

GUERNSEY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Re: Opposition to Proposed Data Center

June 16, 2026 – For immediate release

On Tuesday, June 9, 2026, the Guernsey County Commissioners met at the request of developers who informed the Commissioners of a proposal to possibly construct a data center in Guernsey County.

During the open-session meeting, the site developers offered a general description of their proposal, after which the Commissioners stressed the need of additional information about the facility and its potential economic and environmental impact. The proposed location for the project was not revealed to the Commissioners.

“The developer threw out a lot of information and we needed time to educate ourselves through other informed, but non-biased sources.” explained Board of Commissioners President, Jack Marlin. “Once we are certain that we had fact-based information, we believe we can then educate the public on the issue.”

During the week following the meeting, research revealed a number of important facts, including:

- Because Ohio counties are not "home rule" governments (unlike cities, villages and townships), County Commissioners only possess the specific powers expressly granted to them by the state legislature in the Ohio Revised Code.
- Without a voter-approved local zoning resolution, the Guernsey County Commissioners cannot regulate land use on a county-wide basis. A private landowner can legally sell land to a data center, and a developer can move forward without seeking local land-use permission.
- In the State of Ohio, if a county has no zoning regulations in place, the County Commissioners have no legal authority to deny or approve the construction of a data center.
- Ohio currently has 217 data centers in operation.
- In discussion with other counties, the prevailing opinion was that there is not enough positive economic growth to justify the Guernsey County Commissioner's support of a data center.

- Late last week, it was widely reported by various media outlets that former Governor John Kasich used the Department of Development to grant a 40-year sales tax exemption to Amazon, Google, and Meta. Several other high-tech, data-intensive entities were included in that billion-dollar tax break. Reportedly, some legislators were unaware of the former Governor's actions.
- This is a front-burner issue for our State legislature where both houses have formed a "select committee" to examine the issue. That committee is co-chaired by Rep. Adam Holmes, whose district includes Western Guernsey County and Sen. Brian M. Chavez, whose senate district includes Eastern Guernsey County.

After reviewing the facts, the Guernsey County Commissioners unanimously agree that while the Commissioners do not have the authority to deny or approve the construction of a data center, they do control any possible tax abatements and infrastructure assistance. "Those things won't happen," stated Marlin "the Commissioners believe it unwise to support a data center proposal without knowing what Ohio law will ultimately allow and how it will impact our community."

"If a developer wants a data center in Guernsey County, they'll have to do it without tax abatements and through a private land sale." said Marlin.

Commissioner Marlin pointed out that the discussion took place during an open meeting. "Our office operates with greater transparency than ever before," said Marlin. "We post our agendas and minutes to our county website and The Guernsey News generously publishes a summary of our actions every week."

The Commissioners web address is: <https://guernseycounty.gov/guernsey-county-commissioners/>