



# Vermont Data Center Defense

Community Toolkit — Full Edition

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[vtdatacentertoolkit.org](https://vtdatacentertoolkit.org)

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Carol M. Highsmith / Library of Congress

## VERMONT COMMUNITY RESOURCE

**Vermont almost made Big Tech play by the strongest data-center rules in the country. The Governor**

**said no. Here's how you finish the job — starting today.**

Vermont has no hyperscale data center yet — and a grid too small to quietly absorb one. A tripartisan supermajority already passed H.727. The veto was seven votes short of an override. The door is open. The tools to close it are yours.

1

## THE SITUATION

## What happened — and what comes next

 GROUP The mandate

**In 2026, a tripartisan supermajority passed H.727 — one of the nation's strongest data-center bills.** The Senate voted 26–3. The House passed it on a near-unanimous voice vote. Vermonters across every party said: protect ratepayers, protect water, make Big Tech pay its own way.



## REFERENCE

## The veto — and the open door

**Governor Scott vetoed H.727 on May 28, 2026.** The House override failed 83–52; 90 votes were needed — seven votes short. Today there is **no data-center-specific law in Vermont.** The door the Legislature voted to close is standing open.

H.727 is not law. It was vetoed. Do not rely on it as a protection in force today. It is the ready-made bill to revive next session — nothing more, nothing less.

**WIN Protect what you have**

**You are not starting from zero.** Act 250 land-use review, PUC §248 review for generation and transmission infrastructure, 250+ years of Town Meeting direct democracy, and the Vermont Public Records Act are live levers right now. H.727's text is ready for next session. The job: use the protections you have and put the mandate back to a vote.

**THE VOTE RECORD**

SENATE PASSAGE

**26–3**

HOUSE PASSAGE

**Near-unanimous**

OVERRIDE ATTEMPT (90 NEEDED)

**83–52**

VOTES SHORT OF OVERRIDE

**7**

**May 28, 2026** — veto date



Carol M. Highsmith / Library of Congress

**Legislative timeline**



**JAN 6, 2026**

**S.205 introduced — temporary moratorium on AI data centers >100 MW until 2030-07-01**

Sen. Rebecca White's bill referred to Senate Finance; stalled in committee. The vehicle that moved was H.727. S.205 died at adjournment May 29, 2026.



**2026 SESSION**

**H.727 passed Senate 26–3**

"VT Sustainable Data Centers Act" — 20 MW framework, ratepayer protections, water/PFAS monitoring, on-site renewables.



**2026 SESSION**

**H.727 passed House — near-unanimous voice vote**

One of the most decisive data-center votes in any state legislature.



**MAY 28, 2026**

**Governor Scott vetoed H.727**

Vermont has no data-center-specific law as a result. H.727 did not become law.



**MAY 29, 2026**

**House override failed 83–52 — seven votes short of the 90 needed**

S.205 also died at adjournment the same day. No operative data-center statute exists in Vermont.



**NEXT SESSION**

**Revive H.727 — the mandate already exists**

The bill text is ready. The supermajority voted for it once. The job is to close a seven-vote gap.

**A vetoed bill and a failed override are not defeat — they are a mandate with a seven-vote gap.**

**WIN Bottom line**

The votes for this policy already exist. A vetoed bill and a failed override are not defeat — they are a mandate with a seven-vote gap. Vermont's own tools are in force today. The legislative vehicle is ready for next session.

## 2 | THE GRID Vermont's grid — the facts

These figures carry two or more independent sources and are cleared for use. Each one tells you the same thing: Vermont's grid is small, and any large new

load reshapes it for every ratepayer.

**~880 MW**

Vermont statewide peak electric demand

Vermont Dept. of Public Service, 2026 Annual Energy Report

**+7.5%**

GMP rate increase effective Oct 1, 2026

PUC Case 26-0096-TF (confirmed)

**~\$30M**

Estimated grid hookup cost that stopped the St. Albans proposal, 2025

VT Digger, 2026-02-24

**~5 MW**

Vermont's current total data-center electric load — three small Chittenden Co. facilities

VT Digger, 2026-02-24 · Vermont Public

### One campus vs. the entire state — a scale comparison

VT current data center load (~5 MW)

Single large hyperscale campus (300 MW — 100s of MW typical)

Vermont statewide peak electric demand **880 MW**

Vermont statewide peak: Vermont Dept. of Public Service, 2026 Annual Energy Report. Current VT data-center load (~5 MW): VT Digger, 2026-02-24. Single hyperscale campus figure (300 MW) is ILLUSTRATIVE — large AI campus interconnection requests have ranged from 100 MW to 500+ MW nationally; no specific facility is represented.



**REFERE NCE** One facility could rival the entire state's peak

**Vermont's statewide electric peak demand is ~880 MW (Vermont DPS, 2026 Annual Energy Report).** A single hyperscale data center is not "a new customer" — it is a system-scale event that reshapes peak planning for every ratepayer in the state.



**REFER ENCE** Rates are rising — already above the national average

**Vermonters pay roughly 28% above the U.S. average for electricity (~22.6¢ vs ~17.6¢/kWh).** Green Mountain Power rates increase +7.5% effective October 1, 2026 (PUC Case 26-0096-TF). New data-center infrastructure costs risk shifting further onto households already paying some of the country's highest rates.

Note: the +7.5% figure is confirmed for GMP. Do not cite a +30% figure for GMP — that figure belongs to Swanton Electric (~30%, related to the Highgate Falls dam failure), a different small utility.



**REFERE NCE** The St. Albans test — the grid itself was the brake

**Vermont's one real attempt at a large data center collapsed in 2025.** A single grid hookup would have cost ~\$30 million. The thin grid — not any law — stopped it. Any project that clears the grid will demand enormous infrastructure investment. Someone has to pay for it.

VTDigger (2026-02-24) · Vermont Public (2026-02-26)



**WIN** Vermont still has the luxury of proactive rules

**Vermont's current data-center footprint is tiny — ~5 MW across three small Chittenden County facilities.** Green Mountain Power has fielded only "one or two very speculative inquiries." There is no crisis yet. Vermont has the rare opportunity to set rules from calm rather than react to an emergency.

VTDigger (2026-02-24) · Vermont Public



**WIN** Bottom line

**Vermont's grid is small enough that a single hyperscale facility is a statewide event.** Rates are already high, the thin grid stopped the last real attempt, and Vermont is setting rules before a proposal forces its hand. That window stays open only as long as H.727 is revived before a project arrives.

