Imperial Data Center Project - Initial Feedback Summary

March 20, 2026

Online Comment Portal

On January 29, 2026, the County launched a public comment portal on its website for the proposed Imperial Data Center Project in response to community feedback requesting a way to share input on the Project. The portal was initially intended to provide a 45-day window for community feedback, while also noting that comments would continue to be accepted beyond that timeframe. As of March 20, 2026, the County has received 40 submissions through the public comment portal regarding the proposed Imperial Data Center Project. Because many submissions include multiple questions or address similar topics, the County is publishing a summary document that groups feedback by subject area to help readers more easily navigate the input. This summary reflects comments submitted through the County's web form, as well as unique input received via email and public comment. In response to community requests for transparency, the County will also release a consolidated PDF of all submitted comments in their original form, with names and contact information removed to protect participant privacy.

Public Comment Matrix

The Public Comment Matrix provides a high-level summary of the key topics raised through community input regarding the proposed Imperial Data Center Project. The matrix organizes comments into common themes expressed in the submissions received and presents them in a structured format to help the public and decision-makers understand the range of perspectives shared. The ranking reflects the relative prominence of issues or topics raised based on the frequency of related comments and questions submitted. Rankings are informed by feedback received through the County's public web form available at: https://imperialcounty.org/dc-comments/

Summary of Comments, Recommendations & Questions

The summaries of comments, recommended requirements, and questions provide a consolidated overview of the input received regarding the proposed Imperial Data Center Project. These summaries group similar feedback into common themes to present the range of perspectives, concerns, support, and inquiries raised by the community. While the summaries are primarily informed by comments submitted through the County's public web form, County staff also incorporated additional input the community has shared via email or public comment at Board of Supervisor meetings, if those comments raised unique points not already reflected. This approach was to ensure a more complete and representative record of community feedback. As noted prior, questions, comments and recommendations have also been provided in their original form.

Imperial Data Center Project – Public Comment Matrix

Rank	*Concern Area*	*Summary of Concern*	*Primary Risk Area*
1	Location Near Residential Areas & Schools	Opposition to siting near homes and schools; includes concern regarding proximity distance to nearest residents.	Land-use compatibility, community trust
2	Water Use & Scarcity	Concern over high water demand and sourcing, including questions about specific water sources, compatibility in desert climates, and sustainability.	Resource sustainability, environmental review
3	Air Quality, Public Health & Hazardous Material	Concerns regarding emissions, backup generators, cumulative pollution, asthma, management of hazardous materials, and long-term exposure impacts.	Public health, regulatory compliance
4	CEQA Applicability & Environmental Review	Objection to treating the project as ministerial or exempt; requests for full CEQA review and Environmental Impact Report.	Legal exposure, procedural risk
5	Noise & Continuous Industrial Operations	Concerns about generator noise and continuous operations or industrial activity affecting nearby residents and schools.	Quality of life, mitigation enforceability
6	Electric Grid Strain, Peak Demand & Energy Source	Concern regarding large baseload demand would impact regional grid (especially during summer peak demand/heat events), uncertainty on where/how energy will be sourced, concerns on generator use (including whether generators are backup only)	Infrastructure reliability
7	Economic Benefit vs. Community Burden	Belief that benefits primarily accrue to outside corporations while local communities bear environmental and infrastructure impacts with limited long-term jobs.	Equity, cost-benefit scrutiny, financial accountability
8	Infrastructure & Emergency Services Capacity	Concerns about adequacy of fire protection, emergency response, and supporting infrastructure.	Public safety readiness
9	Transparency & Public Process	Ongoing concern about disclosure of project details, that the project advanced without sufficient notice, outreach, or clear disclosure of risks and safeguards.	Public trust, governance
10	Developer Accountability & Long-Term Viability	Skepticism regarding fulfillment of commitments, long-term operations outcomes, and risk of abandonment or underutilized facilities.	Long-term liability
11	Conditional Support with Safeguards	Support expressed contingent on strict requirements ensuring no rate increases, full infrastructure funding by developer, and enforceable protections.	Conditions of approval
12	Support for Economic Development	Support for the project because it generates more development, property tax revenue, job creation, broader economic growth and avoiding tax increases.	Economic opportunity

Imperial Data Center Project - Summary of Comments Received

(as of March 20, 2026)

Opposition of the Project

1. Oppose locating a data center in or near residential neighborhoods, stating the project is incompatible with areas where families, children, schools, and vulnerable populations live.
2. Express strong opposition to the project being located near existing residential development, including "not in my backyard" concerns.
3. Raise concerns about disproportionate impacts on low-income or vulnerable populations in the Imperial Valley.
4. Cite concerns about water and energy use in a hot desert environment already facing resource constraints.
5. Express concerns about noise, emissions, industrial activity, backup generators, substations, and continuous operations affecting quality of life.
6. Raise public health concerns, including air quality, cumulative pollution, asthma risks, cancer risk, miscarriage risks, and long-term exposure near homes and schools.
7. Reference experiences in other regions where large data centers strained water supplies or contributed to environmental or public health impacts.
8. State that the project lacks transparency and has advanced without sufficient public notice, outreach, or disclosure of risks and safeguards.
9. Oppose treating the project as ministerial or CEQA-exempt and assert that a project of this scale warrants full environmental review.
10. Express distrust of the developer or decision-making process and urge heightened scrutiny to protect residents and County interests.
11. Assert that data centers primarily benefit outside corporations while local communities bear environmental and infrastructure impacts with limited long-term job creation.
12. State that the project could strain local infrastructure, including the electric grid, water supply, and emergency services, particularly during peak summer demand.
13. Argue that the project does not represent sustainable or lasting economic development and could result in underutilized or abandoned facilities over time.
14. Express skepticism that promises related to jobs, water use, and noise mitigation would be fulfilled long term.
15. Express concern that speed, profit, or administrative efficiency is being prioritized over community health, safety, and long-term wellbeing.
16. Raise concern that data centers may use extremely large volumes of water (hundreds of thousands to millions of gallons per day), viewed as inconsistent with statewide water scarcity conditions.

