



**Friends of
the Earth**

Sent on behalf of the 28 undersigned organisations by:
Friends of the Earth Ireland
9 Upper Mount Street,
Dublin 2

5th March 2026

Minister Darragh O'Brien,
Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment
Tom Johnson House, Haddington Road,
Dublin 4

Dear Minister O'Brien,

We, the undersigned, are writing to you with concern for the current direction of policy decisions concerning data centres. As laid out in this letter, we are asking that you prioritise the health and welfare of people and nature over the interests of the tech industry.

Over the past few months, this Government, and the C.R.U, have made major decisions which we believe will accelerate Big Tech's power grab of our energy infrastructure and divert resources away from the public good. These decisions are likely to increase energy costs and pollution, undermine climate goals and decarbonisation efforts, make us more dependent on fossil gas imports, and hand over huge amounts of natural resources for the benefit of one industry. They will have real impacts for workers and households in Ireland, and erode our right to a clean and healthy environment.

The Government is advancing Private Wires legislation, which in its current form would enable data centre operators to build their own private electricity grids, divert resources away from the public good, dodge network charges and hoard electricity by still requiring a back up connection to the national public grid. The Government's Large Energy Users Action Plan proposal frames expansion of renewables as a means to serve the data centre industry at the expense of all other sectors of society. A data centre roundtable will be created to give the industry even more access to decision makers.

Huge amounts of state and semi-state resources will be deployed to facilitate the growth of "green energy parks" to serve data centres, allowing tech giants to mop up renewables. These energy parks will likely be created in rural areas where electricity supply is already constrained.

These decisions come on top of the Commission for Regulation of Utilities' new large energy user connection policy, which allows data centres to expand if they scale up to 80% renewables in 6 years' time, a requirement which undermines the fact that emissions need to come down now, not in the future.

Our organisations find it hard to understand why such decisions are being made now. Data centres use at least 23% of electricity in Ireland. Eirgrid projections suggest this could have been as high as 27% in 2025, more than any other sector, indicating that the energy grid is being leveraged to facilitate the tech industry above all other users. Globally, this is unprecedented; per capita, data centres in Ireland now use a bigger share of national electricity supply than any other reported country in the world. Government bodies like the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland, the Climate Change Advisory Council and National Economic Social Council have all raised the alarm regarding the continuing expansion of the industry.

Communities and nature in Ireland are paying a high price as a result:

- We pay for it through the strain on infrastructure; already we have seen examples of data centre demand undermining the amount of energy available for new housing developments, and re-directing millions of litres of water away from the public supply.
- We pay for it through the level of pollution emitted by these facilities, which demand a constant and enormous supply of power, power that is often being met through the build out of new gas pipelines, gas plants and diesel generators.
- We pay for it through increased household bills and a gas heavy energy network, which leaves us vulnerable to geopolitical shifts and fossil fuel imports

A fairer, cleaner and more affordable energy system is possible. We, the undersigned, ask that the Minister and the Government reverse its current course of direction and prioritise the health and welfare of people and nature over the interests of the tech industry. We demand:

1. A moratorium on new data centre connections until the threat they pose to the security and sustainability of our energy and water systems has been independently assessed and clearly removed.
2. The introduction of prioritisation criteria for connecting to the electricity grid based on social need.
3. Scrap any Private Wires bill which would be a back door for massive data centre expansion.

Le meas,



Rosi Leonard, Friends of the Earth Ireland

Signed on behalf of the following organisations:

- Friends of the Earth Ireland
- ICTU Energy & Natural Resources Committee
- An Taisce
- Trócaire
- Irish Coalition for Business and Human Rights (ICBHR)
- BirdWatch Ireland
- Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice
- Trinity College Dublin Student Union / Aontas Mac Léinn Choláiste na Tríonóide
- Good Energies Alliance Ireland
- Stop Climate Chaos
- Community Law & Mediation
- National Women's Council of Ireland
- UCD Student's Union
- Cork Friends of the Earth
- Save Lough Neagh
- Afri (Action from Ireland)
- Environmental Law and Justice Group, Sutherland School of Law, University College Dublin
- Save The Moat - Save The Sperrins
- Futureproof Clare
- Ecojustice Ireland
- Letterkenny area Friends of the Earth
- Climate Justice Universities Union
- Save Benbradagh Group
- Dundalk Friends of the Earth
- Dundalk Communities United
- Dun Laoghaire Friends of the Earth
- Dublin Friends of the Earth
- Kilmeaden Says No
- Dominican Sisters Cabra