3

REGULATORY LANDSCAPE

Vermont's regulatory tools — what exists today

LEVER	TYPE	COVERS DATA CENTERS?	STATUS
<b>30 V.S.A. §248</b>	Energy — generation & transmission	No — covers gen/tx infrastructure, not load	Active
<b>Act 250 / Act 181 / S.325</b>	Land-use environmental review	Yes — criteria 1 (water), 8 (aesthetics), 9 (energy), 10 (town plan)	Active (S.325 updated 2026)
<b>H.727 — 20 MW threshold</b>	Data-center-specific PUC framework	Yes — but <b>vetoed May 28, 2026</b>	<b>NOT in force</b>
<b>Act 179 / Global Warming Solutions Act</b>	Climate — 100% renewable by 2035	Indirect — fossil backup directly conflicts with statute	Active
<b>Town Meeting / Zoning (24 V.S.A. §4414 / §4415)</b>	Local siting — bylaws & interim rules	Yes — conditional use, interim bylaws, moratorium	Active

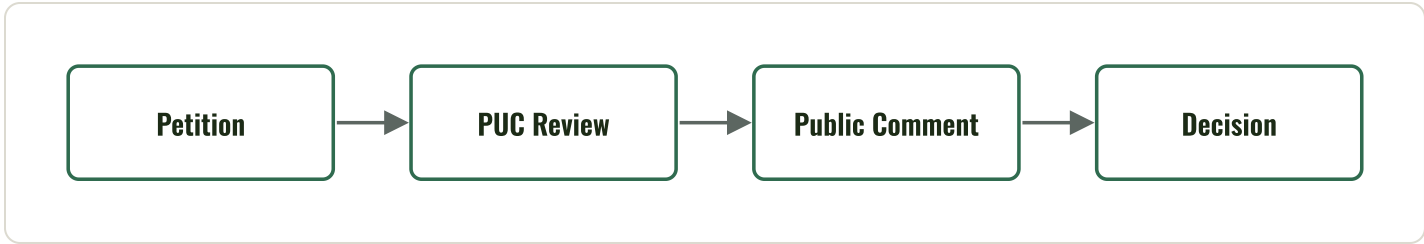
**REF** 30 V.S.A. §248 — PUC Certificate  
**ERE** of Public Good (generation &  
**NCE** transmission)

**§248 governs new electric generation and transmission infrastructure — it is a GENERATION/TRANSMISSION law, not a load law.** Data centers are electric load, not generators or transmission facilities. This means §248 does not directly review a data center as a building.

**Where §248 does apply to a data center project:** if the project requires new dedicated generation (e.g., on-site gas turbines) or new transmission infrastructure (e.g., a new substation, line, or large interconnection upgrade), that infrastructure triggers §248 PUC review. That is where ratepayer-cost arguments, energy-need findings, and public-good analysis go on the record.

**The gap — and why H.727 mattered:** Because §248 does not cover data-center load directly, there was no Vermont-specific framework for the data center as a facility, its aggregate demand, its water use, or its fossil-backup systems. That gap is exactly why H.727 was introduced — to create a 20 MW threshold triggering PUC review of the data center itself. H.727 was vetoed and did not become law. The gap remains.

30 V.S.A. §248 · legislature.vermont.gov (H.727 bill status)



Vermont §248 Certificate of Public Good process — applies to generation and transmission infrastructure, not to data-center load directly

**REF S.325 — Signed June 16, 2026**  
**ERE (land-use / Act 250 Tier, not**  
**NCE energy or data-center law)**

**Governor Scott signed S.325 on June 16, 2026.** This act adjusts Act 250 Tier jurisdiction and regional planning requirements — it is a *land-use and siting law*, not an energy or data-center statute. Cite it in that context only. Confirm current Act 250 Tier thresholds from the signed bill text before citing specific acreage or MW numbers.

S.325 (signed 2026-06-16) · legislature.vermont.gov

**REFEREN Act 250 + Act 181 — Land-use**  
**CE review**

**Act 250 (1970) gives Vermont a statewide land-use review that explicitly weighs water pollution, aesthetics, energy demand, and conformance with town and regional plans.** Act 181 (2024) updated the Tier framework; S.325 (2026) further adjusted Tier jurisdiction. A large industrial facility in a rural or mixed-use area is exactly what this review is built to capture. Residents gain full party status and appeal rights through Act 250.

VNRC · act250.vermont.gov · Act 181 (2024) · S.325 (2026)

**WIN Vermont is legally bound to 100% renewable by 2035**

**Act 179 (H.289) and the Global Warming Solutions Act bind Vermont to 100% renewable electricity by 2035 and to enforceable emissions cuts.** A diesel-backed hyperscale load is not only politically unpopular — it collides with Vermont statute. That is a legal lever, not only a talking point.

Act 179 · Global Warming Solutions Act · Renewable Energy Vermont

**WIN Bottom line**

**Vermont has real regulatory tools today — Act 250, §248 (for infrastructure), Town Meeting, and the Public Records Act.** The gap is a direct data-center framework: §248 does not cover data centers as load, and H.727 (which would have closed the gap) was vetoed. Use the tools you have; revive the bill to close the gap.

# 4

## ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

# Water and energy: what the national record shows

U.S. DOE / NREL — public domain

**Vermont-specific water-use figures for a hypothetical facility are not yet independently corroborated and are not stated here as fact.** What the national record does confirm:

### REFERENCE National water-use record

- Hyperscale data centers are among the largest industrial water consumers in the regions where they site — millions of gallons per day for cooling in large facilities (national figures, attributed to independent engineering and utility records).
- Vermont's existing water law applies to any new large withdrawal. A new facility must secure permits and may face Act 250 Criterion 1 (water pollution) review.

National context: FWW / MediaJustice toolkits (attributed) · VT law: 10 V.S.A. ch.151

### WIN Legal conflict with fossil backup

**Vermont's climate commitments create a direct legal conflict with fossil-fuel backup generation at scale.** Act 179 and the Global Warming Solutions Act bind Vermont to enforceable emissions cuts. Diesel-backed hyperscale load runs directly into that statute — making it a legal argument, not only an environmental one.

### GROU P How to get Vermont-specific data

**The best source of Vermont-specific water-impact data is the PUC §248 process for generation and transmission infrastructure.** Intervene in the docket and put the question on the record. The Department of Public Service (Vermont's statutory ratepayer advocate) and ANR are automatic parties who can carry the argument.

