



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Date: Monday, August 4, 2025

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## **MEJC supports ballot initiative to halt the development of a rural Augusta Charter Township data center**

*Augusta Township residents seek signatures for a petition to vote against the rezoning of farmland for data center development*

MEJC will provide technical assistance to petitioning efforts for Augusta Charter Township residents collecting signatures for a ballot initiative that would stop the rezoning of 522 acres of farmland into general industrial use. MEJC organizing and political staff [met with residents](#) Sunday August 3, 2025, to assist with direct canvassing support and training.

"Now more than ever corporations are incentivized to create sacrifice zones out of communities—rural and urban—for these data centers. Fossil fuel plant closures are being reversed to prepare for their development. Communities will face ever higher energy bills to compensate for the strain these facilities will place on our already-neglected grid," said MEJC political director, Dennis Black. "But there is equal opportunity to intervene if residents are willing to stand together. Every permit request from these corporations is a chance to lean into the democratic process and fight back."

Nationally, [64 billion in data center development](#) has already been derailed by local opposition and initiatives. Concerned August Charter Township residents are acting well within a victory of bringing the pending data center to similar conclusions.

For many residents, the Thor Equity data center underscores existing concerns. One being rolling blackouts already aren't uncommon throughout the DTE service area. Residents have had to shoulder costs by purchasing generators. For others, the data center not only spells a breach of environmental justice but of the democratic process owed to their community.

"The proposed 810-acre industrial data center is a radical shift for Augusta Charter Township, a rural community built on generations of quiet country living since 1836," said resident Travis Matts. "Our elected officials have bypassed meaningful, public input, and transparency in favor of corporate interest and false promises. Many of us residents, myself included, welcome the idea of community improvements and innovations— but not at the cost of our environment, identity, or democratic process. This isn't just about land; it's about the sustainability and longevity of our township. We, residents, demand a vote. This is our home, and our voices will be heard."

Michigan is being dotted with data center projects from Benton Harbor to River Rouge. The group called Protect Augusta Charter Township (PACT) is working overtime to rally their community together around the facts, the harrowing environmental consequences to the area, and what can be done about it.

"This is an issue where Michiganders can unite across races, places and politics because at the end of the day we are all sharing the same grid from River Rouge, to Augusta Township, to Ypsilanti Township"



said MEJC policy director, Andrea Pierce. "This has been happening at a national scale and now it's dropped into our backyard. MEJC worked with legislatures last year to try to defeat the bills that are now allowing our cities and townships to be at the mercy of corporations that profit over sustainable futures and wellbeing. This ballot initiative will give the people of Augusta Twp. the ability to be able to choose whether a data center in their township will be what they want to live with and to leave for future generations."

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*The Michigan Environmental Justice Coalition (MEJC) works to achieve a clean, healthy, and safe environment for Michigan residents most affected by inadequate policies. We build power and unity within our community, so we all can thrive. [www.michiganej.org](http://www.michiganej.org)*