amendment and rezoning that will enable the Blackfoot Crossing project to be proceed.

9:11

As a 60 year resident, I have seen other proposals for the West Log Yard development fail for various reasons.

9:18

Developer Greg Morris has shown great interest in the Bonner Milton community is history, natural resources and aesthetics.

9:27

His proposal for building sustainable housing that is affordable for young families will help reverse the downwind trending enrollment at Bonner School.

9:37

It will provide a model for housing at a time when it is sorely needed.

9:42

He has planned to serve residents and businesses in Blackfoot Crossing with a state-of-the-art membrane bioreactor wastewater treatment, which would preserve groundwater quality and have no discharge to the Blackfoot River.

9:58

He has planned to enable current residents in the W Riverside neighborhood to connect to the treatment facility if they so desire.

10:06

The neighborhood currently utilizes individual septic systems with limited lifetime.

10:12

Blackfoot Crossing will create new strong assets for our community and the county.

10:19

Any action by the commissioners that would enable the development to proceed would be highly appropriate.

10:25

Thank you.

10:26

Thanks.

10:26

Kay, Please come on up.

10:33

And neglected to say you you get 3 minutes and Dave will monitor the shot clock.

10:41

Yeah, I just had a question.

10:42

My name is Brian Quimby was a little resident almost eight years.

10:46

So I when I went to a city planning conference last year, it was already confusing talking about zoning and it was almost inaccessible to a point on purpose on making sure people don't understand what's actually going on.

11:00

So my question was, is the zoning actually going to be for affordable housing?

11:04

Like what oversight is going to be there?

11:08

So then there's not people gouging prices up and making another set of buildings not being habitable for people who need it the most and not people that are rich and can want to make into Airbnb's and stuff.

11:21

So I'm just curious about actual oversight and with zoning and everything like that.

11:28

And I hear drilling, I think about the environment as well as much as everybody else does.

11:32

So thinking about oversight and accountability with that.

11:37

If the person can answer that possibly.

11:39

Yeah.

11:39

Thanks.

11:40

I'll, I'll, I'll do my best at this and give a little history on this.

11:46

The owner of this land came to us with a zoning proposal and the neighbors really got organized into their credit, came with a counter proposal and we had multiple hearings and a mountain of public comment.

12:00

And this zoning really truly reflects what the neighbors brought.

12:04

We can't in zoning demand that houses or condos or any living unit match any specific price point.

12:13

That isn't what zoning does.

12:15

That's not the tool for that.

12:17

Zoning can say we're going to do housing of a certain density in this area, light industrial here, retail, commercial, etcetera.

12:24

But in terms of the cost, that isn't what zoning does.

12:27

Those those certain those things ensuring permanent affordability can be done, but zoning isn't the tool that does it.

12:35

And this is a hearing about zoning and in terms of drilling, this is drilling for water.

12:41

And as Jamie brought up, the state Department of Environmental Quality will have to give the thumbs up on that.

12:46

It isn't our purview.

12:48

So hopefully that helps and appreciate that you would ask those questions.

12:55

Anybody else like to speak to this?

12:56

Let's press button.

13:05

Please do.

13:06

OK.

13:09

Mark Metzger.

13:11

Yeah, Just lean in.

13:11

Mark.

13:12

I'm Martin.

13:13

Yeah, Thank you, Sir.

13:14

I would take my hat off.

13:15

If you don't want to see my head, that's fine.

13:18

No, my biggest concern is a wastewater treatment center that got approved by the Montana DEQ.

13:25

And to my knowledge, they don't take P fast into consideration when they make a decision on wastewater treatment center.

13:37

And then my other concern, and I think I share the same feelings as a lot of people in Bonner W Riverside area, even Missoula that PFAS is a real issue should be taken into consideration.

13:56

And then also town pump owns property to the West and then to the South.

14:03

So is this wastewater treatment center going to be for housing or is it going to be for Town Pump expansion?

14:10

Or is that even possible for them to go across the street with pipe and hook up to wastewater to allow them to build a hotel or another gas station to benefit Town Pump instead of benefiting the residents and the housing?

14:29

So that's that's my main concern.

14:31

Thanks, Chris.

14:32

Yeah, thanks.

14:36

Anybody else, Jamie, could you answer that question about wastewater?

14:51

We actually have seek handling the wastewater component of the project.

14:54

So I don't know the exact details of it.

14:57

However, I do know that the system itself is proposed to serve just this development.

15:02

So Blackfoot Crossing as a whole at this point, there is opportunity to expand it in the future.

15:07

As Gary mentioned, looking to the north would probably be the most likely option if those residents do desire it.

15:15

OK, thank you.

15:16

Yep, bye.

15:20

Do we have a motion?

15:30

And I'll just say before I make a motion, as Commissioner Slotnick mentioned, this comes at the tail end of a very lengthy and pretty robust public comment process.

15:42

And I think the, the proposal that we are going to be voting on here shortly reflects community concerns about maybe not wanting a large scale travel Plaza in this particular area and just what the the future of this site might look like to align with the with the ultimate vision of, of what this might be and, and mean for the community.

16:09

So I feel pretty good about this and am ready to make a motion and I will do so.

16:15

And I move to adopt the resolution to amend the Missoula County land.

16:20

Well, before I do there, there's another someone else, one public comment.

16:25

Just make the motion.

16:25

I'll 2nd and then we'll call.

16:26

OK, very good.

16:28

I will do a slight re redo here.

16:30

So I moved to adopt the resolution to amend the Missoula County Land Use Map, Map 18 to assign the Neighborhood Center Open Resource and Recreation Working Lands and Industrial Center land use designations to the property legally described as Certificate of Survey 6988 Tracked 1B, Section 21, Township 13 N, Range 18 W, based on the findings of fact and conclusions contained in the staff report.

16:57

Thanks, Dave.

16:57

I will second that and again, call for public comment.

17:00

And I do believe I saw an Erica Lessard come through online.

17:05

Erica, please.

17:07

Yeah, hi, it's Erica Lasard.

17:08

And I was just inquiring.

17:10

No, no worries.

17:11

So there was the question about housing costs and limitations in that area.

17:17

And you stated that this was about zoning.

17:20

And my question is simply where can we look to find out what kind of housing and and what sort of costs are going to be implemented there?

17:32

God, that would be with the developer, the developer directly.

17:36

OK, Thank you.

17:37

Much appreciate it.

17:38

Thank you.

17:40

Any other public comment on this?

17:46

OK, all in favor, aye.

17:49

So the second motion that was related to the growth policy, the second motion relates to zoning and I move to adopt the resolution to amend the Missoula County zoning map to show the property legally described as certificate of survey 6988, Track 1B, Section 21, Township 13 N, Range 18 W as industrial Center, Light neighborhood center, agricultural working lands, AGW 40 and resource and open space based on the findings of fact and conclusions contained in the staff report.

18:18

Thanks.

18:19

I'll second that and once again, call for public comment.

18:21

And I do believe I saw a season.

18:23

Holloway Long.

18:29

Yes, hi.

18:29

I was just going to answer Erica's question because I met with the developer's builder and they are actually interviewing local Realtors within the last couple weeks to do.

18:46

And once they choose someone, they are going to have that person do a market analysis and work with them to set prices for the houses.

18:54

They have general idea what what prices they want.

19:00

And I'm I can't state that out loud, but I will tell you that it is very much in line with what houses are going for in our area out this way.

19:09

So it's not going to be like a six or \$700,000 house.

19:14

It will be way more attainable than that.

19:17

Great, thank you.

19:20

Any other public comment on this?

19:25

OK, all in favor?

19:27

Aye.

19:28

Thanks, Kathleen.

19:30

Thanks, Jamie.

19:34

OK.

19:34

Next up, Karen Hughes will speak to us about the data center moratorium, interim zoning and Jenny as well.

19:43

Jenny Dixon.

20:02

Good afternoon, commissioners.

20:03

I'm Karen Hughes, the Planning Director for Missoula County, and this is Jenny Dixon.

20:08

And to get together, we're here to present a proposal and I've got a thing on my screen there for interim zoning for data centers to put a one year moratorium in place.

20:33

It refuses that there we all right so we're going to start with interim zoning requirements.

20:38

I'm going to talk a little bit about what this interim zoning, whoops, I went back.

20:43

We do overview talk about the requirements for interim zoning, talk about this proposal and then talk go into a bit more detail about the the, the nature of the emergency that we see, because that's a really important element of interim zoning.

20:57

So the basic proposal for interim zoning is to place a temporary pause on development or expansion of data centers to provide time for the county to evaluate impacts of the use and who provide the opportunity to update our regulations to mitigate the potential impacts we discover related to health, safety in the environment.

21:17

Basic requirements of putting interim zoning in place, we have to hold a notice, public hearing.

21:24

The commissioners need to adopt A resolution that identifies the proposed boundaries of the zoning, the nature of the emergency that compels the zoning, and you have to adopt regulations that address that emergency.

21:39

Once adopted, we are required at the county to initiate a study that does several things.

21:44

We have to verify that the emergency exists.

21:47

We have to explore the the you know, what that emergency is, the facts and circumstances of it.

21:54

We have to consider all the options that we might that might help us address that emergency and identify a course of action to be taken during the time when interim zoning is in place.

22:09

So the proposal for the interim zoning regulations is to do a moratorium on any new or expanded data centers, again to provide time to update county zoning to address the full scope and impacts of those uses.

22:23

The zoning would apply county wide.

22:25

It would be a county wide overlay district.

22:29

It would apply to all zoned and unzoned areas.

22:31

It would not apply to the city, so county wide within the underincorporated area of the county, all zoned and unzoned areas and it would be effective upon adoption for the period of one year or until replaced by new zoning regulations.

22:48

So the basic concept of the emergency that we outline is in the resolution before you today is that these are really a relatively new use that communities across the nation are struggling with.

22:59

And, and you know, throughout the, you know, around the world actually our current regulations do not adequately address the potential impacts that we're seeing with these uses.