### WIN Bottom line

**National experience shows hyperscale data centers are major water consumers; Vermont law already regulates large withdrawals.** Fossil backup generation collides with Vermont's own climate statute. The PUC §248 docket — for any dedicated infrastructure — is the best forum to put water and energy questions on the record under Vermont law.

# 5

## THE CONTRAST

# What good looks like: community-first technology

The case against extractive data centers is not

"against technology." It is against technology that

...the case against extractive data centers is not takes a community's power, water, and land while giving nothing back and keeping its operations opaque.

against technology. It is against technology that



### WI FEED — Mutual Aid Resource N Sharing

Community-first approaches like [FEED](https://www.sourcetofeed.com) (<https://www.sourcetofeed.com>) show a better model:

**AI built to serve a community's infrastructure** — helping people find food, housing, and benefits — while keeping their data private by design. The AI runs on FEED's own servers, routes through providers with zero data retention, and stores sensitive paperwork in a vault the AI cannot reach.

That is the contrast this toolkit makes: extractive infrastructure that takes from a community versus community infrastructure that serves it.

Detroit Publishing Co. / Library of Congress



### GROUP Bottom line

**Vermont has every reason to demand that technology operating here serves Vermonters.** The regulatory tools exist to make that demand real — Act 250, §248 for dedicated infrastructure, Town Meeting, and a legislative framework waiting to be revived.

## ACTION PLAYBOOKS

# Nine ways to act — ordered from easiest to most sustained

Each playbook is a real out-of-state win re-aimed to a Vermont-correct mechanism. Start at Playbook 1. Each step you complete makes the next one easier.



GROU  
P

**Vermont note — no county government**

**Vermont has no operative county government for siting decisions.** Town bodies — Selectboard, Planning Commission, Development Review Board — are the local decision-makers. The following playbooks are aimed at the correct Vermont body at each step. County lookups, national tools (Ballotpedia, USA.gov), and county-board tactics from other states do not apply here.

AT A GLANCE

## Compare all nine tactics

Each row is a full playbook below. Find your entry point, then read the card.

#	TACTIC	EFFORT	TIMELINE	BEST FOR
1	Email your real decision-maker	LOW	10 min	Any resident
2	Write a Letter to the Editor naming H.727	LOW	30 min	Any resident
3	File a Vermont Public Records Act request	LOW	~1 hour	Any resident
4	Show up at Town Meeting and warn an article	MEDIUM	Days–weeks	A small core team
5	Ask your selectboard to adopt an interim bylaw	MEDIUM	Weeks	Organizers with board relationship
6	Write data centers into your town's zoning	MEDIUM	Months	Organizers + Planning Commission
7	Take party status in Act 250 review	HIGH	Months	Committed resident or org
8	Intervene in the PUC §248 docket	HIGH	Months	Organizers; counsel helpful
9	Revive H.727 — campaign for re-introduction	HIGH	Session-long	Organized coalition

## PLAYBOOKS 1-9

# The nine playbooks

### 1 📧 Email your real decision-maker 10 MIN

In other states, a single constituent email that proved "I'm a local voter and I'm watching" moved officials to take a public position.

### Vermont steps

- 1 **Find your decision-maker**  
Use [legislature.vermont.gov/people](https://legislature.vermont.gov/people) to get your House Rep and Senator (for H.727 revival). Use [sos.vermont.gov/elections/town-clerks](https://sos.vermont.gov/elections/town-clerks) to find your town clerk (for local siting).

2

**Aim your email at the right body**

- a. State policy ask (revive H.727) → email your legislators.
- b. Local siting matter → email the town clerk, Planning Commission, or Development Review Board — not your legislator. The town body decides siting, not Montpelier.

3

**Use the Vermont-aimed template on the Actions page**

Add one sentence in your own words. Include your town and ZIP to prove you're a constituent. Then send.

 **GROUP Effort · Who**

**10 minutes.** Any resident.

legislature.vermont.gov/people ·  
 sos.vermont.gov/elections/town-clerks  
 · FWW Tactic 1

2



**Write a Letter to the Editor naming H.727**

**30 MIN**

Letters to the editor are the cheapest earned-media lever — they put an issue in front of decision-makers and neighbors at once.

**Vermont steps**

1

**Pick one point**

For example: "The Governor's veto left Vermont with no data-center law." One clear argument lands harder than three.

2

**Write 150–200 words**

- a. Open with why a neighbor should care.
- b. Tie it to a recent VTDigger, Vermont Public, or local paper article for placement odds.
- c. Name your target: your legislator (revive H.727) or your selectboard (adopt interim bylaws).

3

**Submit to the opinion editor**

Email the opinion editor. Paste in the body — do not attach a file. Find a ready-to-customize template on the Actions page.



**GROUP Effort · Who**

**30 minutes.** Any resident.

WI "Big Tech Unchecked" Tactic 15 ·  
 FWW Tactic 3

### 3 🏛️ File a Vermont Public Records Act request

~1 HOUR · TEMPLATE PROVIDED

In Wisconsin, public-records law forced Microsoft to disclose water-use data it had claimed as a trade secret. Opacity broke under the law.

## Vermont steps (1 V.S.A. §§315–320)

1

#### Identify the records officer

Town clerk for local records. Agency records officer for state agency records.

2

#### Email a short, specific request

Name the records and date range. Cite the Vermont Public Records Act, 1 V.S.A. §§315–320. Use the copy-paste template on the Actions page.

3

#### Track the clock

- a. Substantive response required within 3 business days.
- b. Any extension must be in writing and is limited to 10 additional business days.

4

#### Challenge "trade secret" withholding

If energy or water data is withheld as a trade secret under §317(c)(9), demand segregation and release of non-exempt portions plus the specific factual basis. A bare "trade secret" label is not self-executing.

5

#### Appeal if denied

Appeal in writing to the agency head (5-business-day decision), then Superior Court. The agency bears the burden; attorney's fees are recoverable if you substantially prevail.

#### 👥 GROUP Effort · Who

~1 hour to file; litigation step needs counsel. Any resident for the initial filing.

1 V.S.A. §§315–320 · §318 (timelines) · §317(c)(9)

**4**  **Show up at Town Meeting and warn an article**

**DAYS TO WEEKS**

A local body in DeKalb County, Georgia passed a 100-day moratorium to study a project. Vermont has a stronger tradition: Town Meeting direct democracy backed by statute.