17. Express concern that companies may minimize tax contributions through incentives or tax structures, resulting in limited fiscal benefit relative to impacts.
18. Reference documentation-related input such as preliminary ownership or reporting materials submitted as part of the project record.

Support of the Project:

19. Support the project as a means to promote development, generate new revenue, and encourage economic growth without increasing taxes.
20. Existing industrial infrastructure in the area supports locating the project if it is properly managed.
21. Support the project only if strict safeguards are implemented to ensure no increased utility rates, infrastructure costs, or long-term burdens are passed on to residents or businesses.
22. Support the project based on anticipated economic benefits, including increased property tax revenue, business activity, infrastructure improvements (e.g., internet reliability), and alignment with long-term economic development goals.
23. Support the project for the construction jobs it will create and the high-paying operational careers.

Recommended Requirements for the Imperial Data Center Project

1. Require a full CEQA review and Environmental Impact Report evaluating air quality, noise, public health impacts, water use, cumulative emissions, and long-term environmental effects.
2. Require greater setbacks or buffer zones between data center facilities and residential neighborhoods, schools, and community facilities.
3. Require comprehensive analysis of generator operations, including cumulative emissions, duration, and worst-case operating scenarios.
4. Require clear, proactive public communication explaining project impacts, mitigation measures, and community protections.
5. Evaluate alternative locations better suited for industrial development and farther from residential areas, including unincorporated County land.
6. Require analysis of impacts to emergency services, including fire protection capacity and response readiness.
7. Require developers to fully fund electric, water, sewer, and infrastructure upgrades so no additional costs are passed on to existing residents or businesses.
8. Require analysis of peak demand impacts during summer heat events and grid stress periods.
9. Require on-site or associated grid-support or renewable infrastructure to offset large, continuous baseload demand.
10. Require meaningful community engagement and documented consideration of public input prior to advancing approvals.
11. Require construction and operational jobs to be local hires.

Questions Specific to the Imperial Data Center Project

1. What peak-load and grid-stress modeling has been conducted, and how will the project avoid increasing regional peak demand or emergency curtailment events?
2. Will the project be sold or transferred to a hyperscaler, and how will commitments made during approval be enforced after transfer?
3. How will cooling water be sourced, treated, discharged, and monitored, and what chemicals or additives will be used?
4. How will noise from generators, equipment, and operations be mitigated and enforced over time?
5. How will contamination of local water supplies be prevented and cumulative pollution risks addressed?
6. How will impacts to the electric grid be mitigated to prevent outages, brownouts, or increased rates for residents?
7. What is the water source for the data center? Are there agreements in place for the project to obtain water from specific local sources, such as wastewater treatment facilities?
8. The developer's website discusses water sourcing and power infrastructure but does not publicly disclose any plan for electronic waste, battery end-of-life disposal, or hazardous materials lifecycle management. Do those plans exist and have they been reviewed?
9. What is the energy source of the data center?
10. Are the on-site generators backup only?
11. How many jobs will the project create for construction and operational?
12. What is the anticipated salary for operational jobs?
13. What is the distance of the nearest resident to the data center?
14. How will the data center impact housing prices in the surrounding area?
15. Will emissions from the generators impact the health of nearby residents or kids at school?

Questions Specific to County Processes and this Project

1. Why would data centers be considered in the Imperial Valley when it is a hot climate here that does not make sense for data centers?
2. Under what grounds did the County as lead agency determine that the proposed facility is exempt from CEQA?
3. Why is a data center considered a permitted use under the applicable zoning, and what studies support that determination?
4. When was the zoning classification for this type of use last evaluated or updated?
5. How could the County allow a data center to be built when the County does not have enough power in the region and suffers from blackouts in the summer?
6. Will the project be required to undergo CEQA and EIR review given the scale, location, and public health concerns?
7. Did the facility provide a negative declaration or mitigated negative declaration?
8. Why didn't the County do a background check on the data center developer?
9. When will sales and use tax revenues be collected, and at what stage of the project (development or operation)?
10. How will site responsibility, cleanup, and tax obligations be handled if a developer or operator withdraws mid-project?
11. Has the property owner obtained required approvals (e.g., Soil Management Plan approval from DTSC) tied to existing land use covenants, and how does that affect the project's classification as ministerial versus discretionary?
12. Why have certain required environmental or regulatory documents not been made publicly available, and how is the County reconciling state-level discretionary review requirements with a ministerial determination?
13. Will tax incentives or abatements be offered now or in the future for this project?
14. What are the economic benefits of the Imperial Data Center project?
15. Has the County done an independent analysis on the economic benefits of the project?