



**Dutchess County
Environmental Management Council (DCEMC)
Meeting Minutes
August 26, 2026**

This meeting was held by Zoom

Attendance:

At-Large Members	Present	Absent
Jefferson Akins	X	
Pete Berasi	X	
James Fredrickson	X	
Vicky Kelly	X	
Elizabeth Kucinich	X	
Constance Kustas	X	
John Paraskeva		X
Lora Schilling	X	
Nancy Severns	X	
Kate Susman	X	
Ex Officio, CAC Members & Others		
Devin Rigolino, Dutchess County Dept. Planning & Development	X	
Lisa Kaul, County Legislator	X	
Scott Kleinberg, CCEDC		X
Dan Shapley, Riverkeeper	X	
Elias Guerra, WAMC	X	

Welcome/Intro/Chairman's comments: Jim Fredrickson welcomed all to the meeting at 7:01 p.m.

Meeting Minutes: A motion to approve the meeting minutes of the June 2026 was made by Nancy Severns, second by Kate Susman, all were in favor, the motion carried.

Correspondence: None except a couple of emails from NYSACC

Website: Lisa reported that the request has been processed and should happen.

Funds Update: EMC currently has \$847.08 remaining of county funds.

NYSACC Membership: EMC is now a member of NYSACC

Legislature's Environment Committee Meeting Attendance: Nancy viewed the last two legislative committee meetings online and reported that there were no pertinent environmental issues to report. There was a housing resolution in the agenda for the Environment Committee although there were no environmental concerns in the resolution. The reason it was on the Environment Committee's agenda is that planning-related topics fall under the scope of that committee.

Reports:

Wappinger Creek Superfund Site Cleanup: The EPA is asking for input from the public on its proposed cleanup plan to address primarily mercury contamination in sediment and streambank soil within the upstream only portions of the Wappinger Creek Superfund site in Wappingers Falls. The downstream section of the site will not be addressed in this cleanup in part because of the PCB contamination, which is influenced by PCB contamination of the Hudson River and in part because contaminants found in the upper portion of the creek were not found in the downstream portion of the creek. In total, the superfund site is the tidal portion of the creek extending about 2 miles downstream from Wappingers Falls to where the creek merges with the Hudson River. It includes an embayment about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile downstream of the industrial park. The site was impacted by an industrial park for over 180 years and the creek received discharged wastes resulting in contamination, including mercury, lead, chromium and PAHs, especially in the sediment. The EPA outlined 4 options for cleanup and has recommended the most comprehensive option (option 4), which is to remove by dredging all contaminated sediments, backfill to grade in the dredge footprint, followed by post-construction monitoring. Riverkeeper has been following the development of this plan and has developed an easy-to-use online response favoring this option for community members. The EMC is in favor of option 4 and Jim and Vicky will draft and circulate a letter of support of option 4, which must be sent to the EPA by September 21, 2026. The letter should include the importance of restoration of habitat as well as a call for improved signage about contamination of fish and threats to human health. It also may include our dismay that the contamination has been known about for decades and is only now being addressed. Elias Guerra of WAMC requested a copy of the letter.

The cleanup will not include Wappinger Lake because it has not been impacted by the contaminants listed. It is, however, impacted by other pollutants and is subject to eutrophication and potentially HAB's. In the past, the Wappinger Creek Intermunicipal Council, now defunct, had an intermunicipal agreement that addressed Wappinger Lake.

Discussion about an EMC recommendation that the DOH address the hazards of fishing around industrial sites such as this. The NY State DOH provides guidelines on fish contamination but

they are difficult to use. The issue is an environmental justice issue in that the people affected are the people who are fishing for their meals.

Other Business:

Document Results of E-vote on Memo to Legislature re. Environmental Impacts of Data Centers: The group voted by email to approve the attached memo to the Legislature regarding the impacts of large data centers in the county. The e-vote was 9 in favor and the memo was approved.

Discussion of beaver management: The Legislature is considering a resolution that requires the Department of Public Works to use humane methods to address beaver problems. Jim contacted Legislator Drago, the author of the resolution, who indicated that the resolution will remain on the agenda but on the back burner.

Lisa reported that the legislature passed a resolution to ban synthetic ‘gas station heroin’ and kratom products. NYS and the federal government ban non-synthetic kratom products. County Executive Serino wants a complete ban on kratom products.

