THE FORENSICS FILES

PUBLIC FORUM DEBATE FREE SAMPLE

Data Center Moratorium

Resolved: The United States federal government should enact a moratorium on hyperscale data center construction.

Grid Reliability & Ratepayer Protection

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Targeted Regulation Solves Better Than a Moratorium

A free student-facing preview from the 2026–2027 The Forensics Files Public Forum product line.

Includes a topic overview, one Pro preview, one Con preview, sample evidence, and student strategy notes.

The Forensics Files

Classroom-ready debate resources for students, coaches, and teachers.

Publication Information

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This completed free sample is designed for classroom, practice, preview, and student preparation use. It gives students and coaches a usable example of the explanation style, evidence organization, and round-ready support used in The Forensics Files Public Forum materials.

This document is intentionally limited. It does not replace the full paid product. Instead, it provides a compact look at one Pro route and one Con route, along with concise coaching notes to show how the larger package functions.

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Evidence Integrity Notice

- Quoted evidence must be preserved accurately and used in context.
- Students should not paraphrase, modernize, shorten, or rearrange quoted source language.
- Warrant language matters more than isolated buzzwords.
- The goal of this sample is to model honest, understandable, and usable debate preparation.

How to Use This Free Sample

This sample is meant to show how The Forensics Files Public Forum materials function in actual rounds: understandable for novices, useful to varsity debaters, organized for coaches, and formatted cleanly enough to use without extra preparation.

Quick Start for Students

The resolution asks whether the federal government should temporarily stop new hyperscale data center construction. The heart of the debate is not whether data centers matter; everyone agrees they do. The clash is whether the risks of rapid buildout are serious enough that a nationwide moratorium is the right response.

- **Pro story:** rapid hyperscale construction can outrun grid capacity, strain water and public systems, and shift risk onto ordinary ratepayers before adequate rules are in place.
- **Con story:** those risks can be addressed with targeted regulation, local permitting, tariff reform, and project-specific safeguards without stopping every project nationwide.
- **Strategic center:** the round often turns on precision. Is a broad federal moratorium a necessary protective pause, or is it an overbroad response to risks that vary by region and project?

What This Free Sample Includes

- A concise topic overview
- One Pro preview: Grid Reliability & Ratepayer Protection
- One Con preview: Targeted Regulation Solves Better Than a Moratorium
- Sample evidence highlights from both sides
- Student crossfire and weighing notes
- A guide to what is included in the full paid package

Topic Overview

Hyperscale data centers are massive facilities used for cloud computing, digital storage, and increasingly artificial-intelligence workloads. Because those facilities require enormous and often continuous electricity demand, they can interact with local grids, transmission planning, water systems, land-use policy, and utility cost allocation in unusually visible ways.

A moratorium is a temporary pause. In this topic, Pro argues that a pause gives government time to verify demand, set rules, and protect public systems before projects create sunk costs and approval pressure. Con argues that the better response is to regulate risk directly through conditions, tariffs, permitting, contracts, and denials where necessary rather than stopping all hyperscale construction.

Core Clash Questions

- Are data center risks immediate and systemic, or manageable and project-specific?
- Should policymakers prioritize temporary restraint or conditional approval?
- Do utilities and regulators already have tools that can solve the main harms?
- How should judges weigh reliability, public cost, flexibility, and future economic opportunity?

Novice-Friendly Summary

If you are just starting, think of the debate this way: Pro says big data-center projects are moving so fast that government needs a timeout before the public gets stuck with grid stress and higher costs. Con says government should not use a timeout on every project when it can write specific rules and approve only the projects that meet them.

Pro Preview

Grid Reliability & Ratepayer Protection

This Pro route argues that a temporary construction pause protects the public by requiring verified demand, credible power plans, dependable supply, and customer-paid infrastructure before hyperscale projects create irreversible commitments.

Core Ballot Story

- Hyperscale requests can arrive on short timelines and at city-scale load levels.
- Utilities may face pressure to serve those projects before replacement generation and transmission are ready.
- If forecasts fail or projects change, households can be left exposed to infrastructure costs they never asked for.
- A temporary federal pause preserves leverage before money is committed and before public systems absorb private risk.

