

Action Packet Cover Letter

TO: Mayor and Members of the Ottawa City Commission

FROM: Concerned Residents and Property Owners of Ottawa and Franklin County

DATE: July 1, 2026

SUBJECT: Submission of Proposed Temporary Moratorium Resolution on Data Centers and Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)

Executive Summary & Core Request

Please find attached a formal template for a temporary 180-day moratorium regarding the acceptance, processing, and approval of all land-use applications, site plans, and permits for commercial data centers and utility-scale Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) within Ottawa.

Our current zoning regulations are completely silent on these specialized industries. Because Proximity Park's current Heavy Industrial (I-2/PPD-O) zoning utilizes a "fast-track" permitting process, the City of Ottawa is structurally vulnerable to high-impact developments outrunning our local regulatory protections.

We respectfully request that this Commission direct the City Manager to place this proposed resolution on the agenda for the next upcoming City Commission Study Session.

Demonstrable Public Support

This request is not an isolated concern. It represents a broad, growing coalition of local homeowners, agricultural landowners, and taxpayers who demand orderly, protective development.

- **Community Alignment:** Hundreds of local residents have mobilized to monitor these fast-tracked projects, expressing deep concern over the sudden industrialization of our borders.
 - **Transparency Demand:** The public expects the City to proactively protect local assets. Including our water security, grid capacity, and peaceful night skies before any outside developer locks in vested property rights under our outdated codes.
 - **Collective Voice:** We stand united in asking the Commission to prioritize its current constituents over speculative, resource-heavy technology companies and lobbyists.
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The Critical Need for Independent, Third-Party Expert Witnesses

Our city staff, Economic Development, Planning and Zoning Committees are highly capable public servants. However, hyperscale data centers and industrial lithium-ion BESS facilities introduce unprecedented engineering, acoustic, and environmental complexities that require hyper-specialized expertise.

To ensure the long-term safety and financial stability of Ottawa, the City must not rely on the biased, self-funded studies provided by developer applicants. During the proposed moratorium, the City should explicitly retain **independent, third-party expert witnesses** to evaluate the following:

1. **Acoustic Engineers:** To model low-frequency noise resonance from continuous 24/7 cooling infrastructure and establish enforceable property-line decibel limits (such as a strict 40 dBA nighttime cap).
 2. **Hydrologists and Utility Grid Experts:** To independently verify the cumulative impact of industrial cooling on Ottawa's municipal water supply and regional electrical grid capacity without shifting costs onto local ratepayers.
 3. **Industrial Fire Suppression Specialists:** To evaluate whether our local volunteer and municipal emergency services possess the training, specialized chemical equipment, and water volume required to mitigate a catastrophic BESS thermal runaway event.
 4. **Environmental Engineers:** To ensure the safety of local residents and livestock through health and environmental studies, eliminate wastewater management burden, ensuring air and water pollution protections.
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Next Steps

We have provided a complete legal framework modeled after successful municipal pauses in neighboring Kansas communities. We urge you to take immediate action to protect Ottawa's resources, utilities, and citizens.

Thank you for your leadership, your time, and your dedicated service to the City of Ottawa.

Respectfully submitted,

Brooke Sheets

On behalf of the Coalition of Concerned Ottawa Residents

Attachment: *Proposed Temporary Moratorium Resolution Template*