**Vermont steps (Vermont has no operative county government — go to your town)**


- 1** **Contact your town clerk**  
The town clerk keeps the warnings and identifies the Selectboard, Planning Commission, and Development Review Board.

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- 2** **Force an article onto Town Meeting yourself**
  - a. Draft the article text.
  - b. Collect signatures from 5% of registered voters — name, signature, and address.
  - c. File with the town clerk at least 47 days before the meeting (17 V.S.A. §2642).

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- 3** **Turn out neighbors to decide it on the floor**  
Organize carpools, reminders, and a clear "ask" for the meeting.

 **GROUP Effort · Who**  
**Days to weeks.** A small core team.

24 V.S.A. ch.117 · 17 V.S.A. §2642 · sos.vermont.gov local-petitions

**5**  **Ask your selectboard to adopt an interim bylaw**

**WEEKS · THE VERMONT MORATORIUM**

A moratorium buys time to write real rules before a developer can lock in approvals under existing zoning.

**Vermont steps (24 V.S.A. §4415)**

- 1** **Ask the Selectboard — not a citizen petition**  
Ask the Selectboard to adopt an interim bylaw under 24 V.S.A. §4415. This is a board action, not a direct citizen petition.

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- 2** **Pair it with a planning study request**  
§4415 requires an active planning effort. Ask the board to simultaneously commission a data-center planning study or bylaw update.

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- 3** **Turn residents out for the public hearing**  
The board adopts after one warned public hearing. Your job: fill that room.

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- 4** **Use the window to push permanent bylaws**  
The interim bylaw lasts up to 2 years (plus a 1-year extension). Use that window to drive permanent data-center bylaws through §4441/§4442.

 **GROUP Effort · Who**  
**Weeks.** Organizers with a selectboard relationship.

24 V.S.A. §4415 · trorc.org · MediaJustice DeKalb County (re-aimed to Vermont municipal level)

6



## Write data centers into your town's zoning **MONTHS**

Prince William County, Virginia passed zoning that confined data centers to industrial-zoned areas only.

**REFE** Vermont note — opponents  
**RENC** want conditional use or  
**E** exclusion

Advice from other states to make data centers a "permitted use" is **inverted** for Vermont opponents. You want **conditional use under strict standards** or **restriction to an industrial-only district**.

## Vermont steps (24 V.S.A. §4414(3))

1

### Bring a proposal to the Planning Commission

Propose making data centers a conditional use under strict standards — or limit them to an industrial-only district. Under 24 V.S.A. §4414(3), conditional use must not cause undue adverse effect on community-facility capacity, area character, or traffic.

2

### Include Act 250 criteria in the conditional-use standards

A town may adopt Act 250 criteria into its conditional-use review, adding water, energy, and aesthetics standards.

3

### Testify at warned hearings

- a. Planning Commission warned hearing.
- b. Selectboard adoption hearing.

4

### Know the adoption timeline

Board adopts (effective 21 days later) or warns it to ballot. To defend a board-adopted bylaw against repeal, know the §4442 process.

### **GROUP Effort · Who**

**Months.** Organizers plus Planning Commission engagement.

24 V.S.A. §4414(3) · §4441–§4442 · MediaJustice Prince William (re-aimed to Vermont town level)

## 7 Take party status in Act 250 review **MONTHS**

Act 250 is a statewide environmental review where residents can question, rebut, and appeal a large project — but participation works through party status, not open online comment.

### Vermont steps

#### 1 Watch for the public notice for your district

Find your District Environmental Commission (one of nine) at [act250.vermont.gov](http://act250.vermont.gov).

#### 2 File a Party Status Petition before the deadline

Name the specific criteria you'll contest: Criterion 1 (water pollution), Criterion 8 (aesthetics/light), Criterion 9 (energy/soils), Criterion 10 (town/regional-plan conformance).

#### 3 Participate in the hearing fully

Present evidence, cross-examine witnesses, and keep your party status to the end to preserve appeal rights.

#### 4 Appeal if aggrieved

Appeal within ~30 days to the Environmental Division (de novo review, your criteria only). Engaging your Regional Planning Commission and town Planning Commission early is critical — they are automatic parties and Criterion 10 turns on their plans.

#### GROUP Effort · Who

**Months; persistence required.** A committed resident or organization.

10 V.S.A. ch.151 §6086(a) · [act250.vermont.gov](http://act250.vermont.gov) · §8504 appeals

## 8 ⚡ Intervene in the PUC §248 docket for power infrastructure

**MONTHS · COUNSEL HELPFUL**

The data-center building itself goes through Act 250 and zoning. The *dedicated power infrastructure* — a new substation, line, or on-site generation — triggers PUC §248 review (30 V.S.A. §248). That is where the ratepayer-cost argument goes on the record.

**REFE** **REN** **CE** **No large-load tariff precedent in Vermont — argue within §248**

Vermont has no large-load tariff precedent like Ohio or Kansas. H.727's PUC equity contract would have created one — but H.727 was vetoed. Argue ratepayer protection as advocacy within existing §248, not as an existing tariff right.

## Vermont steps

- 1 **Find the docket**  
Go to [puc.vermont.gov](http://puc.vermont.gov) → Public Participation → ePUC. Search by company, town, or case number.
- 2 **Watch the scheduling order for the intervention deadline**  
The petitioner must give 45-day advance notice. The scheduling order sets the intervention deadline.
- 3 **Attend the public hearing**  
Public comment at PUC hearings requires no party status. Show up in the host community.
- 4 **File a motion to intervene for full party status**  
File through ePUC before the deadline, stating your stake: abutter, environmental interest, or ratepayer.

5

## Lean on the Department of Public Service and ANR

Both are automatic parties. Put the ratepayer-cost and environmental arguments to them — they can carry the analysis with far more staff capacity.

### **GROUP Effort · Who**

**Months; counsel helpful.** Organizers or intervenors.

30 V.S.A. §248 · [puc.vermont.gov](http://puc.vermont.gov) · [publicservice.vermont.gov](http://publicservice.vermont.gov)

## 9 ✓ Revive H.727 — put the mandate back to a vote

### A SESSION-LONG CAMPAIGN

The policy already commands the votes. It passed both chambers once. The bill text exists. The job is to re-introduce it next session and close the gap.

**REFE** **RENC** **E** **Frame H.727 only as a vetoed bill and next-session target**

**H.727 is not in effect today.** Any statement that H.727 is current law is false. Frame it only as: the policy Vermont's Legislature already voted for, vetoed by the Governor, and ready to revive next session.

