Dear Environment and Energy Committee,

Please join us at our upcoming meeting:

Meeting Details
Topic: Data Center Impacts
Date: Tuesday, Sept. 16, 2025
Time: 9:30-11 a.m.
Register: Please register in advance for the Zoom meeting with the link sent to Committee members.

Data centers are the unseen backbone of our digital economy, yet their development and operation impact local governments and residents both positively and negatively. Data center facilities can provide significant benefits for communities, including tax revenue, enhanced digital connectivity and new jobs. But they also demand enormous amounts of energy and water. Their operation can impact neighbors and community resilience.

ComEd will join us for this conversation about data centers in northeastern Illinois, focusing on energy impacts. We will also touch on land use and tax considerations for local governments. We will take a closer look at the City of Northlake, which is now home to five data centers.

Background:
Data centers are warehouse-like facilities that house servers (connected computers) and data storage systems capable of vast numbers of calculations and computing applications. Explore the National League of Cities useful fact sheets and resources about data centers and local government issues here.

As data centers proliferate, they are increasingly responsible for higher carbon emissions. A 2024 study looking at the environmental impacts of data centers found they emitted 105 million metric tons of carbon emissions, equivalent to about 2% of all U.S. emissions and up from 31.5 million tons in 2018.

Illinois incentivizes data center investments, guiding development to underserved areas and requiring green building and sustainable development practices. The last published report on the impact of these policies shows a statewide investment of $3.3 billion with 179 new jobs created. Illinois now ranks fourth for the number of data centers, with most clustered in the Chicago metro region.

GRC goals: Reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Promote innovation and a competitive workforce. Cultivate local and sustainable development, jobs, and businesses. Use energy for buildings and facilities efficiently. Use and distribute water efficiently.

Climate Action Plan strategies: Engage commercial and residential property owners to optimize building efficiency. Build renewable energy and energy storage capacity to meet the clean energy needs of the region. Integrate climate resiliency into decision-making about capital expenditures.