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Alleged data center plan halts Corpus Christi's efforts to boost water supplies



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Key takeaways

- Corpus Christi is facing a water crisis as local reservoirs drop below 10% full, prompting the city to install pipe for an emergency Evangeline groundwater project near Sinton, whic [See more.](#)

Corpus Christi is racing to lock down more water as drought puts major strain on

South Texas supplies, but a legal fight with nearby Sinton is slowing that plan down.

The twist is that Corpus Christi officials have suggested Sinton may be trying to protect groundwater for a data center project.

As [Inside Climate News](#) reported, Corpus Christi has begun installing pipe for its emergency Evangeline groundwater project near Sinton, even though the city is still battling for the permits needed to drill.

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The project is intended to help a region of roughly 500,000 people facing a serious water crisis. Local reservoirs dropped below 10% full in February, and officials warned that supplies could run dangerously low without significant rain.

Sinton, about 30 minutes north of Corpus Christi and home to roughly 5,500 people, has challenged those permits in court, arguing that the drilling could threaten its water supply. On May 15, administrative law judge Alicia York said that the challenge could continue, putting the case on a path that may stretch for years.

Corpus Christi leaders have suggested there may be more to the resistance. They point to the recent rezoning of about 1,000 acres, nearby land deals, a planned electrical substation, and a local well permit as signs that one or more data centers could be headed to Sinton. Sinton officials have not confirmed that claim, with city manager John Hobson saying, "It is rumors."

The standoff highlights a growing issue across Texas: water-stressed communities are increasingly being asked to support large new industrial users, even as drought and population growth make supplies less reliable.

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Corpus Christi said its Evangeline project could eventually deliver 24 million gallons of water per day by 2027. By comparison, ICN cited a former Sinton city engineer who estimated that the rumored data center could use upward of 3

...engineer who estimated that the planned data center could use up to 1.5 million gallons per day, compared with under 1 million for Sinton itself.

According to [Aterio](#), as cited by ICN, Texas has more planned data centers than any other state, and many of them are tied to the AI boom. AI can offer real benefits, including helping utilities to manage power demand, improve grid efficiency, and support cleaner energy systems.

However, the infrastructure behind AI also puts pressure on the grid because data centers require enormous amounts of electricity and, in many cases, large volumes of water for cooling. That can raise concerns about local shortages, higher utility costs, security risks, and other unintended consequences for nearby communities.

A report from the Bureau of Economic Geology at the University of Texas, as cited by ICN, projected that Texas data center water demand would rise from 120 million gallons per day in 2025 to 640 million gallons by 2030.

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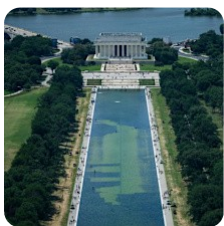
Corpus Christi is pushing ahead where it can. City leaders approved major spending and began bringing in pipe from South Carolina, calling the move a "calculated risk" as they sought a faster emergency response to worsening drought conditions. The city had spent years prioritizing a seawater desalination project, but delays pushed officials back to the Evangeline plan.

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officials have remained mostly quiet about the rumored data center. That leaves residents across the region watching two urgent needs collide: protecting local groundwater and securing enough water for homes, businesses, and industry.

As more large facilities seek land, power, and water, communities may want to pay closer attention to rezoning proposals, groundwater permits, and public utility planning meetings. Those decisions can shape local bills, development patterns, and long-term water security.

"Sinton stopped negotiating with us on our good-neighbor agreements and has been fighting against our regional water supply project," Corpus Christi city manager Peter Zanoni said.

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