## Vermont steps

**1** **Build a coalition**  
CLF, VNRC, VPIRG, town officials — small core team, clear goal, public meetings.

**2** **Ask your legislators to re-introduce H.727's framework next session**

- a. ~20 MW trigger for PUC review of the data center itself.
- b. PUC-approved large-load equity contract insulating ratepayers from infrastructure costs.
- c. Quarterly public reporting of energy and water use.
- d. Limits on fossil-fuel backup generation.
- e. On-site renewables requirement.
- f. Closed-loop cooling and PFAS monitoring.
- g. Public Records Act carve-out so energy and water data cannot hide behind "trade secret."

## 3 **Route to the right committees**

House Energy & Digital Infrastructure / Senate Natural Resources & Energy (heard H.727), Government Operations (records carve-out), Ways & Means (incentives).

## 4 **In testimony, cite the demonstrated supermajority**

Senate 26–3, near-unanimous House. Only the override math (83 of 90 votes) fell short. The mandate is real.

### **GROUP Effort · Who**

**A session-long campaign.** An organized coalition.

[legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2026/H.727](https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2026/H.727) · [governor.vermont.gov](https://governor.vermont.gov) (veto, May 28 2026) · CLF · VNRC · VTDigger

NEXT STEP

## Ready to act?

Start with Playbook 1 — a 10-minute email. Use the tools on the Actions page to find your decision-makers and copy-paste the template.

## ACTION TOOLS

## Find your decision-makers. Use the templates. Act this week.

Vermont has two distinct chains of decision-makers depending on what you're asking for. Get the right person. Send the right message.

## STEP 1

### Find your 3 decision-makers

#### GROUP Why 3?

**Vermont data-center decisions happen at two levels — state law (your legislators) and local siting (your town body).** National lookup tools miss the local chain entirely. Use the Vermont-specific links below.

#### Card 1 — State legislators

*Use when: asking for H.727 revival or any state-level change.*

Find your House Representative(s) and Senator by town at the official Vermont Legislature directory:

Returns your House Rep + Senator with email and phone. Use the email template below for the H.727 revival ask.

#### Card 2 — Town officials

*Use when: asking about local siting, interim bylaws, or zoning.*

**Start with your town clerk.** The clerk identifies your Selectboard, Planning Commission, and Development Review Board, and keeps the warnings and records.

Vermont has no operative county government for siting decisions. Never go to a county body — go to your town.

#### Card 3 — Vermont PUC

*Use when: power infrastructure for a data center triggers §248 review.*

Find open dockets, scheduling orders, and hearing notices at Vermont Public Utility Commission ePUC:

Public comment at PUC hearings requires no party status. Intervention for full party status requires a motion before the deadline.

## STEP 2

## Email templates — copy, personalize, send

Add one sentence in your own words. Include your town and ZIP to prove you're a constituent. Then send.

Implementation tip: the moment you tap Copy, switch to your email, paste, and send — acting in the same sitting is what turns reading into a sent message.

### ✉ Template A — Legislator

*Send to your House Rep and Senator via [legislature.vermont.gov/people](https://legislature.vermont.gov/people)*

Subject: Please bring back H.727 — Vermont still has no data-center law

Dear [Representative/Senator Name],

I'm a constituent in [Town], ZIP [#####]. I'm writing because the Legislature passed H.727 this year by an overwhelming, tripartisan margin — 26–3 in the Senate and a near-unanimous House voice vote — and after the Governor's veto, the override fell only about seven votes short. That left Vermont with no data-center-specific law at all, even as federal rules move to fast-track these projects.

Please commit to re-introducing H.727's framework next session: a ~20 MW trigger, a PUC-approved contract that insulates ratepayers from data-center infrastructure costs, public quarterly reporting of energy and water use, limits on fossil-fuel backup, on-site renewables, and water and PFAS protections. Vermonters already pay roughly 28% above the national average for electricity and our grid has little slack — we can't afford to absorb these costs by default.

The votes for this policy already exist. Please help finish the job.

Thank you,  
[Name], [Town], Vermont

## **Template B — Town**

*Send to your Selectboard and/or Planning Commission*

**Subject:** Data centers and our town — please act before a proposal arrives

Dear [Selectboard / Planning Commission, Town of \_\_\_\_],

I'm a resident of [Town]. Vermont has no data-center-specific law right now, and a single large facility could rival a significant share of the state's entire electric peak (~880 MW, Vermont DPS, 2026). I'm asking our town to get ahead of this while we still can: please (1) consider an interim bylaw under 24 V.S.A. § 4415 paired with a planning study, and (2) review whether our zoning should treat data centers as a tightly-conditioned use or confine them to an industrial district under 24 V.S.A. § 4414(3).

I'd appreciate knowing when this can be warned for a public hearing, and I'll turn out neighbors to support it.

Thank you,  
[Name], [Town], Vermont

## **Template C — LTE**

*Letter to the Editor (≤200 words)*

[Recent local headline] reminds us that Vermont still has no law governing data centers. This isn't for lack of trying: this year our Legislature passed H.727 — one of the strongest data-center bills in the country — by 26–3 in the Senate and a near-unanimous House. The Governor vetoed it, and the override missed by about seven votes. So the protections our own representatives overwhelmingly voted for simply don't exist today.

That matters because Vermonters already pay around 28% more for electricity than the average American, our grid is small enough that one big facility is a system-scale event, and federal rules are now built to fast-track these projects. The St. Albans proposal collapsed in 2025 only because a single grid hookup would have cost about \$30 million — our thin grid, not any law, was the brake.

We can fix that. Ask [Legislator] to bring H.727 back next session, and ask our selectboard to study local safeguards now. The votes are there. Let's finish the job.

[Name], [Town]

**STEP 3**

**Public Records Act request template (1 V.S.A. §§315–320)**

Use this to request energy use, water use, NDAs, and any correspondence between your town and a data-center developer. The Act requires a response **within 3 business days**. Any extension must be stated in writing and is limited to 10 additional business days.

To: [Town Clerk / Agency Records Officer], [Municipality/Agency]

Date: [date]

Under the Vermont Public Records Act, 1 V.S.A. §§ 315–320, I request copies of the following public records:

[Specific records — e.g., "all correspondence, applications, memoranda of understanding, and engineering or utility studies between [Town] and any data-center developer or its agents, including any non-disclosure or confidentiality agreements, from [start date] to present."]

