

Protect PA



June 9, 2026

Email to:

Sara Innamorato, Allegheny County Executive Sara.Innamorato@Alleghenycounty.US
Emily Green, Southwest Regional Coordinator, DEP Office of Environmental Justice
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Cc:

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Grant Gittlen, Chief of Staff to the Allegheny County Executive
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Re: Requests pertaining to environmental justice provisions for the anticipated Springdale hyperscale data center community processes

Dear County Executive Innamorato and Ms. Green:

The undersigned organizations and individuals respectfully request that Allegheny County and the PA DEP EJ Office coordinate efforts for community processes that have definitive environmental consequences in the development of data centers in and near Environmental Justice Area communities. This includes the recent proposal to build a hyperscale data center at the site of the former Cheswick Generating Station in Springdale Borough, PA.

Springdale Borough is an example of an EJ Area community, with a Penn EnviroScreen score of 97.4th percentile for pollution burden. Several surrounding communities are also designated EJ Areas.

The EJ score emphasizes the degree to which residents in this community have endured ongoing environmental and health burdens. These burdens are meant to be factored throughout planning processes for development that can exacerbate these conditions.

In accordance with Pennsylvania's Environmental Justice Policy, updated in January 2026, the EnviroScreen score highlights a need for enhanced public participation support for development projects that affect Environmental Justice Areas, including public technical assistance meetings and public hearings for the community. Under Pennsylvania's EJ Policy, community members are given enhanced access to the public process to help reduce the disparate health, socioeconomic, and environmental burdens they already bear.

Specifically we request:

- (1) That the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD), the Allegheny County Economic Development Department (ACED), and the PA Department of Environmental Protection coordinate in order to provide environmental justice accommodations to the public for the pending release of the Allegheny DC data center applications for the data center in Springdale Borough for both the air permit and SALDO processes.
- (2) That the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) require that the Allegheny DC data center apply for an air permit **before** the SALDO process begins.
- (3) That the following EJ accommodations are provided to the community:
 - Follow the guidelines of Pennsylvania's Environmental Justice Policy trigger provisions for emitters in the air permit and the SALDO processes.
 - Please request that the developer agree in writing to a extended public comment periods of at least 60 business days in order to accommodate these additional meetings and sources of information, and that they agree in writing to adjust the rest of the air permit and SALDO timelines accordingly.
 - Post the Developer Plans, permit applications, and any supporting documentation to a public website within 7 days of receipt.
 - Provide technical consulting assistance to impacted environmental justice communities at least 3 weeks before the closing of the public comment period.
 - Accept oral and written public comments for the duration of the comment period.

- Hold at least one EJ community public hearing 3-7 business days before the close of the required comment period.
- Please make accommodations to host the public hearing over 2 or 3 days, rather than require residents to stay for hours late into the night which forces them to choose between their personal obligations, their health, and civic engagement. Public interest has been high in the Springdale Borough data center municipal meetings, and large turnout of 60-100 public commenters may be expected. A plan to extend public hearings over multiple days would ease the burden of seniors, disabled, workers, students and caregivers in potentially impacted EJ Areas.
- Enable residents to sign up to speak in advance *and* during the meeting.
- Provide at least one virtual hearing.
- Give every speaker at least 3 minutes to provide testimony.
- The public meeting and hearing format should have an open microphone format so that all participants can hear all questions and answers during the meetings.
- Hold the public meetings and hearings in an accessible venue with adequate seating and good acoustics.
- Provide transcriptionist service at public hearings.

(4) Accept public comments from Allegheny County residents plus Westmoreland and Armstrong County residents who believe they may be impacted by the hyperscale data center.

(5) Please commission a cost-benefit analysis of the data center.

Our requests align with Allegheny County’s most recent Comprehensive Plan which states “**Equity and diversity** is an integral part of land use policy and decision-making.”

Success in the Springdale Borough hyperscale data center air permit & SALDO processes would mean not only a strong, binding permit that uses the best available technology and protects public health, but also a process that is transparent, well-publicized, and makes technically-informed review accessible. Fulfilling these requests would give impacted environmental justice communities a meaningful chance to understand the proposal, shape the record, and trust the final decision. Success would also see ACED act as the public trustees they are pursuant to Article 1, Section 27 of the Pennsylvania Constitution.

We appreciate Allegheny County & the PA DEP EJ Office’s continued improvements in community engagement, and we welcome further discussion.

Sources & Resources:

- Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, Environmental Justice Policy, adopted Jan. 3, 2026
- Penn EnviroScreen
- Allegheny County Comprehensive Plan(s) - Allegheny Forward / Allegheny Places
- "Everything we know about the proposed Springdale data center," Trib 9/28/25 (Link)

Sincerely,

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