

DISTRICT 1
JESUS EDUARDO ESCOBAR

DISTRICT 2
MARTHA CARDENAS-SINGH

DISTRICT 3
PEGGY PRICE

DISTRICT 4
RYAN E. KELLEY

DISTRICT 5
JOHN HAWK



COUNTY ADMINISTRATION CENTER

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TELEPHONE (442) 265-1030
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February 11, 2026

Dear Senator Padilla,

Over the past three months, there appears to have been a disconnect in coordinating conversations between your office and the County of Imperial. On February 10, 2026, you issued a press release regarding the Imperial Data Center project stating:

“In December of last year, you sent a letter to the members of the Imperial County Board of Supervisors to request further information on the rationale for the approval of the first stages of a data center application to be developed in the County. To date, the County has yet to provide a response, despite numerous attempts to engage in a conversation to gain better clarity.”

As a Board, we share your concern that we have not yet met directly to discuss the proposed data center project, as well as other County priorities and challenges. However, the absence of a meeting has not been due to a lack of effort or responsiveness on the County’s part. The County has consistently expressed its willingness to meet and has made itself available on multiple occasions, as outlined below:

December 1, 2025:	Your Chief of Staff shared your letter with the County’s lobbyist and requested that a meeting be scheduled with key County personnel and available Board members to discuss the potential data center project.
December 1, 2025:	On behalf of the County, the County’s lobbyist conveyed mutual interest in meeting with you to answer any questions.
December 2, 2025:	The County proposed meeting in Imperial County on December 15, 2025, or alternatively via a virtual meeting.
December 2, 2025:	Your Chief of Staff informed the County that you were unavailable on December 15, 2025, and indicated a preference for a virtual meeting.
December 2, 2025:	Your office issued a press release regarding the letter sent to the Board of Supervisors, as well as published the correspondence letter.
December 4, 2025:	In response to the letter that you made public, which was posted via media channels, the Imperial Data Center project applicant, Mr. Sabastian Rucci, sent you a letter from a technical perspective, providing answers to all of your outlined questions, as well as links to all of the existing studies that had occurred to date.

December 16, 2025:	The County scheduled a virtual meeting with your office for December 22, 2025, at 11:00 a.m.
December 18, 2025:	Your Chief of Staff requested adjusting the meeting time to 10:30 a.m. and inquired who would attend.
December 18, 2025:	The County confirmed that Supervisor Price, Supervisor Kelley, Executive Office staff, and County Counsel would participate.
December 18, 2025:	Due to pending City of Imperial litigation, your Chief of Staff requested that the initial meeting be limited to County staff, without legal counsel present, to better understand the County's process, and stated that a subsequent meeting would be scheduled for principals.
December 19, 2025:	<p>Your office outlined specific topics for discussion at the December 22, 2025, meeting, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether State funds invested in Lithium Valley would instead be used to support a data center economy • The County's economic development strategy related to data centers • Clarification of the by-right process • Questions regarding the Air District, IID, and potential off takers
December 22, 2025:	<p>The County's State lobbyist, County Executive Officer, and Assistant County Executive Officer met with your Chief of Staff to address the questions outlined by your office and to provide detailed information regarding the County's processes and policy framework.</p> <p>During the meeting, the County confirmed that no State funds directed for Lithium Valley had been used, nor were planned to be used, to support a data center economy. The County provided substantive responses on the Imperial Data Center project regarding the County's development process including ministerial verse discretionary; an update on studies that had been completed and those that were pending; the use of generators and the regulations surrounded them; the location of the project and why the developer selected that location; the relationship between geothermal resources and potential data center development; expectations related to reclaimed water use or alternative cooling technologies (rather than reliance on water supplied by IID); the principle that any necessary infrastructure expansion would be funded by developers and not existing residents; the status of the IID facility study; the capacity for transmission outlined in the published IID studies; the anticipated economic benefits associated with such development; and the County's requirement that all projects, including the Imperial Data Center project, secure both a water supply agreement and a power agreement prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy. The County further clarified that if adequate power or water are not available, the facility would not be permitted to operate.</p> <p>During this discussion, your office shared its intent to introduce data center legislation; however, no bill numbers, draft language, or specific policy details were provided at that time. The County expressed interest in collaborating with you on such legislation and was informed that draft language would be shared for further discussion. The County also conveyed its continued</p>