Please provide records in electronic form. I understand the Act requires a response promptly — within 3 business days — to produce the records or certify any claimed exemption, with any extension limited to 10 additional business days and stated in writing.

If any portion is withheld as a trade secret under 1 V.S.A. § 317(c)(9), please segregate and release all non-exempt portions and state the specific factual basis for each withheld element. The Act is liberally construed toward disclosure and the agency bears the burden of justifying any withholding.

Please notify me of any fees before incurring them.

Thank you,  
[Name], [Town], Vermont —  
[email/phone]

**If denied:** appeal in writing to the agency head (5-business-day decision), then Superior Court in your county or Washington County. Attorney's fees are recoverable if you substantially prevail.

1 V.S.A. §§315–320 · §318 (timelines) · §317(c) (9)

## STEP 4

# Your action checklist — step by step

Work through these in order. Each step earns the next.

Commit out loud: tell one other person which step you'll finish first. A commitment you say to someone else is one you're far more likely to keep.

1

### Find your state legislators

Go to [legislature.vermont.gov/people](https://legislature.vermont.gov/people).

2

### Send Template A to your House Rep and Senator

3

### Find your town clerk

Go to [sos.vermont.gov/elections/town-clerks](https://sos.vermont.gov/elections/town-clerks).

4

### Send Template B to your Selectboard and Planning Commission

5

### Write a 150–200-word Letter to the Editor (use Template C)

Submit to VTDigger, Seven Days, or your local paper.

6

### File a Public Records Act request

Request any existing town correspondence with data-center developers.

7

### Attend your next Selectboard or Planning Commission meeting

Ask when data-center siting will be warned for public discussion.

8

### Bookmark the H.727 bill-status page

Go to [legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2026/H.727](https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2026/H.727) and check back each session for its re-introduction.

## LIVE RESOURCES

## Upcoming events and proceedings

*Meeting and hearing dates will be listed here as they are scheduled. Use the official source links below to track them directly.*

- Vermont PUC open dockets: [puc.vermont.gov](https://puc.vermont.gov) (<https://puc.vermont.gov>)
- Vermont Legislature committee schedules: [legislature.vermont.gov/committee](https://legislature.vermont.gov/committee) (<https://legislature.vermont.gov/committee/>)
- H.727 bill status: [legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2026/H.727](https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2026/H.727) (<https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2026/H.727>)

FEDERAL CONTEXT

# The federal backdrop — and why Vermont's own levers matter more because of it

The usual ways communities slow large industrial projects are being deliberately weakened at the federal level. That makes Vermont's own tools — Act 250, PUC §248, Town Meeting, and the push to revive H.727 — more important, not less.

**REFERENCE** Verification standard

Each item below is labeled with its status. Items marked **[SIGNED / VERIFIED]** are confirmed enacted federal actions. Items marked **[CREDIBLE RISK — ACTIVE RULEMAKING]** reflect legally contested analyses that are not yet settled law. The distinction matters — do not overstate contested theories as facts.

#	FEDERAL ACTION	STATUS	VERMONT IMPACT
1	<b>CEQ final rule — NEPA implementing regulations rescinded</b>	Signed Jan 8, 2026	State tools (Act 250, §248) more critical
2	<b>FERC §206 show-cause orders to all RTOs/ISOs</b>	Active rulemaking — Jun 18, 2026	Monitor ISO-NE (RM26-4-000); bypass risk contested
3	<b>EO 14318 — 100 MW+ data-center fast-track permitting</b>	Signed Jul 23, 2025	Federal pre-clearance shortens review window
4	<b>Federal funding withheld from Vermont programs</b>	Verified — multiple actions	\$62.5M Solar for All + ~\$5.2M DOE + \$5M EV frozen
5	<b>Dec 11, 2025 AI EO + DOJ AI Litigation Task Force</b>	Signed — reach to siting law untested	BEAD funds conditioned on AI law compliance

SIGNED / VERIFIED

# 1 | CEQ final rule — NEPA implementing regulations removed (January 8, 2026)

**REFERENCE** What it does

The Council on Environmental Quality published a final rule on **January 8, 2026** rescinding the government-wide NEPA implementing regulations that had been in force since 1978. Each federal agency now self-defines its own environmental review process. Agencies are directed to create data-center-favorable categorical exclusions.

federalregister.gov (doc 2026-00178) ·  
whitehouse.gov · Harvard EELP

**WIN** Why it matters for Vermont advocates

The federal environmental-impact-statement process — historically a primary delay and review tool for projects with a federal nexus — is now narrower and murkier. Any Vermont-sited data center project that touches federal land, federal money, or a federal permit will face a shorter federal review window than projects in earlier years.

This is exactly why Vermont's *state* tools carry more weight, not less. Act 250, PUC §248, and Town Meeting zoning bylaws are Vermont law — they do not depend on federal NEPA.

**Next action:** Prioritize [Playbook 7 \(Act 250 party status\)](#) and [Playbook 8 \(PUC §248 intervention\)](#) as the primary review levers for any project with a Vermont footprint.

## ACTIVE RULEMAKING

**2****FERC §206 show-cause orders — large-load / data-center interconnection (June 18, 2026)**

**REFEREN** **What happened — Signed /**  
**CE** **Verified**

On **June 18, 2026**, FERC issued six §206 "show cause" orders to all RTOs and ISOs — including ISO-NE, which serves Vermont — requiring them to address interconnection rules for large loads and data centers. FERC Docket RM26-4-000 is the active proceeding.

FERC Docket RM26-4-000 · FERC §206 orders, June 18 2026

**REFER** **Credible Risk — Active**  
**ENCE** **Rulemaking — not settled law**

Analysis of the Wright Directive (October 23, 2025) that preceded these orders raises a credible risk: a large data center could potentially apply directly to ISO-NE under federal rules and bypass the Vermont PUC. Whether Vermont's Renewable Energy Standard would apply to a federally-interconnected data center is also legally contested.

**This is a credible risk under active rulemaking — not settled law.** The Wright Directive itself states it does not impinge on states' retail-sales authority. The bypass theory is contested. Track FERC Docket RM26-4-000 and the ISO-NE §206 order for final outcomes before citing as settled fact.

energy.gov · FERC RM26-4-000 · compassvermont.com (RES-bypass analysis — independent VT outlet, labeled credible risk)

**W** **Why it matters for Vermont**  
**IN** **advocates — what is confirmed**

Federal rulemaking is actively aimed at standardizing how large data-center loads connect to the grid. Vermont advocates and the Vermont PUC should monitor this proceeding closely. The Department of Public Service (Vermont's statutory ratepayer advocate) is the right point of engagement.