23:11

And those include things like the substantial energy consumption, water quality and quantity, air quality, heat, noise, vibration and other potential impacts that we haven't fully gone into yet.

23:24

Our current regulations that deal with data centers are the same as those that deal with cryptocurrency mining operate operations.

23:31

They were adopted in 2021 and they've this is really the first Test first time we've had to use them is recently.

23:39

They require several basic things that property has to be zoned industrial that they require that the the operator either generate on site or purchase new renewable energy to offset 100% of the electricity consumed by the operation.

23:56

They require e-waste recycling and meeting all other district standards and if they're within 500 feet of a residential property boundary, they require reviews of special exception.

24:09

So we wanted to talk in a little more detail about the kinds of additional impacts that we think need to be considered and why our current rules and regulations are not adequate.

24:20

And that's kind of at the crux of the emergency.

24:23

So energy consumption running a 24/7 3365 operation is really requires significant energy.

24:34

Cryptocurrency mining did as well.

24:37

The thing that's coming through with data centers that's new is the need for backup generation to support that kind of operation.

24:45

You know that.

24:46

Imagine providing backup generation to a 37 MW data center.

24:51

That's equivalent to all of the city of Missoula's households.

24:55

74 MW data center is all the city's residential, commercial and industrial users combined.

25:01

So that's pretty significant when you think about backup generators doing that.

25:05

And those come with additional impacts, right?

25:07

They come, you know, if you're using diesel, which is the most common, then you've got all the noise, air quality, fuel, all the issues associated with that, that we really don't have.

25:21

We have an energy provision in our zoning but we don't have all of this covered.

25:26

And then depending on the size and the scale of facility, it may require additional utility infrastructure to support the project, power line substations, etcetera.

25:36

Water quality and quantity.

25:39

Water use can be really variable and it depends on a lot on the cooling technology is what we've discovered.

25:45

A mid sized data center can use the equivalent of a small town and larger ones obviously go up from there and then it, you know, so there's the water that's being used and pulled and then there's the potential release of water that could obviously cause water quality concerns To add to the add to the equation, they see release and disposal of wastewater.

26:09

Sometimes it's periodic and regular, sometimes it's not for a long time, but it might happen in the case of a of something happening with our operation.

26:18

So we have to be thinking about how that works, you know, whether it's leaks and repairs, system flushes, blow down, where they clear out the system to remove scaling and things like that and other cases of discharge and the chemicals that would be used in that system.

26:35

There was a recent case brought to our attention from Cheyenne, WY where they stopped accepting data center wastewater into the municipal system after it contaminated their their water system with the with things in the wastewater air quality.

26:56

Again, this really points to the backup power generation and the potential impacts.

27:02

Typically we see these having diesel or natural natural gas generators and although of course they have to meet state standards, there can be localized impacts that can be acute.

27:14

So and not only do they require they, you know, you might end up having to run them during backup during the time when power goes down, but they have to do testing to make sure that it's all operational.

27:27

So they might run, you know, a 50 hour test right, periodically.

27:32

So obviously, you know, you have particulate matter, nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide odors, methane slips for natural gas generators, volatile organic compounds and and other and other issues that come with natural gas generators.

27:54

Heat, if you use a lot of power, you're going to release it as heat.

28:02

We are seeing studies that demonstrate warming of surrounding areas in the vicinity of generators or in the vicinity of data centers.

28:12

And you know, we know from our own studies that heats an important health indicator noise, low frequency noise, infrasound and vibration.

28:26

And I'll have to rely on Jenny to explain some of this if if we want to dive in at all.

28:31

But essentially, we have certain noise standards, but they don't address the kinds of noise that are coming in with these 24/7 operations where you have that continuous low frequency and the potential for tonal noise and it goes on and on, right.

28:49

And that impacts, that has potential impacts on human health, but also potentially on wildlife and it can really disrupt natural systems in that way.

28:59

And then other potential adverse impacts.

29:02

And there's probably more than the ones listed here, hours of operation when we think about backup generation, hazardous materials and emergency response, potential winter icing, hazards from cooling tower plumes, there's a whole range of things.

29:17

And essentially the whole point of this is this, that we, our current regulations don't address any of these additional issues.

29:26

And we need to study them, figure out what what we what the key issues are for our community and then develop a set of regulations or a regulatory package that addresses those issues.

29:40

And that's the whole purpose of interim zoning.

29:43

So the next steps in this is for you to receive and consider public comment.

29:49

And then as that closes, you may want to consider potential updates to the description of the emergency.

29:55

So you may want to add things to it or possibly, I guess make changes to the zoning proposal.

30:02

And then after that we have a recommended motion to approve adopting the resolution or it could be as amended and we're happy to answer questions when you get to that point.

30:18

OK, thanks Guy.

30:19

I might just add that, and this is probably common knowledge at this point that the Bonner developed, the Bonner Data Center development application is no longer and so.

30:47

So we we totally appreciate passion and emotion, but we're really going to try and keep it chill.

30:52

So that was wonderful.

30:54

But from now on, no more clapping or anything like that.

30:57

Thank you.

30:58

Yeah.

30:58

So the, the, this concept of developing these interim regulations developed as part of our review of that Bonner data center and a recognition as we took comments from citizens, did our own research and drafted a very lengthy letter to the applicant for the Krambu Bonner Data Center that we really recognize we needed to to do more.

31:28

And that's why we're here in this hearing.

31:32

I mean, you're free to talk, comment on whatever you want, but no need really to talk about Krambu as far as a potential project in the works it's done.

31:41

So thank you.

31:43

Thanks.

31:46

So one thing I wanted to add here before we dive in on the public comment.

31:53

If Krabu had chosen to go forward, they would have had to present to our Missoula County Consolidated Land Use Board and ask for a special exception to the zoning we created five years ago, and they chose not to do that.

32:09

This is a bit of evidence of the power of zoning.

32:13

Zoning is how we decide what we're going to do where.

32:16

And what we're seeing today is not a rescinding of our prior zoning 'cause it wasn't good.

32:21

I feel like it was pretty darn good circa 2021.

32:26

Back then, a data center meant something very different than what it means right now.

32:30

These types of impacts that Karen and Jenny were describing were not part of the conversation five years ago and they are now.

32:37

So our purpose, if I'm just putting a finer point on it, is to give us some time so we can consider these new impacts that didn't exist when we first did this zoning.

32:46

And I'm still really proud of our zoning.

32:48

We were the only ones in the country at the time that attempted to address cryptocurrency.

32:52

And we're able to consider data centers.

32:54

I can say from recently being involved with the National Association of Counties, we were at the head of it.

33:01

Barely anybody has addressed this with zoning.

33:03

And now everybody's scrambling to, we're scrambling as well, but we didn't have to quite so hard because we have this initial zoning in place.

33:12

And so and I would also mention, and it may have been evident in news stories, I haven't caught up to all the the media on this, that the applicant Krambu was still, I believe interested in coming to Missoula.

33:28

And the manager at the mill site, Mike Heisey, as many of you probably know, started to get the sense, and I don't want to put words in his mouth, but my understanding started to get the sense that there was more or less desire to work collaboratively with the community and voluntarily withdrew his signature from the application.

33:53

Because he want from the beginning has wanted to make sure that that this was done right.

34:01

If it was going to happen, that it would be done right.

34:04

And that is what the special exception gave us, the opportunity to look at all the impacts and mitigate them.

34:12

And if we couldn't, the potential could be it would be denied.

34:17

So there were a lot of avenues this could have gone.

34:20

I'm glad to hear you give my props for keeping the community in mind.

34:24

Yes.

34:24

OK.

34:25

So with that, anybody can speak to this.

34:27

You get 3 minutes, Dave's going to monitor shot clock.

34:35

Hi, my name is Romyra.

34:36

I'm a professional singer-songwriter and entrepreneur who works in tech and software.

34:41

When I travel to play shows, I'm proud to tell people my home is Missoula, Mt and I want to keep it that way.

34:47

I'm here to urge you to adopt the interim zoning for data centers.

34:51

I believe we need a pause before allowing infrastructure this large and resource intensive into our community.

34:58

Missoula is already under a lot of pressure.

35:01

People are barely keeping up with rent, food and utility costs, and we cannot afford to take on projects that could put more strain on our water, our energy grid, our land, and our neighbors.

35:12

Because I'm a musician, I also think a lot about sound and vibration.

35:16

Vibration is not abstract.

35:18

It affects bodies, it affects nervous systems.

35:21

It affects animals.

35:22

It affects whether a place feels livable.

35:25

The same way a song can calm you down, move you or make you feel alive, constant industrial noise and vibration can do the opposite.

35:33

That should matter when we're talking about public health and quality of life.

35:37

This is not just about the one project.

35:39

It's about what kind of future we are choosing for Missoula County.

35:42

We need time.

35:43

We need stronger laws and real protections.

35:47

Please adopt the interim zoning.

35:49

Protect our water, our energy, our land, and the people who live here.

35:53

Thank you.

35:54

Thank you.

35:54

Have a prepared comment.

36:00

Before I start, I just wanted to add that it was pretty traumatic to hear the impacts of the possible data center center county and stepped up early here so I could get through.

36:12

This comment made me pretty emotional.

36:18

Good afternoon.

36:19

My name is Nathan Stevens, I'm a fourth generation Azulian and my family has deep roots here.

36:24

We go back to Montana Power, the early days of KG VO and farming in East Missoula.

36:30

My family even worked at the Bonner Mill baseball field out there is actually named after my cousin.

36:35

I'm also a former UM Griz.

36:39

I strongly support this interim zoning.

36:41

The news that the Bonner Mill property owner withdrew his signature this week is a genuine win for this community.

36:48

And I am, I am, and I am grateful to him for listening to the concerns residents raised.

36:57

I also want to acknowledge the county staff, review that application closely and press Krambu on real problems along the way.

37:04

That diligence is part of why this outcome was possible, but this project showed how much can slip through without stronger rules in place.

