

OFFERED BY COUNCILOR EDWARD M. FLYNN



CITY OF BOSTON

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY SIX

**ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DISCUSS A
MORATORIUM FOR ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE
(AI) DATA CENTERS IN BOSTON**

WHEREAS, In recent years, state and local governments have been slow to adjust and regulate advances in innovation technology, with continued public and pedestrian safety concerns related to both rideshare and third-party food delivery applications; *and*

WHEREAS, During a nationwide affordability crisis, local communities across the United States have raised concerns on the impact of large-scale data center infrastructure on their electricity bills. Data centers also require cooling systems and consume significant amounts of freshwater. The indirect water consumption from data centers in the United States reached an estimated 211 billion gallons in 2023, increasing concerns about water scarcity and sustainability. Moreover, Data centers generate continuous noise pollution from cooling systems and equipment, with nearby residents reporting persistent humming that negatively impacts their quality of life and public health; *and*

WHEREAS, This month, a bipartisan bill passed the Maine Legislature to impose an 18-month moratorium on new data centers, while Port Washington, WI passed a referendum requiring AI data center projects that cost over \$10 million and receive tax benefits to obtain approval from local voters; *and*

WHEREAS, Both the state of Massachusetts and the City of Boston have been supportive of data center development while referencing innovation economy, though concerns relating to community impact and electricity costs have been acknowledged. In Lowell, the Markley Data Center has raised similar concerns among residents regarding noise pollution, air quality, and lack of transparency in expansion plans, leading the City to impose a moratorium on further expansion; *and*

WHEREAS, More than 4,200 data centers now operate across the United States, and their rapid expansion is increasingly affecting the daily lives of hundreds of thousands of residents. In response, communities nationwide have raised concerns to their local governments, citing a range of impacts including heavy water consumption, rising electricity and utility costs, environmental strain, persistent noise, and potential soil contamination. While municipalities have been slow to regulate impacts of innovation technology in recent years, it is critical that Boston also weigh the pros and cons of a potential moratorium on data centers; ***NOW THEREFORE BE IT***

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to discuss a moratorium on data centers in Boston.

Filed on: April 29, 2026