

Climate Claims in Data Center Politics

Infographic and Reference Sheet,
with Annotated bibliography.

Water Claims

Energy Claims

Pollution Claims

Political Claims

Presented by:

THE AULA
FELLOWSHIP



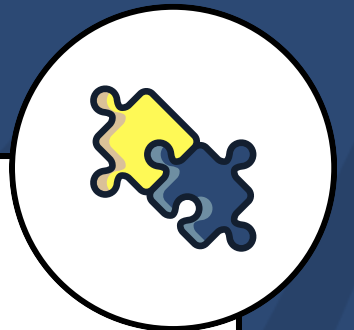
The Water Cycle Nuance

CLAIM



“Even if water evaporates, it rains back down.”

NUANCE



When water evaporates during cooling, **it leaves the local watershed** and precipitates elsewhere (1.1, 1.2, 1.3).

The Just Passing Through Nuance

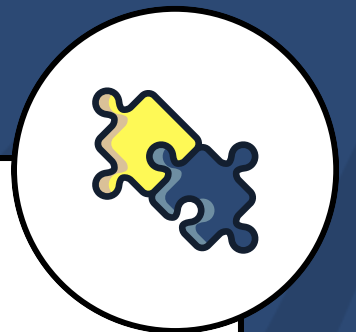
CLAIM

“Water is a cycle, it goes back into the system after it passes through the data centers.”



NUANCE

Construction in drought-prone regions undermines water-table viability and **causes water-system pressurization failures that leave farms short of water (2.1, 2.2, 2.3).**



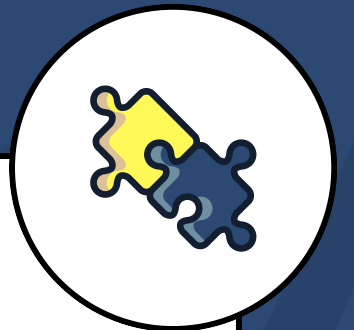
The "Nothing Is Added" Water Nuance

CLAIM



“The data center's usage doesn't dirty the water.”

NUANCE



Water faces both **chemical and biological pollution** (3.1, 3.2). Data center **developers hide pollution** information (3.3).

So-Called Closed-Loop Systems

CLAIM

“They are water efficient/use clean power because they are closed-loop.”



NUANCE

Efficiency increases pollution at a slower rate. Trading water for dirty power. The water eventually gets dumped. (4.1, 4.2, 4.3).



New and Advanced Nuclear Energy

CLAIM



“Nuclear energy can decarbonize the energy supply for data centers.”

NUANCE



Nuclear power plants are **too expensive** (5.1), **too slow** (5.2), and in many cases **not ready for deployment** (5.3).

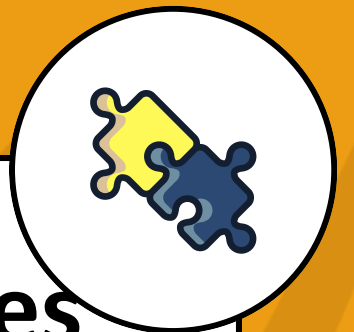
The Clean Nuclear Energy Nuance

CLAIM



“Nuclear power is clean.”

NUANCE



Nuclear power's fuel cycle **produces fossil fuel emissions (6.1). All types of reactors (fission and fusion) generate radioactive waste (6.2, 6.3).**

The Tale of the Smokeless Data Center

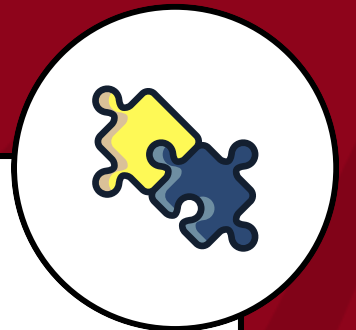
CLAIM

“Data centers do not cause any air pollution.”



NUANCE

Gas turbines used to provide on-site power to data centers emit **toxic nitrogen dioxide fumes** (7.1, 7.2).



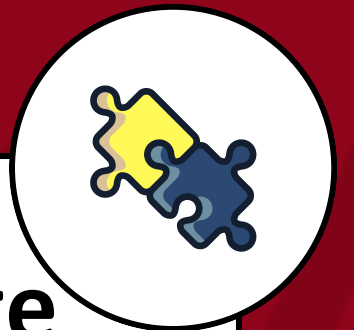
The Tale of the Silent Data Center

CLAIM



“Data centers cause minimal amounts of sound pollution.”

NUANCE



Data centers **emit noises in a range of frequencies** (8.1, 8.2). Even low-frequency noises **can harm human health and wellbeing** (8.3).

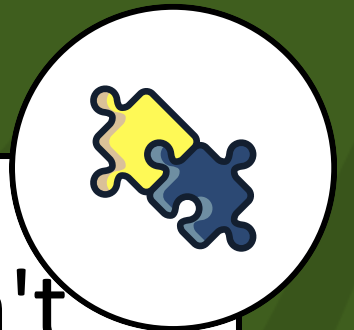
AI Will Save Us from Ourselves

CLAIM



“AI will save the world faster than it exacerbates problems.”

NUANCE



Efficiency ≠ sustainability. We can't clean up a pool at one end while polluting at the other (9.1, 9.2, 9.3).

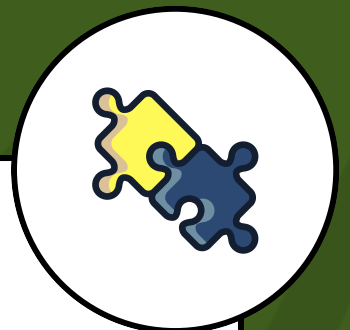
The Community Prosperity Nuance

CLAIM



“Data centres bring your community prosperity to help fight climate change.”

NUANCE



Data center-driven community wealth is a **fiscal illusion**: municipal tax breaks, low job creation, power grid expansion cost shifted to residential ratepayers (10.1, 10.2).

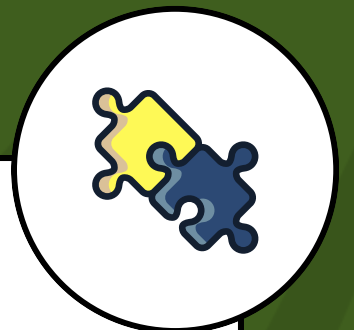
Eco Trickle-Down Claims

CLAIM



“AI tech companies finance the green revolution.”

NUANCE



Energy sources are **increasingly fossil fuels use over renewables** (11.1, 11.2). There is **greenwashing** and **disregarded climate targets** (11.3).

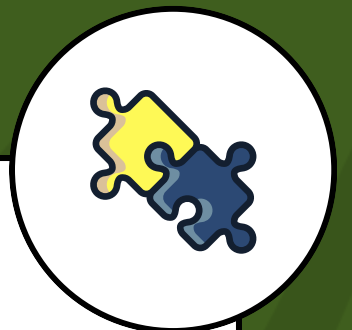
Claims that Data Centers are Inevitable

CLAIM



“AI is happening, so we need more data centres.”

NUANCE



There are aspects that are **too destructive**, and they **have to be controlled through political actions** (12.1, 12.2, 12.3).

About this Work

See the annotated bibliography and further resources at:

<https://theaulafellowship.org/climate-claims-in-data-center-politics/>

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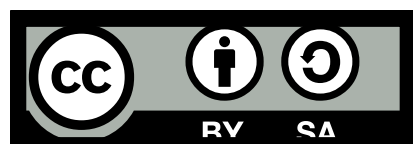
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