37:13

It took five rounds of applications, 29 documented deficiency, and months of sustained public attention to surface issues like contradictory water use figures and unaddressed Legionella risk.

37:26

Even with careful staff review, that's a lot of scrutiny required to catch what should have been flagged from the start.

37:33

The application itself described a 2029 Watt MW fills facility, which public reporting indicated the company's actual ambitions for the site were as high as 100 megawatts.

37:45

That gap between what gets submitted and what a company may actually intend is exactly the kind of thing this county cannot catch application by application, and Crambo has not withdrawn its application.

37:56

Staff confirmed the company could still approach another property owner here or elsewhere in the county, and any future proposal would move through the same regulations once your own staff have said were written for cryptocurrency mining and still have real gaps for facilities of the scale.

38:12

Data centers of this size bring significant water use, noise, heat and power demands.

38:19

This process raised a bigger question that I don't think has been answered yet, whether facilities like this belong in Missoula County at all, given what they ask of our water, our power grid, and our communities in return for very little in local jobs or lasting benefits.

38:36

And interim PODS gives the county time to actually work through that question and to set clear, enforceable standards if data centers are permitted here, rather than relying on residents and staff to catch problems 1 application at a time.

38:51

I'm asking you to adopt this interim zoning.

38:56

I also ask, it's not on my thing, but I heard you only want one year.

38:59

I don't think that's long enough.

39:00

2 to 4 would be adequate.

39:02

This is a very complicated issue.

39:04

I don't think it can be studied in a year's time.

39:07

This has been very hard for many people in the community to bring you lots of comments and we were very reasonable in our demands.

39:15

Please don't make us do more work to bring you this.

39:18

You do a do a comprehensive study.

39:20

Take the time.

39:21

Thank you.

39:23

Thank you.

39:24

Remember, we're going to be chill.

39:31

Hello.

39:32

Thank you.

39:33

My name is Lisa Thomas.

39:34

I'm a resident of East Missoula.

39:35

I want to thank you for holding this meeting.

39:38

And I'm speaking today in favor of a moratorium for data centers in Missoula County.

39:45

While we have all watched nationally the Canary in the coal mine communities who have been decimated by data centers there, small towns have been ruined by the consumption and pollution of data centers.

40:00

So I believe a weight is prudent and necessary to preserve our own natural resources to move forward.

40:08

During this time we can see what we need and what is important and really focus.

40:14

Knowledge is power and whether we move forward after this or not, we will have the knowledge to move forward intelligently and with regulations that will again speak to not needing staff to go application by application.

40:29

It will stop things a lot sooner.

40:33

I also want to speak to the 42,000 people and still growing that signed the last petition against the last Data center speaks to your constituents and that we do not want this.

40:45

Last thing I want to say is about the difference between the county and the city.

40:51

Living in East Missoula, we have seen developers simply asked to be annexed into the city.

40:57

No rules apply.

40:58

They have to go to the city.

41:00

So that worries me greatly that any property owner can just request annexation and put a data center in the county.

41:10

And that ruins our water, our groundwater, river water, our air, our sound.

41:16

It's still going to be all around us.

41:17

Even though we live in the county.

41:19

The city can come in and they have their own their own regulations and the county residents do not have any representation on the City Council, which we have seen is a problem.

41:32

So I'd like love it if that could be addressed or at least to make you aware that there is that change regarding annexation.

41:40

Thank you.

41:41

Thank you.

41:45

No, no, no, no.

41:53

Hi, my name is Carla Abrams.

41:54

I live in the I live in Missoula.

41:57

So I want to say I am proud of Missoula County.

42:01

I stand in solidarity with communities all over the United States and calling for this moratorium on data center development and supporting it.

42:10

I am happy to support Missoula County to pass this one year moratorium on data center development and I am confident that by passing this moratorium, the County can take the time it needs to determine together what our community needs.

42:28

New data centers have many potential impacts.

42:30

They all need to be addressed.

42:32

Thank you Missoula County for passing the one year pause on development.

42:37

Also, I want to mention one more thing, which is heat, which is one of the big concerns.

42:43

I want to mention that we are looking at the worst El Nino event in the history of recorded weather coming to us.

42:50

Now many people don't know what that means for Missoula, but I guarantee as a scientist, I know that we will be impacted by this.

42:58

So the climate needs to be one of our number one considerations as we go forward with this.

43:04

Thank you.

43:05

Thank you.

43:10

My name is Beth Taylor Wilson and I'm from Missoula.

43:16

I completely support the one year moratorium proposed no matter what our monopoly utility Northwestern Energy says about their proposed merger with Black Hills Energy, which is a frack gas utility almost entirely.

43:33

It's all about data centers all over in Montana.

43:37

So I'm going to address the elephant in the room regarding data centers, which is climate change.

43:44

I'm quoting from a column that Bill McKibben wrote on April 19th this year entitled Big Oil Breaks Everything.

43:57

I try hard to stay focused and what we can still do to ward off the worst.

44:02

But every once in a while I'm reminded of why we're here, on a planet rapidly overheating.

44:08

When I started writing about the climate crisis in the 1980s, I was in my 20s, and I didn't fully comprehend that there could be a force on this planet so steeped in greed and power that it would sacrifice the Earth and its inhabitants for its own narrow interests.

44:27

But there is, and it's Big Oil, Big Whale mobilized to defeat the cap and trade proposals at the end of that decade.

44:36

And here Bill is referring to the 80s and to scuttle the Copenhagen climate talks.

44:41

What we didn't know then was just exactly how vile all this greedy maneuvering really was.

44:47

It wasn't until 2015 that reporters delving into the archives and interviewing whistleblower whistleblowers proved that the exons of the world had known everything there was to know about climate change back in the 80s and simply chosen to lie about it.

45:04

It's never far from my mind what a different planet we live on.

45:08

Had they simply fessed up at the start and gotten to work on the problem?

45:14

The GN 40 administration vetoed this last legislative session, a bipartisan community solar bill.

45:23

His appointees on the Department of Environmental Quality are from the fossil fuel and timber industries, not a climate scientist to to be found.

45:32

And their whole administration has been impeding and dragging their feet on the held decision, which reaffirmed yet again that our kids have a constitutional right to a clean and helpful environment.

45:45

And I'll close with this, close with this quote from Greta Tunberg.

45:50

My message is that if we do not care about the climate crisis and if we do not act now, then almost no other question is going to matter in the future.

46:00

Thank you.

46:02

Thank you.

46:06

Hello, my name is Allie Duvall.

46:09

I'm a long time resident of Missoula County living between E Missoula and Bonner, 3.5 miles from the Bonner Mill site.

46:17

I want to thank you so much for the work you've done.

46:21

It's clear that we're standing at a very unique moment where we need to collaborate as a community.

46:28

I also want to publicly recognize and thank Mike Heisey for withdrawing the signature from the application, as well as all of the community members who expressed that opposition and how much it was needed.

46:40

I've spent nearly 30 years working in community based landscape scale conservation across the Western US and Canada, supporting agencies, coalitions and communities as they proactively protect the special places, resources and working lands that keep our ecosystems vibrant for the future.

46:59

Today, I want to give my full support to the commissioners to adopt interim zoning.

47:05

I'd like to see two to four years as well, and associated regulation to create as much time as possible for a thorough understanding of the impacts on our water, especially through drought and climate change, on energy use and air quality, and on land use compatibility with the values of the surrounding community.

47:23

Data centers and AI are not going away, but we're here to stay.

47:28

That means we need to roll up our sleeves and engage as a community to understand the system, what got us here, and what we need to know as we look ahead.

47:38

Montana, and Missoula specifically, has a history of conservation leadership.

47:43

We need to follow the giants who came before us.

47:46

We are a community that cares deeply about this place.

47:56

Sorry.

47:59

That means we need acts of leadership at every level on this issue, meeting the challenge with both the art and the science of civic engagement.

48:10

And what we need most from you as as people in positions of authority who care about this county so much is to protect the space for adaptive work and technical work on this issue.

48:21

In that case, it means giving us the time to do the work and develop grounded, tested solutions.

48:27

I also request that as we're doing this work, that you give the work back to the community.

48:33

Let us engage in the process, bring forward research data, run community meetings that help us understand the values and the conflicts at stake in moving forward with data centers in Missoula.

48:44

Perhaps the Citizens Advisory Committee could be useful.

48:49

People support what they help create.

48:51

Let this community be a part of creating a grassroots future for our home as it relates to data Centers for the future.

49:00

Thank you, thank you.

49:06

Hi.

49:07

Oh goodness, the mic.

49:08

My name is Maya Decker.

49:10

I am a born and raised Missoulain and I want to hear be here to offer a bit of perspective on the history of 20th century conservation on the Blackfoot.

49:19

We are incredibly lucky to stand literally on the backs of giants.

49:22

And what some of you may not know is that when people came to film Norman Maclean's or river run through it.

49:27

In fact, the river was so overrun and polluted they were confused how a book could have ever been like written about it.

49:35

But in fact, after long efforts by regulations, by concerned citizens such as us, we are lucky to be able to have access to clean water.

49:43

Data centers threaten this and we have an obligation as a community to put a moratorium so that we can ensure that when there are facilities in place, we are able to approach them.

49:52

Currently, we cannot do this.

49:54

Why is this the case?

49:56

Currently, data centers use anywhere from 100,000 to nearly 20 amount as much electricity as average homes.

50:05

What this means is that also in 2020, five, \$60 billion was spent in an increase in electricity bills for Americans.

50:13

That means that in 2025, Americans paid 10% more on average in electricity bills than they had the prior year because of data centers.

50:21

Furthermore, the water usage is like kind of incomprehensible.

50:26

The average data center uses 300,000 to 5,000,000 gallons of water a day.

50:31

As Montanans, this is uniquely harmful.

50:34

Why is this the case?

50:36

Over 1/3 of Montana residents are currently living in a drought, which means that we are unable to make sure that our Montana residents have access to water.

50:44

Data centers are going to continually threaten this, but what I really want to highlight is these PFAS forever chemicals.