A motion to adjourn was made by Nancy Severns. The next scheduled meeting of the EMC is on Wednesday, September 23, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Vicky Kelly, Recording Secretary

July 14, 2026

Dear Legislator Kaul,

The Environmental Management Council (EMC) has researched possible impacts to the environment of Dutchess County that would result from the construction and operation of large data centers in our county.

They are as follows:

- **Water Use** – Data centers can use large amounts of water in their daily operation. There is currently some level of water regulation through the Dutchess County Water and Wastewater Authority, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and in some, but not all communities, water system operators such as the Poughkeepsie Joint Water Board. Proposals that involved large water removals would likely be subject to New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) review. Ensuring that these agencies and reviews adequately address impacts on surrounding communities is critical.
- **Electrical Use** – Data centers use large amounts of electricity in their daily operation, estimated to be as much as an additional 100K households or more for Artificial Intelligence (AI) hyperscale facilities. There are some steps, such as engineering load estimations and grid capacity verification, which are required by electrical utility companies and some building departments. Ensuring that these take into account impacts on surrounding communities is critical.
- **Carbon Footprint** – Greenhouse gas emissions from electricity use may be significant, negating emissions reduction goals, particularly if data centers are allowed to construct their own fossil fuel generating plants. Back up power, which our research indicates is frequently fossil-fuel generator power, would only add to the environmental burden.
- **Wastewater / Discharge Water** – If discharge is required, it is likely that DEC permitting will be required, including a State Pollutant Discharge Elimination Systems (SPDES) permit.
- **Habitat Destruction or Degradation** – If facilities are not installed in existing buildings/facilities, habitat destruction will occur. In addition, security lighting around the perimeters and on the buildings of data centers, will be disruptive to wildlife and nearby human habitation.
- **Noise Pollution** – Noise levels impacting both humans and wildlife have been documented at existing data centers. Current regulations should be evaluated to ensure that they are appropriate to address the noise from commercial or industrial properties such as data centers.

ADVISORY MEMO

Thank you for offering the Environmental Management Council the opportunity to comment on Data Management Center environmental concerns.

The Dutchess County Legislature should be aware of and understand that the environmental impacts of large data centers are substantial, multi-faceted and complex. These many environmental impacts cross municipality boundaries, meaning that collaboration across communities will be essential in ensuring that the impacts are appropriately addressed. Water removed in one municipality can be felt by neighboring municipalities. Likewise, electricity demand by a data center may result in power outages, increased costs, or brownouts in large areas of the county. The other impacts listed above will lower the overall quality of life for wildlife and human populations in the region, including possible health effects. Noise and light pollution have been linked to adverse health outcomes like sleep disruption, stress hormone spikes, anxiety and hypertension.

Communities in New Jersey, Virginia and elsewhere have been caught unaware of the impact of built data centers where home values have declined and quality of life has diminished. While these are not strictly defined as environmental concerns, our environment does directly impact our quality of life.

Note that Governor Hochul has signed an executive order that places a 1-year moratorium on new hyperscale data centers. We encourage the Dutchess County Legislature to revisit the issue at the end of the statewide moratorium.

RESOURCES

1. [The U.S. Energy Information Administration \(EIA\)](#)
2. [What we know about energy use at U.S. data centers amid the AI boom](#)
3. Guidi, G., et al. (2024) Environmental burden of United States Data Centers in the artificial intelligence era. Article preprint: <https://github.com/NSAPH-Projects/>.

4. Koukounian, V., Downey, M. 2024. Noise ordinances: the key to Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) issues surrounding data centers. Noise-Con Conference, 2024.
5. Mytton, D. (2021) Data Centre Water Consumption. www.nature.com/npjcleanwater
6. Siddik, M.A., A. Shehabi, and L. Marston. 2021. The environmental footprint of data centers in the United States. Environ. Res. Letters 16: 064017.
7. Shehabi, A. et al. 2024 US Data Center Energy Usage Report. <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/32d6m0d1>
8. George, B. Health consequences of large data centers: Air pollution, noise, water use and environmental justice.
9. 7 Ways Data Centers Affect US Communities | World Resources Institute
10. 'Living in Hell': Data Center Neighbors Grapple With Noise, Air Pollution | National News | U.S. News
11. Here's what communities can do when data centers arrive - The Washington Post
12. Colorado communities impose data center moratoriums amid revolt over power, water, and tax breaks | Yahoo News