**3** | **SIGNED / VERIFIED**  
**EO 14318 — "Accelerating Federal Permitting of Data Center Infrastructure" (July 23, 2025)**

**REFERENCE** What it does

Executive Order 14318, signed July 23, 2025, fast-tracks data centers requiring more than 100 MW of new load via FAST-41 single-window permitting. It also directs new NEPA categorical exclusions, new Clean Water Act §404 nationwide permits, Brownfield and Superfund reuse pathways, federal land access, and federal financing for data-center projects.

whitehouse.gov · federalregister.gov (90 FR 35385, doc 2025-14212)

**WI** Why it matters for Vermont  
**N** advocates

If a Vermont-sited project ever touched federal land, federal money, or a federal permit, the federal environmental-review steps opponents rely on would be pre-cleared or removed before Vermont's own process even begins. Vermont's state-level tools — Act 250, PUC §248, local zoning — do not depend on federal permitting timelines and remain available.

**Next action:** For any project with a federal nexus, identify Vermont's independent state review hooks early and engage them before any federal pre-clearance closes the window.

**4** | SIGNED / VERIFIED  
**Federal funding withheld from Vermont's clean-energy programs**

**\$62.5M**

EPA "Solar for All" grant terminated (August–September 2025)

vtdigger.org · ago.vermont.gov

**~\$5.2M**

DOE cuts to UVM (~\$3.4M) and BETA Technologies (~\$1.8M)

vtdigger.org

**\$5M**

Burlington EV-charging award frozen

vtdigger.org · cbsnews.com

**REFERENCE** What happened

A documented pattern of withholding federal money from states pursuing climate and technology regulation:

- EPA terminated Vermont's **\$62.5M "Solar for All" grant** (August–September 2025).
- DOE cut approximately **\$3.4M to UVM** and approximately **\$1.8M to BETA Technologies**.
- A **\$5M Burlington EV-charging award was frozen**.
- The December 11, 2025 AI Executive Order conditions **BEAD broadband and funds** on states not having "onerous" AI laws.

vtdigger.org · ago.vermont.gov · whitehouse.gov · cbsnews.com



**WI Why it matters for Vermont  
N advocates**

This is a documented pattern of withholding money from states that pursue climate and technology regulation — a chilling effect on exactly the guardrails Vermont would adopt. Vermont Attorney General Charles Clark has sued repeatedly.

The funding leverage is real. The legislative response — passing H.727, the strongest framework Vermont can deploy — is also the clearest signal that Vermont will not be deterred.

**5**

**REACH LEGALLY UNTESTED**

**Dec 11, 2025 AI Executive Order + DOJ AI Litigation Task Force**



**REFERENC What it does — Signed /  
E Verified**

The December 11, 2025 Executive Order stands up a DOJ unit to sue states over AI laws on preemption, Commerce Clause, and First Amendment grounds. It also conditions federal funds on states not having "onerous" AI regulation.

whitehouse.gov · cbsnews.com · datamatters.sidley.com



**REFE Honest scope note — reach to  
REN data-center siting / energy law is  
CE legally untested**

This EO targets *AI regulation* specifically. Whether it reaches a data-center *siting or energy law* like H.727 is legally untested. Do not state it as settled law that H.727 would trigger this EO. The architecture to deter state guardrails is real; its reach to energy/siting law is not yet established.

**BOTTOM LINE**

**What the federal backdrop means for Vermont advocates**

**Vermont's own levers carry more weight, not less — Act 250, PUC §248, and Town Meeting are Vermont law and do not depend on federal NEPA or permitting timelines.**

## **WIN** Vermont's own levers carry more weight, not less

The federal review tools that communities have relied on for decades are weaker. NEPA's implementing regulations are gone. FERC is actively reshaping interconnection rules. EO 14318 pre-clears many federal permits.

**That makes Vermont's own levers carry more weight, not less.** Act 250 is Vermont law. PUC §248 is Vermont law. Town Meeting zoning is Vermont law. None of them depend on federal NEPA or federal permitting timelines.

The most effective response to a weakened federal review environment is a stronger Vermont state framework. That is what H.727 was built to be — and reviving it is the single highest-leverage action you can take.

## Highest-leverage actions

1

### Use Vermont's existing review tools now

Act 250 party status (Playbook 7) and PUC §248 intervention (Playbook 8) are the primary levers for any project with a Vermont footprint. None depend on federal permitting timelines.

2

### Revive H.727 next legislative session

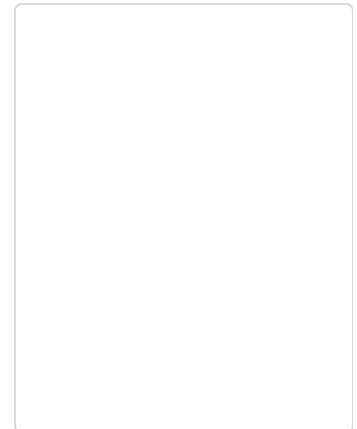
The bill text is ready. The supermajority voted for it once. Seven votes decide whether Vermont closes the gap — or leaves the door open to the next proposal.

## FEDERAL COUNTERPART — SANDERS AI RECORD

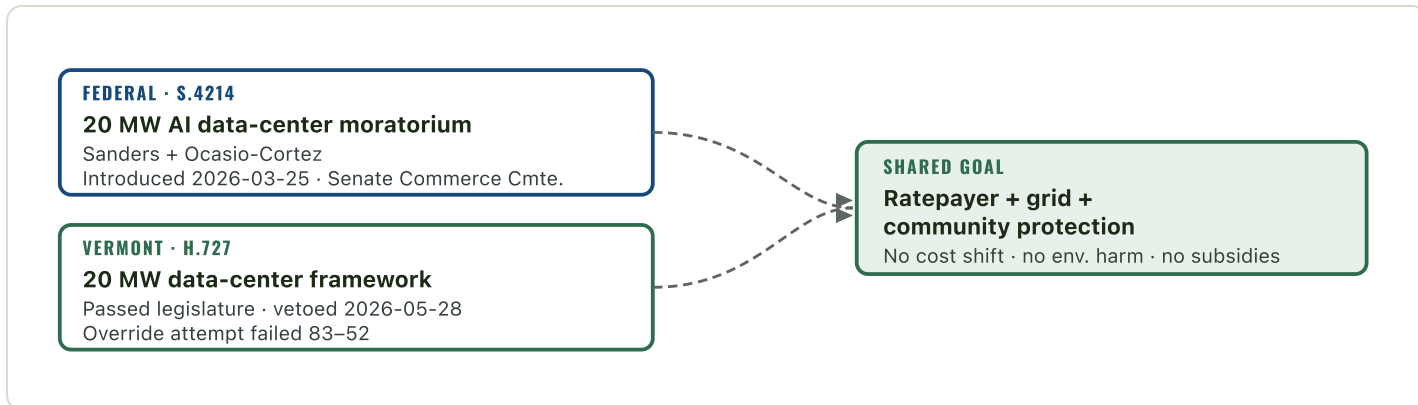
**Sen. Bernie Sanders: federal AI data-center legislation in parallel with Vermont's H.727** **GROUP Independence notice**

