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Most Americans Say "Not in My Backyard" to AI Data Centers

Redfin's analysis found that AI data centers have some benefits: In northern Virginia, taxes on data center equipment are likely contributing to a surge in education spending. Meanwhile, individual homeowners' property-tax rates are declining.

SEATTLE — July 22, 2026 — More than half (53%) of U.S. residents oppose the construction of an AI data center in their neighborhood, according to a new survey commissioned by Redfin, the real estate brokerage powered by Rocket. Roughly one-third (34%) support it.

This is according to a Redfin-commissioned survey conducted by Ipsos in May 2026, fielded to 4,000 U.S. residents. These findings focus on a question about how respondents feel about building certain types of properties in their neighborhoods.

AI data centers are controversial largely because they strain electricity and water resources, which can push up energy costs and spark environmental concerns, per various news sources. They can also disrupt communities with noise and large, industrial-looking structures. One example of opposition is New York's recent statewide ban on building large data centers. For some people, AI data centers also represent broader fears about AI: Nearly three in five (58%) of U.S. residents believe that advances in AI will eliminate jobs and make it harder to afford homes, according to the same survey.

A Redfin agent in Virginia said concerns about nearby data centers are becoming increasingly common among homebuyers. One recent buyer asked the agent to verify that no data center was planned near a home she was considering, and another northern Virginia buyer later said they likely would have chosen a different neighborhood had they known how many data centers were nearby. House hunters are concerned about noise, traffic, heavy water and electricity use, and the impact of industrial buildings on the character of neighborhoods.

Broken down by age, older generations are more likely than younger generations to oppose data centers in their area. Roughly two-thirds (65%) of baby boomers and 60% of Gen Xers oppose the construction of an AI data center in their neighborhood, compared with 42% of Gen Zers and 43% of millennials.

Additionally, Americans are more likely to oppose data centers in their neighborhood than any other type of building Redfin asked about. More than half of U.S. residents oppose construction of a data center near their home, while 39% oppose a new apartment complex and 32% oppose a mixed-use development. Forty-eight percent oppose converting single-family homes into smaller dwellings to increase supply in their area.

AI Data Centers Are Helping Fund Virginia Schools

While the majority of Americans don't want to live near AI data centers, the structures can provide educational benefits to communities.

The boom in AI data centers in northern Virginia is helping fund public schools through a surge in tax revenue. A Redfin analysis of county financial records found that Virginia's two largest data-center hubs—Loudoun County and Prince William County—have seen far faster growth in education spending than neighboring counties over the last 15 years. Both counties collect substantial taxes on computer equipment housed inside data centers; Loudoun's financial reports identify computer equipment in data centers as the largest source of personal property tax revenue, which is paid by the companies responsible for them.

Loudoun County is home to 176 data centers, more than twice the number of any other U.S. county. Neighboring Prince William County ranks third nationally, with 77 facilities. Santa Clara County, CA is second, with 83 data centers; Redfin didn't include Santa Clara County in its analysis of education spending because data centers aren't a major source of revenue for that area.

Redfin's analysis found that AI data centers are driving a tax windfall in Loudoun and Prince William counties. Personal property tax revenue, which are levies imposed on physical assets—like AI data centers—per resident, has increased nearly 639% in Loudoun County over the last 15 years, and it rose 349% in Prince William County. That's compared with 91% growth in neighboring Fairfax County, which has the fifth-most data centers in the U.S. but far fewer than Prince William County or Loudon County.

Increased tax revenue from data centers has contributed to a surge in education spending in Prince William and Loudoun counties. Prince William County increased education spending per resident by 82% to $1,589 over the last 15 years. Loudoun County increased it by 77% to $2,955 per resident. For comparison, Fairfax County increased education spending per resident by 49% to $2,234 over that period. Stafford County, VA, where there is just one operational data center, increased it by 29% to $1,024.

Impact of AI Data Centers on Education Spending
Select Northern Virginia counties

	Loudoun County, VA	Prince William County, VA	Fairfax County, VA	Stafford County, VA
Number of data centers	176 (most in the U.S.)	77 (third-most in the U.S.)	45 (fifth-most in the U.S.)	1
Increase in personal property tax revenue, 2010-2025	639%	349%	91%	N/A
Increase in education spending per resident, 2010-2025	77%	82%	49%	29%
Education spending per resident, 2025	$2,955	$1,589	$2,234	$1,024

Local officials from Loudoun County have linked revenue from AI data centers to school funding.

Average teacher salaries have risen more rapidly in Loudoun County than in neighboring Fairfax County, which has far fewer data centers. Teacher salaries in Loudon County rose roughly 40% to about $83,000 from 2010 to 2023; that's compared with a 29% increase to about $82,000 in Fairfax County. Still, teacher pay in Virginia is lagging behind the U.S. as a whole.

Virginia recently approved a new statewide tax on data center power consumption, which would go to the state's general fund.

Virginia's Data Center-Heavy Counties Are Collecting More Tax Revenue While Cutting Homeowner Rates

Loudoun and Prince William counties are seeing more revenue growth from personal property taxes than counties with fewer or no data centers.

Meanwhile, the property-tax rate for individual homeowners has steadily fallen over the past decade.

"Loudoun County's expanding data-center tax base has given local officials more capacity to invest in schools, including higher education spending and teacher compensation, without upping tax rates on homeowners," said Redfin senior economist Yingqi Xu. "Because data centers are taxed largely through personal property taxes on computer equipment, that revenue can help fund growing budgets without putting the same pressure on residential real estate taxes. Surging data-center revenue allows counties to rely less heavily on homeowners to fund education, though it's important to note that a surge in data-center revenue doesn't automatically translate dollar-for-dollar to public spending."

Prince William County cut its real-property tax rate from $1.12 per $100 of assessed value in 2022 to $0.92 in 2025. Due to that decline, the county has kept its estimated residential tax levy relatively flat at roughly $1,320 per resident since 2023.

Loudoun County cut its real-property tax rate from 0.89% in 2022 to 0.81% in 2025. But rising home values have offset those rate cuts: Redfin estimates that the county's residential property-tax levy per resident increased from roughly $1,574 in 2014 to about $2,005 in 2024 before leveling off in 2025.

To view the full report, including a chart and detailed methodology, please visit: https://www.redfin.com/news/ai-data-centers-opposition-education-benefit

About Redfin

Redfin is a technology-driven real estate company with the country's most-visited real estate brokerage website. As part of Rocket Companies (NYSE: RKT), Redfin is creating an integrated homeownership platform from search to close to make the dream of homeownership more affordable and accessible for everyone. Redfin's clients can see homes first with on-demand tours, easily apply for a home loan with Rocket Mortgage, and save thousands in fees while working with a top local agent.

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