50:50

Why is this the case?

50:52

Two legislative sessions ago, the Water Quality Act was repealed, which requires that water quality has to be tested for forever chemicals and data centers, in order to cool their machines, have to pump water full of forever chemicals.

51:05

That's 15,000 chemicals that are linked to increases in cancer, increases in diabetes, increases in things such as dementia.

51:13

And we are literally unequipped to be able to test for this because our legislative like standards do not require that data centers have to tell us whether or not they are polluting our rivers.

51:23

This is also under the Trump administration water quality era, which currently has a duct test, which is essentially, if the water looks clean, then it's clean enough to be allowed by regulation.

51:33

What this means is that if we do not put a moratorium on this now, we are opening our community up to cancer rates, to infertility.

51:40

As someone who was born and raised here, I would love to be able to have kids here.

51:44

And I worry that if we have data centers, I am never going to be able to have children.

51:48

And I think that that's like an immense grief, and we ought to be able to do what we can to protect people.

51:53

This requires further research.

51:55

This requires further regulation.

51:57

And we are unprepared to do that at the present.

51:58

Very proud to say that we should affirm this.

52:01

Thank you.

52:09

I am Shanti Devons, and I'm here on behalf of Climate Smart Missoula.

52:11

I'm the program Director there and the mission of our organization is to build and accelerate climate solutions for Missoula and beyond.

52:17

And for well over almost a decade, not well over almost a decade, Climate Smart Missoula has been involved with various zoning issues and opportunities with the county, including the initial emergency zoning related to cryptocurrency that was referenced in 2018.

52:30

And we strongly support this emergency zoning pause on the development or expansion of data centers so that the county can develop updated informed zoning regulations.

52:39

We all recognize that data centers bring with them a host of issues.

52:41

We've been talking about them, including the impacts on our energy systems, climate, water resources, health and safety.

52:47

And as we're learning here and across Montana and the United States, those issues are significant and they pose both immediate and long term threats.

52:53

It's crucial to take the necessary time at this juncture to pause so that we can get it right.

52:57

And we're extremely hardened to hear that the Missoula County is intending to investigate the circumstances of the emergency and the potential course of action to mitigate the said emergency.

53:06

Depending on your findings, we with the now withdrawn Crambo application, the time is ripe for this moratorium.

53:11

Missoula County Commissioners and staff have a track record of tackling big thorny issues in order to best serve the public responsibly, carefully considering how regulations impact and protect all of us today and in the future.

53:22

And we commend you for considering this emergency zoning.

53:26

Thank you for this opportunity for all, for all of us to weigh in.

53:29

Thank you for considering this, and we are happy to help however we can.

53:32

Thanks, Shanti.

53:39

Thank you, everybody.

53:40

Can I hit the There we go.

53:42

My name is Paul Barmore.

53:44

I'm a lifelong Montanan resident of Missoula since 2018.

53:48

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

53:50

I'm here to urge you to pass this moratorium on AI data center development until detailed regulations going to be developed or even better, an outright ban can be passed.

54:00

I got involved with the movement to halt the Bonner Data Center by writing a petition that garnered more than 49,000 signatures as of today in opposition of that project.

54:10

The main concerns including water, land pollution, environmental disruption and impacts on human health.

54:17

Montanans and our rivers have already paid the cost of short sighted corporate greed.

54:21

The pursuits of the Copper Kings resulted in the Berkeley Pit, a blight now 70 years old.

54:27

More recently, the Yellowstone Club supposed self-contained 80 million gallons Wastewater Pond was found leaking 15 gallons per minute into the Gallatin River in 2012 and still leaks today.

54:41

I grew up in Gallon Gateway and I was affected by this pollution as a child.

54:44

I do not intend to stand by while another corporation pollutes and harms the Montana I will leave for my son and daughter to inherit.

54:54

Decision makers should remember and consider that Montana's ecosystems are delicate and require thoughtful long term care.

55:01

Rapidly evolving and experimental technologies like data centers do not do not belong in environments where ecological balance is critical.

55:09

If we consider allowing data centers into our county, we need proven long term models showing they can exist without disrupting local ecosystems.

55:18

And without those models, it is irresponsible to allow data center development in Missoula County.

55:24

If you all here value public opinion, you will acknowledge that there is an overwhelming outcry to prevent development of AI data centers in Missoula County.

55:33

The voice of opposition is loud while supporters of data centers are nearly non existent.

55:38

Montanans care about our wild lands and our outdoor recreation.

55:42

We do not value wealthy corporations and their money making ventures at the cost of our pristine outdoors.

55:49

Failure to pass this moratorium is a failure to your duty as public servants.

55:54

When the opinion of constituents is so crystal clear.

55:58

Please align yourselves with the residents of Missoula County and pass this proposed moratorium.

56:04

Thank you.

56:06

Thank you.

56:12

Hello.

56:14

All right, Hello and good afternoon to the county commissioners, land use planners and the Missoula community.

56:21

My name is Alessandro.

56:22

I live in the Franklin to the Fort neighborhood here in the city of Missoula, and I'm the director of a community organizing group called Missoula Neighbors United.

56:30

I am here to urge the County Commissioners to adopt the interim zoning measures discussed here today.

56:35

As of Monday this week, the owner of the Bonner Mill site where a data center was proposed withdrew his signature on the business application.

56:43

As far as I see, this still means that Krambu, the company attempting to build the proposed data center, still has an active application.

56:51

This, in my opinion, obligates the County Commission to pass interim zoning as quickly as possible before Krambu enters into a new application process that may complicate things further for the County and the rest of the community.

57:03

The decision to implement interim zoning in order to adopt proper data center zoning parameters is also in line with the County's decision to update its comprehensive land use planning.

57:13

Though this update is taking place through 27, the County does have active growth policy and land use plans on the books already, including the 2005 Missoula County Growth Policy, which clearly states the County's intent to quote, respect the different elements of neighborhood patterns and integrate them so as to form a functional, aesthetically pleasing and livable whole.

57:34

Also from the 1998 Urban Comprehensive Plan, preservation of the diversity, integrity and unique values of our neighborhoods, communities in rural areas is one of the most important goals for well managed growth.

57:45

And finally, from the 2016 growth policy as part of its landscape goals, conserve vital natural resources, including surface and groundwater, air quality, agricultural resources, iconic landscapes, Fish and Wildlife species and their habitats, native and native plant communities.

58:03

On this note, I would like to state that the County has my group, Neighbors United, as a willing and eager collaborator as we've begun intensive research on data center zoning since our data center campaign launch one month ago.

58:16

MNU is in contact with organizers and researchers around the state in the country to get a sense of what data center zoning will make sense from Missoula County.

58:25

We look forward to discussions about this with you all at the County as this process continues.

58:30

Finally, this moment provides the County commissioners A crucial opportunity to firmly express the will of the public on the data center issue, an area where the state and federal government has, on the whole, failed to do.

58:43

The rushed introduction of artificial intelligence and it's required infrastructure into our communities is an expression of the lust for power and profit of the Titans of the technology and finance sectors.

58:54

These developments, if not inclusive of the will of the public threaten to create a permanent consolidation of the social power possessed by American tech oligopolies in surveilling and controlling human behavior at large scale, as well as exponentially increasing the degradation of our environment and lasting impacts on worldwide.

59:13

Alessandro, so sorry.

59:15

Second, which this type of unfettered profit driven and industrial development is responsible for one last part.

59:21

Let us have the decision.

59:22

Let us have the decision to engage in a moratorium by Missoula County become part of a trend regionally and nationally of rationally planning a future that emphasizes the primacy of human and other organic life.

59:34

Thank you, Dave.

59:39

Good to see you.

59:40

Good afternoon.

59:42

So I'm Dave Thompson from Frenchtown Sperry on my resume, but I do have some professional experience in this area of data center.

59:47

So just a couple things I want to mention.

59:50

The largest variable input cost to a data center is power, right?

59:54

So how much does it cost you to put your power into it?

59:58

And when you think about it, all of the power that goes in a data center comes out as one thing, heat.

1:00:03

Now what do you do with the heat?

1:00:05

Under, you know, conventional wisdom, you need to spend about for about a MW in, you need to spend about a MW out, right?

1:00:12

So it's about 5050.

1:00:13

Now, the single biggest variable input into what your power cooling cost is, is the temperature of the fluid you're putting the heat into, right?

1:00:22

Because you just got to move the heat, you got to move it out of the data center and into someplace else, the outside.

1:00:28

If you're calling that outside to outside air, you know, how hot is the data center, how hot is the air?

1:00:34

I'll tell you why they want to be by the river, because Montana river water is cold.

1:00:39

So with cold river water, if you run a loop through that river, you can reject heat directly into the river.

1:00:44

Now, that's not good for fish, right?

1:00:46

But it's good for data center profits.

1:00:48

If you want to run a cooling tower, you want to pump water out of the ground.

1:00:50

You want to pump water out of the river, put it through a cooling tower, evaporate that water off, leveraging the latent heat of vaporization to cool your data center.

1:00:58

That water goes up, goes in the jet stream and leaves our aquifer.

1:01:03

So these are some of the things I think it's very important that the county take take a look into and I'll leave you with that.

1:01:10

Thank you very much.

1:01:10

Thanks, Dave.

1:01:15

Hello again.

1:01:15

Whoa, for for once, I'm actually too loud right now.

1:01:18

OK, My name is Brandon Quinby.

1:01:21

I am not just a little guy.

1:01:22

I also am speaking from someone who used to serve on Bill, the Kevin's Leadership Committee of the Environmental justiceorganization350.org.

1:01:32

I'm on the local health Behavioral Health Advisory Council for the county, the Access to Care Task force for Missoula Public Health, and the Community Living Task Force for the Community Health Improvement Plan, which is a five year plan.

1:01:45

And also something I would would like to see be put into place for a pause is a five year.

1:01:51

That's to put the standard when it comes to the bureaucratic stuff.

1:01:53

For what I've gathered, we already have administration that is already against earth prospering.

