

Testimony of Joe Laquatra, Jr., President and Business Manager
Pennsylvania Laborers' District Council

Before the Senate Democratic Policy Committee
Public Hearing on Data Centers

September 2, 2025

The Pennsylvania Laborers' District Council represents workers in 62 counties across eastern and western Pennsylvania. On behalf of our members and their families, I appreciate this opportunity to submit written comments to the Senate Democratic Policy Committee regarding our workforce participation and interest in the development of data centers in Pennsylvania.

To provide greater background on our union, please know that our district council is part of the Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA), which represents workers throughout the United States and Canada. Our members perform a range of construction work in the public and private sectors. Traditionally, our members are responsible for building and maintaining much of our country's infrastructure, including roads and bridges, schools, commercial buildings, as well as utility and energy systems. Our organization provides specialized training to ensure that the range of construction work that we do is completed to the highest industry standards with the utmost regard to workplace and public safety.

In exchange for their training and skills, LIUNA members earn a middle-class wage, receive affordable health insurance for their families, and gain a retirement benefit that allows them to age with dignity. And, because LIUNA members live in or near the communities where they work, they spend their earnings at local businesses, pay local and state taxes, utilize their insurance benefits at local hospitals, and continue to support the local economy with their retirement earnings long after they stop working.

Please know that we are supportive of the growth of energy infrastructure, and we applaud Governor Shapiro's work to secure the significant partnership with and investments by AWS in Pennsylvania. Our organization has always worked diligently to foster alliances with companies and contractors throughout all energy sectors. These strategic partnerships in energy construction have proven to generate solid, long-term career opportunities for generations of LIUNA members.

As Pennsylvania's data center market grows, we are similarly working to ensure that our members will fill our traditional construction roles for the thousands of good jobs that will be created through the construction of new data centers and related infrastructure. Like prior energy systems, work on these sites can provide years of employment for workers, which means continuous pay and stability for our members and their families. Accordingly, we are glad to review and lend our support to any legislative or policy initiatives that will further the buildout of data centers and infrastructure.

We also encourage the committee to review its ability to ensure that data centers and related infrastructure projects that receive public incentives (such as state and local tax credits or tax

exemptions) are employing in-state workers and paying local prevailing wage rates on all aspects of work, from site work to building construction. Such an action helps to ensure that our contractors can compete with competitors who may employ low-wage, out of state workers, and would help to prevent any erosion of quality wage rates or job opportunities in our local communities. Energy construction work is, and should continue to be, good-paying work for local, highly trained workers. Pennsylvania has a strong energy workforce that takes great pride in its work, and we are hopeful to only grow that workforce.

Once again, we appreciate the opportunity to participate as a stakeholder in this important discussion. We look forward to working closely with you should any legislation or policy initiatives result from this hearing, and as the full legislature debates this topic.