



PROJECT JUPITER: RISKS AND POLICY GAPS FOR NEW MEXICO'S WATER, CLIMATE, AND COMMUNITIES

Empowerment Congress;
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Overview: What is Project Jupiter?

- \$165 billion AI data center and energy project proposed in Santa Teresa.
- Includes four hyperscale data centers and a 700 MW natural gas power plant.
- Approved for Industrial Revenue Bond (IRB) and LEDA tax subsidies.
- Promises thousands of jobs — but evidence from other states shows limited long-term benefits.

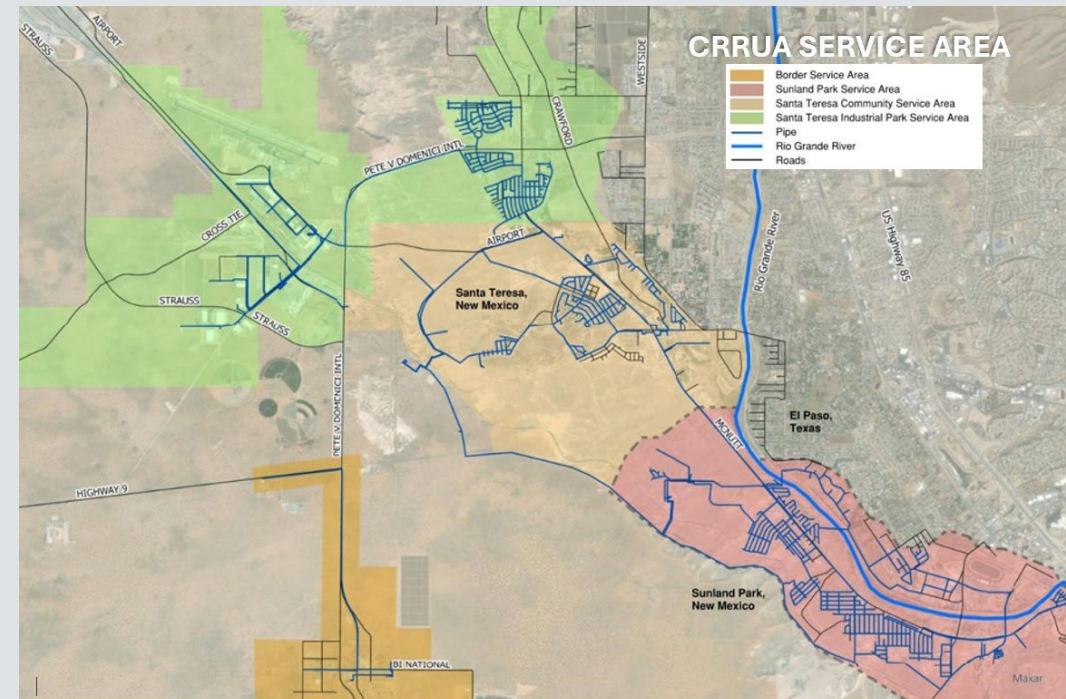


Community Context: Southern NM & Borderlands

- Dona Ana County is home to just a little over 225,000 people
- Sunland Park, Santa Teresa, and Anapra with a population of about 21,000 people who are predominantly Latino, working-class, and already face water insecurity and air quality issues.
- Families already spend hundreds monthly on bottled water.

Local Water Provider: Camino Real Regional Utility Authority

- Water and waste water provider for the area – 36 square miles
- 8,000 utility accounts
- System violations: arsenic contamination, infrastructure decay, and lack of transparency.
- Consistent clean and safe drinking water has been a challenge for years.