1:02:02

And at the same time we're trying to live longer lives.

1:02:07

We're trying to make sure our our kids and animals, everything around us is able to have healthy long life spans.

1:02:14

And data centers are such an eyesore.

1:02:17

Just thinking aesthetically pleasing as well.

1:02:21

And we already don't prioritize beauty when it comes to billboards and all that stuff, key in the integrated resource plan for Northwestern Energy.

1:02:33

We need to invest more time.

1:02:35

And we also need to look at models of cities the same size as us and know that there's already been an emergency.

1:02:42

We just haven't been listening.

1:02:44

And these regulations need to be longer of a pause in one year because these are going to go away.

1:02:51

But we, as other people have said, we're not going anywhere.

1:02:55

And I'm asking you all to have a critical eye on that and think about your think about the community and create transparency and actually make sure that these, the AI and the all these data center stuff will not impede on how front hands can prosper because they don't belong anywhere ever.

1:03:18

Even if there's a fire, which is a quote I don't want to get into, but yes, I want to end with that.

1:03:27

If there isn't a pause brought, then it sounds like a codependent relationship with the with corporate greed and we need there's not.

1:03:36

It's not too late to think about making that first step to a better relationship with power.

1:03:40

So please choose wisely for everybody involved.

1:03:43

Thank you.

1:03:43

Thank you.

1:03:50

Good afternoon county commissioners really quick.

1:03:52

A lot of points have already been made.

1:03:54

My name is Joaquin Tillman, been resident here for about 5 years.

1:03:57

My family's from Missoula and Frenchtown.

1:03:58

I mean the main thing power, but water also.

1:04:02

I mean our aquifer is already so low.

1:04:05

Our rivers are already already over allocated.

1:04:07

I don't understand why we think bringing in a data center is going to help or fix anything.

1:04:12

Montana's been warming by 2.5° the past 50 years and a steady increase.

1:04:16

Looks like we're going to keep going too.

1:04:18

So why bring heat and why bring the oh the water?

1:04:21

Why take the water away from us right vote to reject.

1:04:26

I mean I'm vote to the enterendum is right.

1:04:28

I want it like four or five years.

1:04:29

I don't even think there's a place for them in the county that begin with in mind Canada.

1:04:33

Montana's constitution guarantees us a clean environment for our children and I would like to have children here, especially this is play great place to raise children in Missoula and having data centers in our county, let alone around us, you know, that's gonna strip everything that we like about this place.

1:04:53

And one last note, I'm studying pre engineering.

1:04:58

So the closed whole closed loop system that doesn't fix anything that actually adds more PFAS, more forever chemicals and more more pollution into our into our into our waterways.

1:05:09

Sure, you're not getting a heat, maybe as much heat in our rivers, but then you're polluting them more.

1:05:14

And ultimately the science that the lot of these companies are trying to use and the science that these data centers are using are the cheapest.

1:05:21

There's so many better ways, better ways to engineer like cooling and power ways, but they're just cheap companies trying to come in, be like, oh, look at the nice cool water.

1:05:29

I, I think I've heard a quote from one of these.

1:05:31

I think it was Karambu.

1:05:33

It doesn't get hot in Montana.

1:05:34

That's why it's perfect for, for, for a data centers.

1:05:38

It looks pretty hot out there.

1:05:39

So I it does get hot in Montana and I don't think we need data centers here.

1:05:42

Thank you.

1:05:44

Thank you.

1:05:56

Hello, my name is Lucas Moody.

1:05:58

I'm Co chair of Western Montana DSA and member member of the Montanans against Data Centers Action Team AKA Madcat.

1:06:09

Just wanted to say that while I wasn't born in Missoula, I came here at the tender age of 8 and it made a big impact on me that my initials were on the mountains here.

1:06:21

But that being said, I, I, I remember a time when we used to get horrible inversions here in the valley that the, the pollution just would, everything would get trapped and you'd have overcast days like all winter and until you got like the spring winds to clear things out.

1:06:37

And we've done a lot environmentally to change that in the inter, I mean, years to where it, like Missoula is, is, has always been a beautiful place to live.

1:06:47

But it's especially, especially now, even as the climate is getting warmer.

1:06:54

And like, because I remember as a kid, a Clark Fork river used to completely freeze over and now most of the creeks don't even freeze over now.

1:07:06

Mostly going to be riffing here since one of the hazards of going later in line is that a number of your your points already got taken.

1:07:13

But one, one of the things that I don't think has been brought up is that Missoula, 50% of our water comes from the aquifer.

1:07:24

And so that puts the city at a massive risk.

1:07:27

If that were to get polluted by P fabs or other other chemicals, that would be the result of basically bringing a data center into this town or into the county as a whole.

1:07:45

And I think going forward in the future, what we need are things that promote life and promote livability.

1:07:51

And a data center doesn't do that.

1:07:53

It's, it's provides like half a dozen jobs and makes the climate more inhospitable for us.

1:08:02

And, and going forward, we really need to focus on making the climate sustainable and being able to not just for us, but for the ecosystem, because we are dependent on that ecosystem as much as it is influenced by by us as well.

1:08:21

And I would like to echo the sentiments of longer moratorium, like the two to four range rather than simply a year.

1:08:29

I agree that even though coming onto this project moving from the gravel pit in Bonner had to pivot from that with Missoula Neighbors United into raising awareness about the data center.

1:08:46

But so, yeah, I'd just like to echo the sentiment to have an extended moratorium.

1:08:52

Thank you for your time.

1:08:53

Thanks, Lucas.

1:08:57

Hello.

1:08:57

My name is Olmos David Foster.

1:08:59

I'm here today bringing the voices of my ancestors and my people to this room.

1:09:04

I'm not at the Bee on Blackfoot, on Black feet from the Blackfoot Confederacy, on Dakota and a Cinnabon from the Olchette Shakoi nations.

1:09:13

I come from people who have inhabited this land for over 18,000 years.

1:09:17

We have been dated to be here before the Great Continental Divide, and I'm only 22 years old.

1:09:26

I want to share a bit of a of my story.

1:09:30

I come from a long line of people who have been colonized, who have seen their lands be taken, who have seen their children be taken, who have watched generations be eradicated, their animals be eradicated, their medicine be forced underground.

1:09:47

My, my fight for this land and water and our people go back as far as me being born back in 2015.

1:09:58

I was at Standing Rock defending sacred lands from the Dakota Access Pipeline that in the end still was built, still was built over the thousands of people who gathered on that land, protecting it day in and day out.

1:10:12

And when I hear things as like Missoula being a poster child, I want y'all to know that I'm, I'm not poster child.

1:10:23

I'm I'm the child that comes from those people who this federal government wore the faces of the branding of who occupy our lands, who use our animals to put forth this American dream.

1:10:36

And I want you to know that that it's not real.

1:10:39

It wasn't real because it's it's just been a costume.

1:10:45

And so I don't really have plans coming up here besides like championing my, my, my comrades, my kin in this room, the people who took a stand and gathered with one another.

1:10:57

And I want you to know that your fight's not over.

1:10:59

And it will never be over and won't be over as long as your children live, as long as your children's children's live.

1:11:06

This is a fight that will be here until the end of time now, because that's what that's where we're at now.

1:11:14

There's no point of looking back and believing that we, we can rebuild.

1:11:19

You know, we have to save whatever is left here.

1:11:23

We have to rely on each other, build kin with one another, build economies off of each other, build real jobs, build affordable homes of get affordable groceries.

1:11:37

There's just so many things that go into this.

1:11:39

And so I just want you all to keep keep your head in it, keep your children's head in it because again, your children's going to have to fight this fight.

1:11:50

I'm here fighting this fight because my parents can't fight this fight anymore.

1:11:54

Thank you.

1:11:55

Thank you.

1:11:59

Hi there, everyone.

1:12:00

My name is Mabel Funderburg.

1:12:02

I am a resident of Missoula.

1:12:05

There have already been a lot of people who have brought attention to the emergent and very crucial concerns like water and air pollution.

1:12:12

But I'd like to take some time to expand the attention to noise pollution that comes from these data centers.

1:12:17

And this information is coming from people who are much, much more intelligent than myself.

1:12:22

I don't have any expertise in this area.

1:12:23

I'm just somebody who cares.

1:12:26

So data centers produce infrasonic and low frequency noise anywhere from under 20 Hertz to over 200 Hertz due to the continuous mechanical cooling required and their power functions.

1:12:36

As noted already in the PowerPoint presentation, these systems operate 24/7 365.

1:12:42

There are no quiet break periods.

1:12:45

Below 20 Hertz is typically considered undetectable to the human ear.

1:12:49

However, community similar to ours who are unfortunately experiencing these data centers have reported that they are in fact audible.

1:12:57

These infrasonic and low frequency noise emissions are very difficult to block.

1:13:02

They travel through solid objects such as doors, walls, windows, and soil under the foundation of buildings, so there is no hiding from this noise.

1:13:12

The noise pollution causes adverse effects to plant life, wildlife, and human life.

1:13:16

It triggers an increase in the stress hormone cortisol, which can lead to chronic headaches, migraines, sleep disturbances, cardiovascular diseases, and other adverse distresses.

1:13:26

Also, notably, there is a link between wildlife stillbirths and fertility issues, so unlike other forms of pollution such like air and water pollution, there are currently no federal or state of Montana guardrails that limit these ILFN pollutions.

1:13:41

I would urge everyone to accept the interim zoning moratorium with an intention to permanently banned them from Missoula County.

1:13:49

The people of Missoula County, as of my last refresh in line here, 49,239 and counting, have made it crystal clear that we do not want data centers in Missoula County or in Montana.

1:14:03

One of the things that we all I think love about Montana is the great outdoors.

1:14:07

So let's keep Montana, Montana.

1:14:09

Thank you.

1:14:09

Thank you.

1:14:14

Hello, commissioners, planners, administrators.

1:14:16

Thank you very much for holding this meeting to the meeting today.

