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Opposition to Proposed Data Center Backup Power Plant Due to Groundwater Impacts

To whom it may concern:

As an Indian Wells Valley resident, I oppose the proposed power plant intended to provide backup power for the proposed data center because of its potential impact on the already critically overdrafted Indian Wells Valley groundwater basin.

Our valley is facing a serious and well-documented water crisis. The Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Basin has been officially designated as critically overdrafted under California's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. Local groundwater authorities have acknowledged that current groundwater pumping exceeds the basin's sustainable yield and that imported water may ultimately be necessary to sustain existing residential, military, industrial, and agricultural demand.

In this context, approving a new industrial facility with potentially significant water demands raises serious concerns. Power plants commonly require water for cooling, emissions controls, and related operations, while data centers themselves can also consume substantial amounts of water. Even if the project's direct water use appears modest in isolation, cumulative impacts matter in a basin that is already in long-term decline.

Residents and existing industries are already experiencing the consequences of groundwater scarcity. Local agencies are pursuing costly imported-water solutions because current groundwater use is unsustainable. At the same time, water limitations and ongoing groundwater disputes have contributed to instability for existing regional employers and industries.

Before this project is approved, decision-makers should require:

- * A full independent analysis of projected groundwater demand.
- * A cumulative-impact study evaluating existing overdraft conditions.
- * Clear identification of the project's long-term water source.
- * Proof that the project will not worsen aquifer depletion or increase costs for residents.
- * Evaluation of lower-water alternatives, including dry-cooling technologies where feasible.

The Indian Wells Valley cannot continue approving new high-demand industrial projects without fully accounting for the reality that our groundwater basin is already in crisis. Long-term water sustainability must be prioritized before additional industrial expansion is approved.

Respectfully,

Lauren Blazek
Ridgecrest Resident

Sources

- * Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Authority (IWVGA) "Groundwater Sustainability Plan and basin management documents: <https://iwvga.org>
- * California Department of Water Resources "Critically Overdrafted Basin designations under SGMA: <https://water.ca.gov>
- * Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Basin Groundwater Sustainability Plan