Water Impacts: “Can’t Drink Data”

- Data centers use water directly for cooling and indirectly through energy generation.
- U.S. data centers consumed 17 billion gallons directly and 211 billion gallons indirectly.
- Current Meta data center water usage in Los Lunas is 75,000 gallons a day
- Proposed site threatens local aquifers already under stress and arsenic contamination.
- Closed-loop systems still require fresh water and replacement due to corrosion

Brackish Water Desalination: Not a Solution

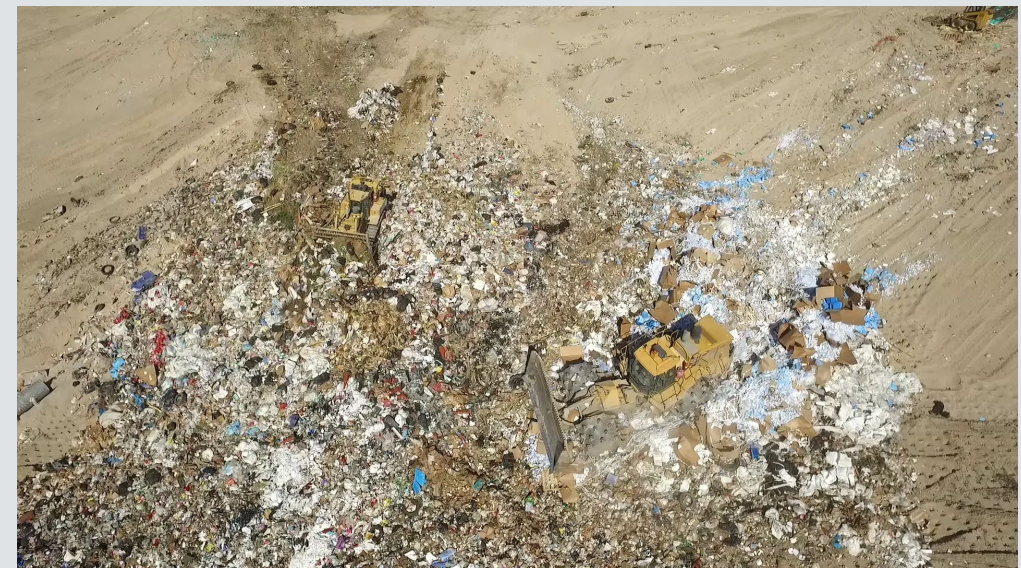
- Desalination is energy-intensive and expensive costing \$357 – \$782 per acre-foot.
- Produces brine waste that contaminates soil and groundwater.
- NMSU research found PFAS and metals (arsenic, uranium, radium) in brackish sources.
- Not feasible, safe, or cost-effective option for data centers, in particular because of the closed loop cooling systems need very high water quality pure water.

Climate Impact: Carbon & Energy

- Data center's 700 MW gas plant = 2.7 million metric tons of CO₂ annually.
- That's 3× the total annual emissions of Las Cruces
- Simple-cycle turbines use less water but emit more CO₂ per kWh than any other source.
- “Renewable offsets” in corporate plans do not prevent local pollution.

Public Health & Community Wellbeing

- Increased air pollution, heat, and dust from construction and gas plant operations.
- Noise and light pollution from 24/7 generators affect nearby residents.
- Disproportionate impact on low-income Latino families already facing cumulative health burdens.
- El Paso Electric Plant and Camino Real Landfill



Transparency & Accountability

- Companies operate under NDAs; the public still doesn't know full details on water use or emissions.
 - Zone changes were approved by the county planning and zoning commission for this project
 - We are unaware if a Letter to serve has been provided by CRRUA to the companies for this project
 - Preparation for this project has begun, uncertain about permits
- Community members excluded from decision-making.
- Current NM policy lacks mandatory water-use reporting or environmental impact review for data centers.

Local Vision:

Water for People, Not for Data

- Borderlands deserve clean, safe, and affordable water, not extraction for AI servers.
- Protect New Mexico's water, air, and families
- We can attract sustainable industry and green innovation without sacrificing communities.
- Community deserves to lead sustainable equitable economic development that does not ask require the health and safety of low-income communities of color to benefit the larger economy.

New Policy Options for New Mexico

- Require full Environmental and Community Impact Studies before tax incentives.
- Mandate transparent water-use reporting for all large-scale users.
- Create a separate regulatory rate class for data centers to prevent public cost burdens.
- Reform IRB/LEDA eligibility to exclude water and carbon intensive projects.
- Adopt clean energy standards for data center power sourcing.

Questions