This section presents Senator Sanders' *public record* — legislation introduced, Senate committee work, and published statements — on a nonpartisan, factual basis. Content is drawn from congress.gov, sanders.senate.gov, and the Congressional Record. This toolkit is not affiliated with, authorized by, or endorsed by Senator Sanders or his office.

Sanders serves as **Ranking Member** of the Senate Health, Education, Labor & Pensions (HELP) Committee in the 119th Congress (2025–26). His introduced legislation (S.4214) and committee work on AI's labor and energy impacts run in direct parallel to Vermont's H.727 — both bills target the same 20 MW threshold and aim to shield ratepayers, communities, and the grid from the unchecked buildout of AI data centers.



U.S. Congress / public domain



S.4214 (federal) and H.727 (Vermont) use the same 20 MW threshold and converge on the same protective goals — ratepayer protection, grid stability, and community approval.

# 1 | INTRODUCED 2026-03-25 · S.4214 "Artificial Intelligence Data Center Moratorium Act" — the direct federal parallel

**REFERENCE** What S.4214 does

Introduced March 25, 2026, S.4214 pauses construction of AI data centers consuming **20 MW or more** of electricity. After the moratorium period it permanently prohibits:

- Shifting electricity costs to ratepayers
- Causing environmental harm
- Receiving public subsidies
- Proceeding without union labor at prevailing wages
- Proceeding without community approval

A House companion bill was led by Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. The Senate bill was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science & Transportation.

[congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov) (S.4214, 119th Congress) · [sanders.senate.gov](https://www.sanders.senate.gov)

**WIN** Why this bridges to Vermont's fight

S.4214 and Vermont's H.727 use the **identical 20 MW threshold** and nearly identical protective conditions. Vermont advocates can cite this as direct evidence that the H.727 framework is not a local outlier — the same analysis was reached independently at the federal level by the Senate's Ranking Member on labor and health policy.

## 2

2025–2026

## Sanders AI-accountability record — chronological

OCT 2025

**HELP Committee report: "The Big Tech Oligarchs' War Against Workers"**

As Ranking Member, Sanders released a Senate HELP Committee staff report projecting — as a disputed modeled estimate, not a settled empirical finding — that AI and automation could eliminate nearly 100 million U.S. jobs over the next decade.

2026-03-25

**S.4214 introduced — "Artificial Intelligence Data Center Moratorium Act"**

Filed with House companion by Rep. Ocasio-Cortez. Referred to Senate Commerce, Science & Transportation Committee. Targets the 20 MW threshold — matching Vermont's H.727.

2026-04-16

**Fox News op-ed: "Artificial intelligence is coming for the working class. We must fight back."**

Sanders argued that AI automation's economic displacement requires structural worker and community protections — the direct rationale behind legislation such as S.4214.

2026-06-18

**"American AI Sovereign Wealth Fund Act" proposed — no bill number assigned yet**

Sanders proposed a one-time tax on large AI firms to fund a citizen dividend. No bill number has been assigned as of publication. Do not cite a number.

**Artificial intelligence is coming for the working class. We must fight back.**

— Sen. Bernie Sanders — op-ed title, Fox News, 2026-04-16. The pull quote above is the verbatim published title of the op-ed; the body text of the article was not independently verified and is not quoted here.

**GR** **Bipartisan signal: Sanders and**  
**OU** **DeSantis both raised data-center**  
**P** **electricity concerns**

In January 2026, both Senator Sanders and Florida Governor Ron DeSantis publicly criticized the data-center electricity demand boom over its effects on electricity prices and grid stability (CNBC, 2026-01-01). Vermont's concern about large-load data centers is not a partisan position — it reflects ratepayer and grid-reliability concerns that have been voiced across the political spectrum.

**REF** **Primary source — S.4214 bill**  
**NCE** **text and status**

Full text, referral history, and co-sponsors: [congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov) — [S.4214, 119th Congress](https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/senate-bill/4214) (<https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/senate-bill/4214>)

**REFER** **Primary source — Sanders**  
**CE** **Senate office**

Committee reports, press releases, and floor statements: [sanders.senate.gov](https://www.sanders.senate.gov) (<https://www.sanders.senate.gov>)

## Sources, Credits & Notes

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### Primary Sources

- Vermont Legislature — H.727 text and vote record: [legislature.vermont.gov](https://legislature.vermont.gov)
- Vermont Public Utility Commission §248 proceedings: [puc.vermont.gov](https://puc.vermont.gov)
- Vermont Act 250 Land Use Law: [anr.vermont.gov](https://anr.vermont.gov)
- U.S. Energy Information Administration — grid and state power data: [eia.gov](https://eia.gov)
- U.S. Congress — S.4214, 119th Congress (Sanders / Ocasio-Cortez): [congress.gov](https://congress.gov)
- Senator Sanders' committee reports and press releases: [sanders.senate.gov](https://sanders.senate.gov)
- Vermont League of Cities and Towns — Town Meeting resources: [vlct.org](https://vlct.org)
- Vermont Secretary of State — find your town clerk: [sos.vermont.gov/elections/town-clerks](https://sos.vermont.gov/elections/town-clerks)

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### About This Toolkit

Vermont Data Center Defense is an independent community resource for Vermonters engaged in data-center siting, ratepayer protection, and grid stewardship. All content is drawn from public record. Find your legislators at [legislature.vermont.gov/people](https://legislature.vermont.gov/people).

Online edition: [vtdatacentertoolkit.org](https://vtdatacentertoolkit.org) · Community technology example:

[www.sourcetofeed.com](https://www.sourcetofeed.com)

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