



# Climate Mayors: Governing In the Time of Data Centers

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

**EVENT DATE:** December 8, 2025  
**EVENT TIME:** 8:00 am - 9:00 am PT / 11:00 am - 12:00 pm ET  
**HOSTED BY:** Climate Mayors

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Mayors are key decision-makers who can actively guide data center development toward sustainable outcomes, benefiting both residents and the climate. This call underscored the pivotal role mayors play in shaping data center projects within their communities, balancing economic opportunities like job creation and tax revenue with concerns about climate impact, rising energy costs, and community health.

Expert speakers and attending mayors highlighted both the opportunities and challenges of rapid data center expansion. Mayors emphasized that negotiating and local tools, including land use policies, regulatory frameworks, and tax incentives, can ensure data centers operate as "good neighbors." Innovative strategies were also explored, including leveraging rooftop solar and storage, capturing and utilizing waste heat, and engaging households in shared energy solutions.

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## 1. KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Mayors have leverage in the conversation around data centers and can utilize zoning tools as both carrots and sticks to ensure tech companies are building in a manner that benefits the community.
- There are technology solutions available that simultaneously support data center buildout while addressing the resource needs of these centers. Examples of this include water recycling, battery backup generators, and rooftop solar. While these solutions may not work for every community, there is space to investigate how new infrastructure and technology can support the community.

- While data centers can lead to higher energy costs for some communities, this impact can be mitigated if the data centers are required to cover the costs of their own power infrastructure development and if there is investment in improving residential energy efficiency.
- When policy mechanisms aren't available, mayors can still make an impact, particularly in negotiations with data center developers. Mayor Schor shared about engaging in conversations with a data center developer in their community. By negotiating, Lansing secured a deal where developers agreed to pay for their own substation upgrades, invest in community programming, and use closed-loop water systems.
- Our homes carry untapped potential to support a resilient grid. With investments in residential energy efficiency, we can lower utility costs for residents while stabilizing the grid.

## 2. RESOURCES FROM CALL

- [PowerPoint from Ari Matusiak, Founder, President, and CEO of Rewiring America](#)
- [Climate Mayors' Support PowerPoint](#)
- Op-eds from Matt Rogers, Founder and CEO of Nest
  - [I built the first iPhone with Steve Jobs. The AI industry risks repeating a mistake | Fortune](#)
  - [AI companies have money and momentum. But look who's stuck with their utility bill](#)
- [Homegrown Energy Report from Rewiring America](#)
- Sample Legislation:
  - [Harrisonburg, VA](#)
  - [Phoenix, AZ](#)
  - [Atlanta, GA](#)
- Climate Mayors Briefing: [Governing in a Time of Data Center Growth](#)

### 3. SPEAKERS



**Kate Gallego**

*Mayor, City of Phoenix, Arizona &  
Chair, Climate Mayors*

Kate Gallego is the Mayor of Phoenix, Arizona, the 5th largest city in the nation. In November 2020, she was returned to office by the highest number of votes ever cast for a mayoral candidate in Phoenix.

Mayor Gallego is the second elected female Mayor in Phoenix history and one of the youngest big-city Mayors in the United States. She graduated from Harvard University and earned an MBA from the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania. Before being elected to the Phoenix City Council, Mayor Gallego worked on Economic Development for the local utility company, Salt River Project.

Mayor Gallego has focused on three key policy areas during her time in office: diversifying the economy, strengthening infrastructure investment, and working to make Phoenix a leader in sustainability. The year 2020 saw a significant addition to that list: ensuring the public health is protected by adhering to the evolving science around the COVID-19 virus.

Her record of proven results includes leading the campaign to pass Phoenix's citywide transportation plan through 2050, which was the largest local government commitment to transportation infrastructure in the country when it passed in 2015. She has led efforts on criminal justice reform and ensuring equal pay for equal work. Mayor Gallego is passionate about building a Phoenix that works for everyone and improving the quality of life for all Phoenixians.



**Matt Rogers**  
*CEO of Mill and Incite.org*

Matt Rogers is the CEO and co-founder of Mill, where he has built an entirely new system to prevent waste, starting with food. Mill makes it easy to prevent food waste at home and at work with an innovative new kitchen experience and pathways that keep food out of landfills.

Matt is also the co-founder of Incite.org, a values-based investor that provides catalytic capital and guidance for world-positive start-ups, non-profits, and activists. Heeding the call to address the climate crisis, Matt leads Incite.org's investments in climate solutions as well as nonprofits and advocacy groups advancing climate policy.

Before Incite, Matt was the co-founder of Nest, where he built the team that created the first machine learning thermostat and the leading brand for the connected home. Before Nest, Matt earned bachelor's and master's degrees from Carnegie Mellon University.



**Ari Matusiak**  
Founder, President, and CEO of  
Rewiring America

Ari Matusiak is co-founder, president and CEO of Rewiring America. He is founder and co-chair of Power Forward Communities, a national coalition awarded \$2 billion from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund to decarbonize and reinvest in American households. He was a founding partner of PVG, a consulting firm committed to driving climate solutions. Matusiak was previously the co-founder and chair of Young Invincibles, a nonprofit that gave voice to young adults in the health reform debate and helped drive passage of the Affordable Care Act, and was chief strategy officer of Renovate America, a residential energy efficiency and renewable energy financing platform.

From 2011 through 2014, he was special assistant to the president and director of private sector engagement in the Obama White House. Earlier in his career, Matusiak was vice president of strategy and community impact at the Rhode Island Foundation and co-founder and director of HousingWorks RI, a coalition that catalyzed over \$1 billion in affordable housing development and thousands of good-paying jobs in the Ocean State. He graduated cum laude and as a Public Interest Law Scholar from Georgetown University Law Center, and is a magna cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Brown University.



**Kate Wright**  
*Executive Director, Climate Mayors*

Kate Wright is the Executive Director of Climate Mayors. Kate is responsible for the strategic direction of the network, including helping cities implement bold policies and programs, supporting equitable climate action by the Federal Administration and Congress, and building initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while advancing economic growth and environmental justice. Before joining Climate Mayors, Kate served as CEO of CivicWell (formerly the Local Government Commission), where she worked with city and county leaders for fifteen years, spearheading environmental initiatives on climate resilience, clean mobility, sustainable water management, livable communities, renewable energy, and affordable housing.

## 4. ATTENDING MAYORS

*Mayor Kate Gallego, Phoenix, AZ, Chair of Climate Mayors*

*Mayor Andy Schor, Lansing, MI*

*Mayor Andrea Davis, Missoula, MT*

*Mayor Bill McLeod, Hoffman Estates, IL*

*Mayor Joseph Schember, Erie, PA*

*Mayor Julia Arata-Fratta, Fitchburg, WI*

*Mayor Katrina Thompson, Broadview, IL*

*Mayor Kevin Burns, Geneva, IL*

*Mayor Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft, Alameda, CA*

*Mayor Regina Romero, Tucson, AZ*

*Mayor Ryan Sorenson, Sheboygan, WI*

*Mayor Becky Daggett, Flagstaff, AZ*

*Mayor Erica Zweifel, Northfield, MN*

*Mayor Caroline Simmons, Stamford, CT*

*Mayor Chris Bollwage, Elizabeth, NJ*

*Mayor Michael Owens, Mableton, GA*

*Mayor Kirk Watson, Austin, TX*

*Mayor Aaron Brockett, Boulder, CO*

*Mayor Keith Wilson, Portland, OR*

*Mayor Patricia Lock Dawson, Riverside, CA*