Top Stories: Takeaways from Tuesday's primaries | America250 time capsule | Blood pressure meds

MYSA Follow

Texas faces water supply woes as big tech continues its Lone Star takeover

Aerial view of the Skybox Power Campus under construction in Hutto, Texas near Austin. Project plans call for four million square feet and 600 megawatts power at the facility. (BackyardProduction/ Getty Images)

Kelsey Thompson
Mon, May 18, 2026 at 8:02 PM CDT · 2 min read

7

As data centers ramp up their presence in the Lone Star State, new research out of Texas' capital city is shedding more insight into just how much more water use these developments will need amid Texas' ongoing drought and water supply woes.

The University of Texas at Austin shared new research earlier this month that revealed Texas' data center water use could make up 3% to 9% of Texas' overall water use by 2040 as production ramps up statewide. That estimate accounts for both data centers' use of water as a cooling mechanism as well as their water needs for power production. Right now, data centers' water usage accounts for fewer than 1% of the state's total water use.

Researchers' forecasts have been shaped by factors such as industry growth, cooling technologies used in those processes as well as the specific source of electricity used to power Texas data centers. That estimated figure could potentially surpass the total water use from Texas' manufacturing industry, which sits at 7% of statewide figures, UT's research noted.

"There's a lot of uncertainty surrounding the water use for data centers," Mariam Arzumanyan, a postdoctoral fellow at the Bureau of Economic Geology research unit within the UT Jackson School of Geosciences, said in the May release. "People don't know the scale of how much water is going to be needed. There is not a unified understanding of the technologies used for cooling, or how much water that technology would use."

Currently, more than 400 data centers are either operating or under development here in Texas, UT researchers revealed, adding that figure could change depending on whether all of those facilities lingering in the planning stages come to life. While water usage at data centers is twofold, researchers zeroed in on the water needed to create the energy powering these developments; with data centers dependent on plenty of power, that could increase natural gas, coal or nuclear energy production, which already amounts to 5% of the state's water usage.

Researchers outlined a slew of policy recommendations for state leadership, developers and municipalities, including:

- Expanded awareness and communication among major stakeholders, such as

data center operators, utilities, municipalities, state agencies and private developers.

- Improved mapping to aid projected industry growth forecasts, especially in "water-stressed regions of the state."
- Developing planning frameworks that marry hydrologic projections, grid capacity models, land-use constraints and permitting processes.

Sign up for Afternoon Headlines, MySA's free newsletter bringing you San Antonio's top stories of the day.

This article originally published at **Texas faces water supply woes as big tech continues its Lone Star takeover**.

Recommended articles

yahoo!news