1:14:20

My name is Ben Cat and I'm a on and off again, lifelong Missoula County resident, and I also represent the Montana Environmental Information Center.

1:14:27

And we wholeheartedly support this declaration of an emergency and this interim zoning push.

1:14:33

Data centers definitely represent changes in our relationship to energy, water and emergent contaminants and more that constitute an emergency.

1:14:42

I also want to say thank you for having this meeting.

1:14:44

In contrast with other counties around the state, Yellowstone counties, commissioners are suing their citizens for trying to run an initiative to have voter approval for sighting of data center.

1:14:55

So I like that you guys are being proactive in a very different way.

1:14:58

So thank you for that.

1:15:01

Me.

1:15:01

I see he's been holding public education panel events around the state with enormous turnouts.

1:15:05

And then recent polling we've seen that Montanans are overwhelmingly concerned about data centers and their demands that they want to place upon Montana.

1:15:14

That one proposal in Yellowstone County wants 10 times the average electricity demand that all of Northwestern Energy's customers are currently using.

1:15:23

So that is that is an emergency 100%.

1:15:26

We've been wholeheartedly impressed with the diligence, Jenny Dixon in particular and Spain Newman and Karen Hughes that you performed in the application process that we've watched with Kramboo and that this prior zoning allowed us to to have in place.

1:15:43

And that it's provided transparency, accountability and public process so that we've been able to fully vet this proposal.

1:15:51

And we've seen the company make some better decisions about what they're putting forth.

1:15:56

And then we've also seen them actually reveal some things that maybe they were not wanting to be forthright about in the 1st place.

1:16:02

And so the process was, was working.

1:16:05

And I think that is fantastic and I would like to then recommend that we expand that process that both in geography, you know the Bonner residents were only afforded that special exception criteria process because of the proximity to residential.

1:16:21

And I think that all of Missoula County deserves that process if another proposal of this sort comes forth regardless of proximity.

1:16:29

I also think in scope of impact, as you guys have already said, 2021 data centers have changed dramatically since then.

1:16:36

We know a lot more now about heat and its impacts, about water use and chemical use like PFAS as we've heard mentioned a lot up here about backup generation and so on.

1:16:46

So there are a lot of things that we were able to take a hard look at because of our diligent planners, but that need to be included in there mandatorily right off the bat.

1:16:56

So thank you very much, Missoula County, for giving a road map to others around the state.

1:17:00

I hope that we can both make these regulations more robust here and that others can be afforded these protections as well.

1:17:08

So thank you.

1:17:09

Thanks, Ben.

1:17:14

Hello, my name is Kagan Bonstein.

1:17:16

I'm a resident of Missoula for the past ten years.

1:17:19

I'm a first generation Montanan.

1:17:22

I come from the Northeast of the United States, which I can understand gives a fair bit of skepticism from where I come from and how my people operate.

1:17:32

But I've chosen to live here because of the efforts that I've seen here today and how much due diligence really goes into these types of developments and how that considers all things we have here that we really care about.

1:17:47

I'm absolutely in favor of the moratorium being prolonged because I think anything that we're going to do here requires time in order to brainstorm and gather the very best idea.

1:17:59

Of course, I think we all would be happy to not have this be something that we're facing because of how much we truly treasure the place in which we live and the nature that we interact with every day.

1:18:13

The world spins forward.

1:18:15

And so as we do that, I would encourage us to keep an open mind not to give in to the developments of a company coming in to us, but understand that we have bargaining power to create something new.

1:18:31

So read something that addresses the heat output and all of the scientific terminology that I don't have at my disposal here today.

1:18:39

I think that because of it's proven in other parts of the world that green technology is in fact possible, that it could defang the immediacy of this development if we proceeded forward in that way of truly trying to build something better.

1:19:02

And perhaps it would take away our dependence on things like AI and set a precedent moving forward.

1:19:10

I am a food service worker.

1:19:14

I work at Saint Pat's Hospital.

1:19:17

I don't have the lingo or the perhaps cloud to say what I'm saying, and I'm certainly not pushing the need to lean into technology.

1:19:28

I just think that we have two very beautiful possibilities in our future.

1:19:33

Based on the response that we've had to this proposal, we could push it away and not have it take place and continue on in our developments and our zoning and our progress within our community, which is exemplary.

1:19:46

Or we could do something to develop it so the rest of the world can look and say we don't need to give in to the money because the money is our environment in our community.

1:19:56

Thank you, thank you, thank you all.

1:20:01

I'm Michael Workman, I grew up here in Missoula.

1:20:06

I grew up swimming actually in the old dam site just above.

1:20:12

The Milltown Dam, not really knowing the health effects of that, but living a nice and carefree childhood.

1:20:21

And we just got that cleaned up and now there's continued threats to that same area and that has me deeply concerned.

1:20:30

I'm in support of this moratorium.

1:20:32

I'm also in support of taking more time to research the kind of catastrophic nature of data centers and to really understand that if we give in to these data centers, that we know what we're actually accepting.

1:20:49

And I think that we're at a kind of crossroads right now in Montana.

1:20:57

We've faced this before.

1:20:58

We've faced the Copper Kings, we and now we have Elon Musk and we have Sam Altman and we have all these different people coming in doing a similar thing because we're in another gold rush, a speculative gold rush.

1:21:11

And I think that we need to ask ourselves, whose side are we on in this moment?

1:21:16

Are we on the side of the billionaires?

1:21:18

Are we on the side of workers?

1:21:19

And I've been really inspired by Missoula.

1:21:24

The community here has shown up.

1:21:26

There's been over 50% of data centers have been postponed or cancelled that were planned for this year.

1:21:32

And now Missoula hopefully can be one of those communities that fought back against this corporate greed.

1:21:38

And I think we should all, all the people in this room should remember that and take that forward, that when we get organized, we can win and we can beat these corporations back.

1:21:49

I don't need to state the potential concerns of data centers.

1:21:54

Again.

1:21:54

I think everybody's covered that better than I could here, but I hope that you all consider this and vote yes on the moratorium and consider extending the period of of research before we do irreparable harm to our community.

1:22:10

Thank you.

1:22:11

Thanks, Michael.

1:22:13

Hello.

1:22:14

Hello.

1:22:15

My name is Rachel Hoffman.

1:22:16

I've been a resident of Missoula for the last 8 years.

1:22:19

I stand in favor of adopting the moratorium.

1:22:21

I wasn't sure if I was going to make a comment when I came today, but I am for one central reason.

1:22:27

We've heard the laundry list of detriments both in the presentation and from my fellow commenters.

1:22:31

You don't need to hear them again from me.

1:22:33

But my main question, and it is a rhetorical 1, is what is the benefit of these centers?

1:22:39

All these stories from across the country of the horrors of data centers.

1:22:42

I have yet to hear one single substantive argument that doesn't center ambiguous numbers of jobs created or they encourage the growth of AI that increasing them percentage of people do not want.

1:22:54

So that's my question.

1:22:55

If these data centers are nothing but a tangle of risk management and mitigation with little improvement to the communities they're affecting, why are they necessary at all?

1:23:05

In the absence of any tangible benefit, I encourage the consideration of whether data centers should be permanently banned from both Missoula County and City.

1:23:12

I also agree with my fellow commenters who expressed that one year is far too short for a study of this kind.

1:23:18

In the grand scheme of scientific study, one year is almost nothing more.

1:23:22

Consideration and time should be taken, and I encourage moratorium of three to five years.

1:23:26

Thank you.

1:23:29

Thank you.

1:23:31

Hello again.

1:23:32

I'm Gary Matson.

1:23:33

I'm the W Riverside resident.

1:23:35

I strongly support the interim zoning that would pause the development of new data centers in the county.

1:23:41

Updated regulations should include specifying the means by which a data center can comply with the regulation now states these facilities shall be required to develop or purchase sufficient new renewable energy to offset 100% of the electricity consumed.

1:24:00

To comply I'm the data center should be required to develop or purchase the same number of MW hours used annually by the facility.

1:24:11

That is A5 MW Data center must be required not to merely provide new renewable energy with the nameplate capacity of five megawatts, but must annually replace its electrical usage of 43,800 MW hours with that amount of electricity from a new renewable energy facility of appropriate size and capability.

1:24:35

Besides their large electricity usage, a second potential very large impact of data centers as water usage.

1:24:42

The county regulation for data center should require an evaluation by the Montana Department of Natural

Resources and Conservation and confirmation that the proposed water usage would not negatively impact the area aquifer.

1:24:57

And secondly, an annual report by the data center to DNRC in Missoula County stating the data center's water use.

1:25:06

So thank you for what you're doing.

1:25:08

Thank you, Gary.

1:25:14

Hello, my name is Nathan McIntyre.

1:25:17

I am a recent arrival to Missoula County.

1:25:20

I came here for a job in the environmental sciences actually, and I was thrilled to see how quickly the petition spread around the county and the community.

1:25:32

Where I come from is a slightly smaller, similar sized city out in Virginia, and more often than not I find my city looking to other communities for guidance and how to regulate some of these more difficult questions.

1:25:50

And it's through the guidance of cities that are taking first steps, like Missoula County, that they were even able to pass pollinator sanction sanctuary rules in my hometown.

1:26:02

And with how much concern and threat the data centers bring to not just our communities, but our environment, it is very important that we take our time and take these things into deep consideration.

1:26:17

And so I am proud to say that where I find myself today is on the forefront of doing this.

1:26:24

And I encourage that even if something is coming out inconclusively, don't hesitate to extend the, you know, what I'm trying to say to continue to figure out what is best for this community and what might be a good set of rails for other communities to follow.

1:26:44

Thank you.

1:26:46

Thank you.

1:26:50

Hello.

1:26:51

My name is Caitlin Posercia.

1:26:52

I'm a Missoula resident, and I'm here on behalf of the Montana Chapter of the Sierra Club to support the proposed moratorium.

1:27:02

Back in 2019, we advocated for the joint City County commitment to reaching 100% clean electricity by 2030, and we were proud supporters of the county's effort to pass pioneering zoning regulations on cryptocurrency operations that accounted for the threat of ballooning energy use.