Evidence Spotlight

DOE SEAB 2024: “Connection requests for hyperscale facilities of 300–1000 MW or larger with lead times of 1–3 years are stretching the capacity of local grids to deliver and supply power at that pace.”

PJM 2025: “A capacity shortage could affect the PJM system as early as the 2026/2027 Delivery Year,” with demand growing rapidly “primarily from the proliferation of data centers.”

Why This Argument Is Strong

This route is persuasive because it is concrete and easy to weigh. It lets Pro explain that the status quo problem is not theoretical: planners, utilities, and regulators are already warning that rapid large-load growth can outrun dependable infrastructure. It also gives students a clean cost-comparison frame: a short delay is reversible, but stranded infrastructure and grid instability can persist for years.

Con Preview

Targeted Regulation Solves Better Than a Moratorium

This Con route agrees that data-center growth can create genuine public risks, but argues that those harms justify enforceable, project-specific safeguards rather than a nationwide construction freeze that treats compliant and noncompliant projects alike.

Core Ballot Story

- Targeted regulation can impose study fees, minimum bills, collateral, contracts, termination payments, and site-specific conditions.
- Local authorities can use zoning, permits, development agreements, and site-plan review to address water, noise, land-use, and infrastructure impacts.
- A national moratorium is overbroad because regional conditions vary dramatically.
- Con wins when it shows that precision solves the harms better than a blanket federal pause.

Evidence Spotlight

Georgia Power 2026: “Large energy users such as data centers pay the full costs to serve them,” including longer contract terms, minimum bills, financial security provisions, termination payments, and upfront local-infrastructure costs.

NACo 2026: counties can use “zoning ordinances,” “conditional or special use permits,” and “site plan review or development agreements” to address infrastructure impacts and long-term commitments.

Why This Argument Is Strong

This route works well because it concedes the best Pro concerns, then turns the round toward remedy comparison. Con does not need to prove that every data-center project is harmless. It only needs to show that narrower, enforceable tools can separate responsible projects from irresponsible ones more effectively than a uniform freeze.

Student Crossfire & Weighing Notes

Useful Crossfire Questions

- If you support a moratorium, what specific problem cannot be solved through tariffs, permits, or project-level denial?
- If you oppose a moratorium, what happens in regions where infrastructure commitments are made before dependable supply is ready?
- Who should bear the risk when a hyperscale project changes, downsizes, or never materializes?
- Is the judge choosing between development and no development, or between two different regulatory sequences?

Easy Weighing Lenses

- **Reversibility:** a pause delays construction; bad infrastructure commitments can burden the public for much longer.
- **Precision:** does the side solve the harm directly, or does it rely on a broader policy than necessary?
- **Timeframe:** are the most important commitments happening before regulators can respond, or can regulators impose conditions in time?
- **Magnitude:** which side best protects large numbers of customers, communities, and public systems?

Public Forum rewards clarity. Students should not try to win by reciting the largest number of technical details. They should tell a coherent story, extend one or two high-quality pieces of evidence, and explain why their policy choice is more reasonable for judges.

Upgrade to the Full Product

The complete The Forensics Files Public Forum package for Data Center Moratorium is much larger than this sample. The full customer edition includes a synchronized master file plus student-ready and coach-ready components designed for tournament use, classroom instruction, and season-long preparation.

Included in the Full Package

- Full synchronized topic file
- Topic overview, definitions, and argument maps
- Neutral background evidence
- Pro evidence book
- Con evidence book
- Best card starter packs
- Pro constructive case library
- Con constructive case library
- Blocks and round strategy guide
- Printable round-ready quick sheets
- Practice drills and scrimmage packet
- Coach answer key and model performance guide
- Source guide, evidence index, and works cited

If you want the full student and coach system instead of a preview, the complete product line provides significantly more evidence depth, more case options, more rebuttal support, and more structured practice material than this sample.

Thank you for reviewing this free sample.

The Forensics Files | Classroom-ready debate resources for students, coaches, and teachers.