	availability for an additional meeting and to answer any further questions regarding this project or other County initiatives.
January 14, 2026:	After no additional correspondence regarding the proposed legislation, the County learned of Senate Bills 886 and 887 for the first time through a generic e-blast from your office. The County followed up to request a meeting with you to discuss the proposed legislation.
January 14, 2026:	Your Chief of Staff informed the County’s lobbyist that no meeting would be scheduled until the County responded to your December 1, 2025, letter and your office had time to process the information.

Given the substantive meeting already held with your Chief of Staff on December 22, 2025, the prior commitment to schedule a follow-up meeting with principals, and the ongoing communication between our offices, the County understood that it had been actively engaged in responding to your inquiry. If your December 1 correspondence was intended to request a formal written response in addition to the meeting and information already provided, that expectation was not clearly conveyed.

January 20, 2026:	Supervisor Kelley reached out to you directly, while in Sacramento, to request a meeting. No response was received.
January 30, 2026:	The County Executive Office sent a letter requesting an in-person meeting during your next visit to Imperial County with the County Legislative Subcommittee, including Chairwoman Price, Supervisor Kelley, and Executive Office staff. No response was received.
February 10, 2026:	Your field representative attended a County Board of Supervisors meeting to express your support for a separate project and to convey your continued commitment and willingness to communicate with the County. Also on February 10, 2026, you issued a press release on the Imperial Data Center project, stating that the County “has yet to provide a response, despite numerous attempts to engage in a conversation to gain better clarity.”

The record reflects that the County has made repeated and good faith efforts to meet, provide information, and engage constructively. We remain committed to transparency and collaboration.

To be clear, the County of Imperial did not solicit Imperial Valley Computer Manufacturing LLC to develop the Imperial Data Center project in the unincorporated area of Imperial County. It is the County’s understanding that upon development being determined by the applicant to not be feasible in the City of Imperial, the applicant elected to submit a project to the County of Imperial, which they did so on August 1, 2025. On September 4, 2025, Imperial County Planning & Development Services issued a letter to the applicant stating,

“...Staff has completed a review of the proposed project for consistency with the Imperial County Land Use Ordinance (Title 9), a “Data Center (within enclosed building)” is a permitted use within the M-1 (Light Industrial) zoning district. Ancillary components directly incidental to the primary data center operation—such as long-term power backup

generators, electrical substation, gen-tie lines, short-term power backup battery energy storage system (BESS), water treatment skid, and cooling yard—are likewise considered permitted uses within the M-1 zoning district.”

The County of Imperial has provided no incentives, tax exemptions, or “promises” to the Imperial Data Center project or applicant. Additionally, to date, no permits have been issued associated with the Imperial Data Center project.

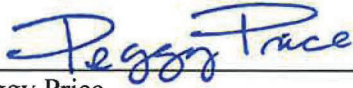
As previously requested by County Supervisors, our lobbyists, and staff, we welcome the opportunity to meet directly with you to discuss this project, your pending legislation, and broader priorities affecting Imperial County, including economic development, infrastructure, and the advancement of Lithium Valley.

Our preference is to communicate directly and productively with your office rather than through press releases. However, given that the County’s repeated efforts to secure a meeting have not resulted in a response and recent communications have occurred publicly, we are providing this documented correspondence in a public fashion to ensure clarity and transparency regarding the County’s engagement efforts.

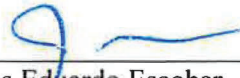
We respectfully request that your office provide available dates for an in-person meeting in Imperial County or confirm a date for a virtual meeting that includes the appropriate principals on both sides.

Imperial County stands ready to engage. We look forward to establishing a direct and constructive dialogue moving forward.

Sincerely,



Peggy Price
Chairwoman, District 3



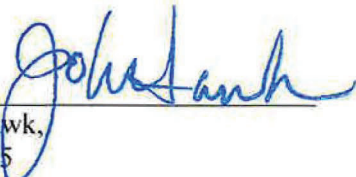
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