1:27:21

Missoula County at the time, and we know that although the current zoning regulations help protect from some impacts of large scale AI data centers, they were primarily meant to address concerns with Bitcoin mining.

1:27:34

So are not sufficient to address the threats posed by AI data centers.

1:27:40

Many of which, as other folks have spoken to, have had alarming impacts on community energy use, water quality, water availability in communities across the country.

1:27:54

We are still living in a climate emergency.

1:27:56

And we are also now facing unprecedented scale, facing an unprecedented scale of AI data center development that's further straining communities, energy resources and water resources at the same time.

1:28:11

So we very much fully support the proposed moratorium on data center development in Missoula County and

we're grateful you're considering taking this step to address the groundswell of concerns that have come from Missoula community members that are specific to this new wave of development.

1:28:29

I'll, I'll submit some more detailed suggestions online, but I want to propose that before any new applications for new data centers are considered that we see an update to zoning regulations that accounts for the full scale of community impacts posed by developments of this sort that work to both health protect the health and welfare of Missilians and ensure that the environment is not compromised by the sighting of these facilities.

1:29:01

And we would urge zoning restrictions that account for all of the common concerns with data centers, including restrictions that will ensure that future developments are required to use renewable energy sources for both daily operations and backup generators and and make it clear that carbon credits are not on the table.

1:29:26

We also hope to see more requirements around transparency for future proposals, strong community mechanisms for input, restrictions around the release of toxics and forever chemicals, along with other protections for ground surface water, and making sure, as other folks have said, that data centers are paying for their own electricity use and mitigating any impacts on wildlife.

1:29:57

So please pass moratorium.

1:29:59

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

1:30:07

Hi everyone.

1:30:08

I'm Doctor Colette Berg, and I'm a plant evolutionary geneticist.

1:30:11

I came here to Missoula in 2019 to study the genetic effects of extreme heat on plant adaptation, an area that just becomes more and more relevant as the climate crisis intensifies.

1:30:23

Since then, I've earned a PhD from the University of Montana, I've gotten married to a lifelong Montana, and we look forward to raising our children here.

1:30:31

We've already heard a lot about the science.

1:30:32

So I'm going to focus more about what I see as the potential impacts of this data center and AI more broadly on our young people in Montana.

1:30:41

Because I was AI was ATA of Rocky Mountain Flora and Ecology and botany here for six years at EU, And I think our young people are just like the greatest treasure that we have.

1:30:53

So first, I don't think I need to expand any more about the potential environmental impacts of AI data centers and all the possible concerns.

1:31:00

I also want to talk about the detrimental effects of AI on education and on young people's brains.

1:31:06

I'm so, so grateful that I was able to learn to read and write and write code and do math in an era that was before the shallow thinking and expectation of instant results of the AI era.

1:31:19

I'm not blaming students for the use of AI.

1:31:21

Rather, I want to emphasize that we are failing them.

1:31:24

We are making it more and more difficult for them to think harder.

1:31:28

And it is a product of a neoliberal era that sees education as a product rather than a process.

1:31:35

I also wanted to say that we're failing our young people because of the extreme anxiety and alienation about employment prospects, which is exasperated by the effects of AI.

1:31:46

These AI corporations are trying to make as much money as they possibly can right now, all the while using AI as justification for mass layoffs.

1:31:54

People deserve to support themselves and engage with their community through meaningful work, and AI threatens to take that opportunity away.

1:32:01

I'm going to paraphrase Ursula Guinn here and say that the proliferation of AI feels inevitable, but so did the divine right of kings.

1:32:10

We can start in this room and in places like this room all around the country and say, hey, you cannot poison our water and tax our power grid and cause mass unemployment.

1:32:21

At least not if we have anything to say about it.

1:32:24

So I'm so incredibly inspired by everyone who has already spoken today, and I want to wholeheartedly support the moratorium on AI data center zoning.

1:32:31

Thank you.

1:32:32

Thank you.

1:32:36

So, oh, sorry, I'm short.

1:32:38

I know.

1:32:41

Do I have to press anything?

1:32:42

No, it's green.

1:32:43

My name is Jennifer Stevens, and I'm a resident of Missoula.

1:32:47

I grew up here, left for college, came back.

1:32:50

So I would like to just start by saying I'm in support of the moratorium, also extending it longer than one year and bring a little bit of a broader picture to the table.

1:33:04

I hope that there will be a place for the community to continue to give public comment in the development of regulations in the event that the interim zoning moratorium goes into effect.

1:33:18

I appreciate the work that you've done so far to support that and the questions that you have been asking.

1:33:26

I hope that also, when regulations are being developed, that everything can be done to prevent them from being susceptible to being overturned by the 2027 legislative session.

1:33:41

I don't know how much primacy comes into play in this scenario, but it's important.

1:33:48

The Montana Energy Task Force just met in Helena this week.

1:33:53

They're putting together recommendations for the upcoming legislative session.

1:33:58

And of the 20 people on the panel, 13 of them are representatives from energy or data center companies.

1:34:10

There's Tail and Energy, Northwestern Energy, Quantica, CB Data Centers, Terra Wolf, Next Era Energy, Montana, Dakota Utilities, Northwest and Intermountain Power Products, the NRG Montana Electric Cooperative Association.

1:34:28

See if I can read my own writing, Grit United, BHE Transmission, Bonneville Power Administration.

1:34:37

So all of those folks are on the energy task force.

1:34:42

Now, my first instinct is to think that an energy task force is considering all of the energy needs of the state of Montana from different sources.

1:34:51

However, with this lineup of members, that's not the conclusion I would draw.

1:34:59

So keep that in mind when putting together regulations.

1:35:06

The next meeting for that I think is August 25th, if anyone is interested.

1:35:11

Also, in conversations with other people, it seems that Krambu, although a data center builder, is not necessarily a data center operator.

1:35:22

They're a middleman building a center that they intend to sell off to someone else after it's built.

1:35:28

So any regulations need to have enough teeth to hold any future owners or operators also accountable to high standards.

1:35:38

Thank you.

1:35:44

My name is Claudia Narcisco and I am a fairly long time resident of Missoula.

1:35:51

Came here in in 1974.

1:35:55

I am AI hope that you do pass the interim moratorium.

1:36:03

The data center is everyone has spoken highly about the data or at length about the data center, so I won't go into detail there.

1:36:11

But every once in a while we do something good.

1:36:16

Removal of the Milltown Dam and the dredging of the toxic sludge behind it was something good.

1:36:25

I attended the ceremony celebrating that way back and I don't know, 2000 and 567 and, you know, listened to the tribal people to talk about and pray for the return of the bull trout and, you know, other species and, and it was very moving.

1:36:43

So to look at all the work that has been done in the Bonner area, the confluence of the, the Blackfoot, a designated recreation, a river, It's, it's a step in the wrong direction.

1:37:00

So I mean, I don't even want to consider it at any time, but at the one year moratorium to study all the unknowns.

1:37:08

The one thing that comes with age is like, you can look back and you could see, oh, this reminds me of the nuclear industry.

1:37:16

How much stuff it do we not know about it?

1:37:21

And we're still dealing with the, the residual of that.

1:37:26

And now we're going to be dealing could be dealing with not only here, but everywhere the residual of the rare earth minerals.

1:37:34

You know, people have presented things that needed to be studied.

1:37:37

And you know, I'm not going to even go there because I'm not qualified to go there.

1:37:42

But we don't even know if it has any benefit whatsoever.

1:37:47

The prior person just spoke.

1:37:48

She said that that there's the economics like Wall Street Journal keeps reporting that we don't even know if these buildings are going to be used or if the AI is going to have what kind of a future.

1:38:00

So basically we're setting ourselves up for another boom and bust economy.

1:38:07

And from what?

1:38:09

What are we ruining our confluence?

1:38:11

What are we ruining our rivers?

1:38:12

What are we ruining our environments and our health?

1:38:16

And for for what?

1:38:19

Thank you, Claudia.

1:38:23

Afternoon.

1:38:25

My name is Reagan Mason.

1:38:27

I'm a member of this community, small business owner, father and a husband and I am in support of this moratorium and I hope that you extend it Five years would be great.

1:38:43

Thank you for everything that you guys have done so far and I look forward to see what you do with this next portion that we have coming up.

1:38:49

Thank you.

1:38:49

Thank you.

1:38:52

We have anybody else in the room before we go to Folks Online.

1:38:58

All right, thank you for all your comments and we'll jump to Folks Online.

1:39:06

Jane Maru.

1:39:07

Jane Maru.

1:39:11

Hi, can you hear me?

1:39:14

Yes, we can hear you.

1:39:16

Hello, greetings.

1:39:18

I'm a long time resident of Missoula County.

1:39:22

I live in Potomac.

1:39:24

I want to thank Mike Heisey for removing his signature.

1:39:29

I think he dodged a bullet.

1:39:31

I think we all dodged a bullet.

1:39:35

I didn't have to dig very deep to see that Krembo has a track record of noise complaints from crypto mining operation.

1:39:47

They are currently in litigation in Idaho for questionable business practices.

1:39:54

You can easily find that it's let's see what is that it is Crambo versus Evans.

1:40:06

So I'd like to say that first of all that I am not opposed to AII.

1:40:14

Sec.

1:40:16

Where it can be a massive benefit to humankind.

1:40:23

But as far as the data centers go, here's the good news.

1:40:28

If we put a moratorium that is beyond one year, say five years, we're not going to need them at that point because every day we are seeing emerging technologies and they are expected to make today's large scale facilities partially if not largely obsolete with just within just a few years.

1:40:52

So given the speculative nature of this industry, the company's history, the prior failure at this exact site of the Bonner Mill with the crypto mining that was there and the risk of rapid technological obsolescence, I strongly recommend requiring A substantial registered capital bond or performance bond is a condition of any approval.

1:41:26

This bond should fully cover decommissioning, site remediation, lost tax revenue, and economic impacts if the facility underperforms or closes permanently.

