



Planning and Community Development

Deb Bell

Council Initiated:

☒ Yes CM Nehring

☐ No

ECAF: 2026-1510

Ordinance: 26-026

Type:

☐ Contract

☐ Board Appt.

☒ Code Amendment

MORATORIUM

☐ Budget Action

☐ Other

Requested Handling:

☐ Normal

☐ Expedite

☒ Urgent

Fund Source:

☐ General Fund

☐ Other Rd Fund

☒ N/A

Executive Rec:

☐ Approve

☐ Did Not Approve

☒ N/A

Approved as to

Form:

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ N/A

Subject: Moratorium related to Growth Management.

Scope: Adopting a moratorium on data centers within unincorporated Snohomish County and adding new sections to Chapter 30.28 SCC and Chapter 30.91D SCC and declaring an emergency.

Authority Granted: RCW 36.70A.390 authorizes the County Council to adopt moratoria, interim zoning ordinance, and interim official controls to preserve the status quo while new plans and regulations are being developed. RCW 36.70A.390 and SCC 30.73.090(3) permit the County to adopt such measures without notice and public hearing when deemed appropriate to promote the public health, safety and welfare, provided that the County holds a public hearing within sixty (60) days after the adoption of the moratorium ordinance.

Background: Snohomish County is experiencing increased interest in the development of data centers and related digital infrastructure facilities, such as data mining and cryptocurrency mining. Data centers have impacts relating to land use compatibility, electrical demand, water usage, transportation, noise, environmental sustainability and economic development.

Snohomish County code does not currently contain comprehensive regulations specifically addressing the siting, development or operation of data centers to adequately ensure the protection of Snohomish County, its lands, waters, natural resources, natural environment and human community, from the potential impacts from data centers.

Research indicates that Data centers are often grouped into three categories: enterprise, co-location, and hyperscale. An “enterprise data center,” is where one company exclusively uses the data center. (Large tech companies like Meta and Google operate many enterprise data centers and rely on them to power their digital services, including “cloud” file storage and AI agents.) Another type of data centers are “colocation” data centers, where often smaller companies can lease space in the data center for their own purposes. Finally, is the “hyperscale” data centers. These are very large data centers (often several warehouses) that have surged in popularity recently driven by AI and cryptocurrency mining.

Snohomish County intends to develop permanent regulations to address the deficiencies in the current regulations.

Action Requested: To move the emergency ordinance to GLS on June 24, 2026, for consideration.