1:41:43

AI data centers represent a new and rapidly evolving industry with significant societal, environmental, and moral implications, as the woman earlier spoke about regarding our children.

1:41:58

And what is it that we are imposing on our younger generations?

1:42:04

Are we going to just ignore that?

1:42:07

I respectfully request that the Board explicitly incorporate ethical considerations into its review process.

1:42:16

A few key ethical issues.

1:42:19

Jane, sorry to interrupt you just hit our 3 minutes.

1:42:21

We really appreciate what you had to say, but we're we're keeping everybody to 3 minutes.

1:42:25

We had a out of state businesses receive tax incentives and extra local resources while the party.

1:42:30

Thank you Jane.

1:42:33

OK, can we go to another communities?

1:42:36

Thank you, Brenna Love.

1:42:45

Hi there.

1:42:46

Sorry I can't be there in person.

1:42:47

Thank you for making a virtual option available.

1:42:50

My name is Brenna Love.

1:42:51

I have lived in Missoula County my entire life and I have been recreating the Blackfoot, the Clark Fork and the Bitterroot since before I could walk and talk.

1:42:58

I first want to say thank you to the county employees who have been so present and responsive throughout everything that occurred throughout the Krampu threat in Bonner, where I had lived for the last six years.

1:43:09

Before public comment, it was implied that Cranbou withdrew their zoning application for the Bonner site based on existing regulations in Missoula County.

1:43:18

That's not true.

1:43:20

Thank you, Jenny Dixon, for clarifying that the landlord at the Bonner site withdrew his approval based on public opposition.

1:43:26

Without Mike Heisey's change of heart in response to that massive and organized public outcry, Jenny would be getting ready to review application number six right now from Cranbou strongly in favor of the proposed one year moratorium on the development and expansion of data centers in Missoula County, or longer.

1:43:44

I understand Missoula County's current regulations are more protective than many communities have.

1:43:48

However, I think that what we just saw happen in Bonner, that overwhelming opposition, is proof that existing zoning regulations are insufficient and that that case study in Bonner should clearly establish the emergency status needed to justify this proposal.

1:44:04

Frankly, I would like to see a flat out ban on data centers in our beautiful state and I will continue to encourage those sweeping bands at the city, county, state and federal level burning barring the county's ability to do that today.

1:44:17

We need clear protective regulations as well as enforcement mechanisms that have real teeth and we need time to make that happen.

1:44:24

Thank you.

1:44:26

Thank you, Bill.

1:44:30

Go ahead.

1:44:47

We can't hear you if you're talking.

1:44:55

There we go.

1:44:55

Can you hear me, Mr.

1:44:56

Chairman?

1:44:57

Yes, Mr.

1:44:58

Chairman.

1:45:00

And commissioners and planning staff.

1:45:01

Bill Lombardi from Seeley Lake.

1:45:06

I'm glad you're considering this moratorium.

1:45:10

I agree that it should be a year at least and extended if if you need to.

1:45:15

I think you really need to look at the cost benefit analysis of these proposals.

1:45:20

As previous speakers said, what are the benefits and what are the cost to this?

1:45:26

I'm in an unincorporated area, Seeley Lake.

1:45:29

We have a citizen's council up here at Seeley Lake Community Council, and I was on the Planning Commission, planning Advisory Council for Condon after the big Holland Lake snafu and thank you for your planning staff for helping us on that.

1:45:44

This is one of the reasons why we need some kind of regulatory authority in these unincorporated areas like Seeley and Condon up this beautiful valley here, which is one of the last undeveloped valleys in in this state.

1:45:58

Very rural people prize.

1:46:00

The rural nature of the wildlife, the access to public lands and the overwhelming support we got when the Planning Advisory Commission was to keep our water clean, our water clean.

1:46:12

You already have a special management area in Seeley Lake for nitrates.

1:46:16

Water is the most critical aspect up here.

1:46:18

People come and enjoy our water up here in in the Seeley Swan wildlife uses our water.

1:46:24

We have bull trout, threatened bull trout, we have threatened grizzly bears and lynx.

1:46:29

So I'm urging you to adopt this moratorium to look at the cost benefit analysis and down the road to adopt some regulatory authority in these unincorporated areas like Condon.

1:46:41

And we, we, we citizens stood up and said no to large commercial resorts and developments.

1:46:48

There's a proposal on the table to put zoning through in Condon for large commercial development so that hopefully we can get that done.

1:46:56

But this is will will take the place of that for, for now for data centers, we need to really get as you saw we, we had a, a large output, 7000 people opposed to that large destination resort in Condon.

1:47:12

So we need to protect our water up here and data centers use a lot of water and we need to protect that water up here.

1:47:19

So I urge you to pass this.

1:47:22

Thank you, Mr.

1:47:23

Chairman and and Commission.

1:47:25

Thanks, Bill.

1:47:30

All right, we're great.

1:47:33

Please, we have some questions.

1:47:34

Yeah, a couple questions for staff.

1:47:36

First off, my understanding is that by state law, we do not have the authority to outright on a permanent basis prohibit data centers.

1:47:48

So if staff could address that or legal or legal counsel could address that, what we're contemplating today is, is not permanent zoning that would prohibit data centers.

1:48:02

But again, my understanding is that that even though that's come up today, we do not have the authority to do that.

1:48:12

So something my name's John Hart.

1:48:15

I'm in the county attorney's office, and one thing that people need to appreciate about county government versus state government versus city government is that of those three, county government is a limited power political subdivision of the state.

1:48:38

The Montana Constitution explicitly states that county government can only do those things that have been specifically allowed by the Legislature.

1:48:52

And one of those things is zoning, right?

1:48:57

That's why we're here today.

1:48:59

And zoning is a very powerful tool.

1:49:02

This interim zoning provision that you're considering today is a powerful tool.

1:49:09

Also, it's limited to one year.

1:49:13

OK.

1:49:14

So we heard a lot of people who would like to have it extended.

1:49:18

You can only enact interim zoning today for one year.

1:49:24

There is a provision that allows you to extend it for another year, but you have to come back, have another hearing, have an explanation as to why the one year was not a sufficient amount of time to address the the emergency and come up with solutions or, or mitigation or regulations that address the emergency.

1:49:47

So one year today, that's all you can do and you're not considering a ban on data centers.

1:49:56

There is nothing in Montana law that allows county government to ban data centers.

1:50:07

And so that is not something that we're going to consider today and it's probably not in the cards for the next year or less.

1:50:18

As we develop regulations, what we're trying to do is come up with ways to mitigate the impacts from data centers, and that will not include an outright ban on the data centers because we don't have that power.

1:50:37

If citizens want Missoula County to have that power, the Legislature will be meeting this winter.

1:50:45

And the Legislature can give Missoula power, that explicit authority, but we don't have it right now.

1:50:54

Thank you, John.

1:50:54

Thanks, John.

1:50:58

Yeah, there.

1:50:58

Yeah, The only question I was going to ask you answered already, which was the law around interim zoning in the one year.

1:51:05

I did want to do a couple of my own comments just to stay on brand.

1:51:09

Absolutely.

1:51:11

I agree with most everything everyone said.

1:51:14

My only disagreement was with the person who said, Oh no, it wasn't the zoning, it was Mike Heisey.

1:51:19

I very much appreciate Mike.

1:51:21

Full transparency.

1:51:22

I'd say we're we're acquaintances, almost friends.

1:51:24

I get along with him and I really appreciate his dedication to the community.

1:51:27

The reason why there wasn't a data center, Bam, was because of our zoning.

1:51:33

If it had been allowed in our zoning, there would be a data center because they were less than 500 feet from a residential area.

1:51:41

They had to go to our Missoula County Consolidated Land Use Board and ask for a special exception, which is a process because of our zoning and because of all this public outcry, I would bet that that board was going to say no.

1:51:54

So yes, our zoning, incomplete as it was because it's five years old, very much kept this data center from happening in Bonner.

1:52:01

And Mike High C deserves all the props that people are offering it.

1:52:05

Second thing I want to say, the word fight was used a whole bunch.

1:52:10

It is just begun.

1:52:11

As John noted, the legislature's meeting in a few months.

1:52:15

The legislature has a proud tradition of undoing what Missoula County has done.

1:52:20

They will absolutely go after it.

1:52:22

And when they go after it, Michael mentioned the the heroes of the, of, of the AI world, untold riches.

1:52:31

We cannot fathom how much money these folks have.

1:52:33

And they will be throwing a portion of that at state legislatures across the country.

1:52:37

We have no lobbyists.

1:52:39

You only have legislators.

1:52:42

You all are going to have to exert the same pressure on the legislature, on our delegation and go to Helena and write letters and speak your mind and do all the organizing that you've done today.

1:52:51

You're going to have to do it again.

1:52:53

And I'm sorry for that.

1:52:55

And I'm really pleased that I know that you can do it.

1:52:59

So with that, do we have a motion?

1:53:06

And while that's being pulled up, I would just say I am very pleased that Missoula County today will be at the tip of the spear in the state of Montana and taking a deep breath to take a deliberative, methodical approach over the next year or potentially more to assess the impacts of data centers on our communities, on our citizenry and on our county.

1:53:31

So with that, I would move to adopt A resolution adopting A countrywide data center Interim Zoning Overlay District in Missoula County, Montana, establishing a moratorium on permitting new or expanded data centers effective July 9th, 2026.

1:53:46

That would be today and expiring July 8th, 2027 or when replaced by new zoning regulations.

1:53:53

I'll second that.

1:53:55

And by state law, I have to ask for public comment, but please don't unless you're saying something that no one has said.

1:54:04

OK.

1:54:05

With that all in favor, aye aye.

1:54:07

Thank you everybody for coming and all the work you've done.

1:54:09

Now we can clap.

1:54:10

Thank you.

1:54:14

And before we go, so much thanks to our staff.

1:54:19

This would not have happened without them.

1:54:27

Now we can catch the last of the Morocco France game.

1:54:30

Thanks.