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EVENT NOTE

Pennsylvania changes permitting and state support for data centers

On 18 August 2026, Governor Josh Shapiro signed Executive Order 2026-05, changing how Pennsylvania permits and powers data centers. Most of the state's large pipeline is still proposals, and only one of the nine former Fast Track campuses has verified operating AI-capable capacity.

AS OF
20 August 2026

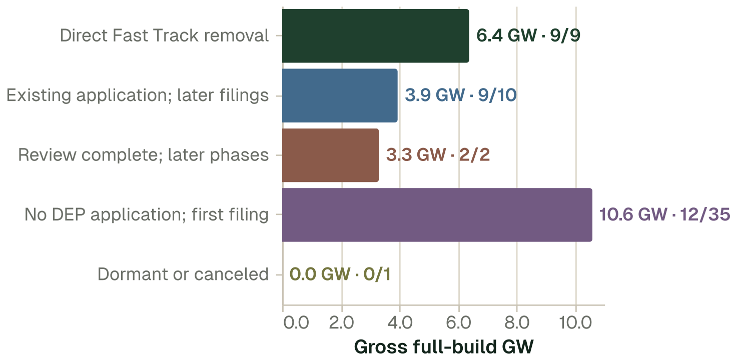
SCOPE
57 tracked Pennsylvania data-center projects statewide, 32 with quantified full-build plans and nine formerly on Fast Track

KEY POINTS

- **Projects above 25 MW have two choices.** If they accept the Governor's Responsible Infrastructure Development (GRID) rules, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) reviews each permit as it is filed. If they do not, they must get local and water approvals first.
- **Developers bear more of the power costs.** They must fund the infrastructure they need. Without enough new capacity, their power may be reduced first. Clean generation and storage receive faster permitting.
- **The 24.2 GW pipeline is overstated.** 35 of 57 projects have no DEP application, and only 6.4 GW was on Fast Track. Many proposals have no end user and remain speculative. This is what the EO tries to eliminate.
- **AWS has the largest named exposure at 2.8 GW.** Delays or self-supply would reduce demand for Talen, Vistra, PSEG and transmission investment. No affected AWS campus has a public link to Anthropic.

24.2 GW quantified; 6.4 GW lost Fast Track

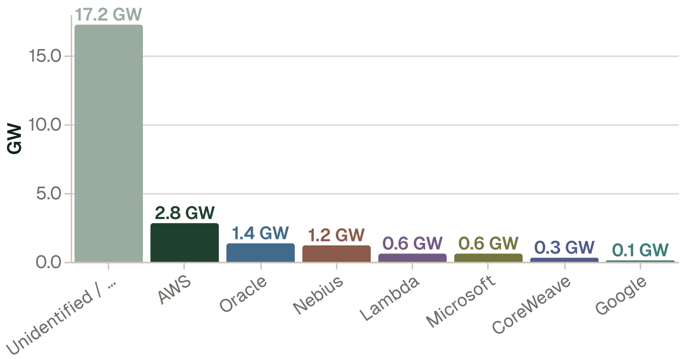
Base GW by legal pathway; 25 of 57 projects remain unquantified



Projected data-center GW in Pennsylvania, by how the order treats each project. The pair after each label is sized projects out of the total. Planning demand, not operating MW.

17.2 GW of capacity has no named tenant

Base GW by most likely tenant; 24.2 GW statewide quantified subtotal



The same projected data-center GW, regrouped by who would use it. Unidentified is any project with no tenant named in public evidence. Planning demand, not operating MW.

What the order changes

The EO eliminates Fast Track applications. New tax-exemption applicants must follow the Governor's Responsible Infrastructure Development (GRID) requirements. State agencies cannot use NDAs, and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) must publish project data. Existing permits remain valid, as do the 23 permit records still pending across the nine former Fast Track projects.

Grid connections are still allowed but the order asks regulators to make data centers pay connection and reliability costs. During an emergency, utilities may reduce their power first unless they secure enough new capacity.

How the review process works

- **GRID route:** Projects above 25 MW tell DEP, meet before filing and sign an agreement. DEP gives rolling review after local approvals.
- **Standard route:** Projects outside GRID get local and required water approvals first. DEP then reviews the full permit package together.
- **Grid connection:** DEP approval is kept separate. Utilities and regional grid operator PJM decide whether and when a project connects. The order changes who pays and whose power can be reduced.
- **Existing applications:** Applications filed before the order keep the old process, only new or amended filings use the new rules.

Investment implications

1. **The 24.2 GW headline number is overstated.** It covers gross plans at 32 of 57 projects, many without a tenant or DEP filing—not contracted load or delayed capacity. This is exactly the point of the EO: to reduce speculative proposals.
2. **AWS has the largest named exposure.** Its 2.8 GW equals 12% of the quantified pipeline. AWS provides no comparable installed-MW total, so its company-level share is unknown.
3. **Existing grid assets lose demand upside.** If projects self-supply, stall or cancel, Pennsylvania electrical load growth falls. That weakens the data-center case for companies with power-plant exposure in the state, such as Talen, Vistra and PSEG, as well as for transmission investments by PPL and Exelon.
4. **Shapiro makes a point for clean-energy supply.** GRID makes developers fund required power infrastructure. In the press conference, Shapiro advocated for clean, reliable and affordable generation, and the EO directs DEP to expedite permitting for clean supply, which could include solar, battery storage and advanced nuclear.
5. **Anthropic has the largest exposure to AWS.** Its AWS agreement covers up to 5 GW, but neither company links the Pennsylvania campuses to Anthropic. The schedule impact is unquantified.

Sources

1. Anthropic and AWS capacity expansion
2. Pennsylvania DEP Data Center Permit Tracker
3. Pennsylvania Executive Order 2026-05 - Protecting Pennsylvania Consumers from Data Center Impacts
4. Governor Shapiro signs executive order on data-center development
5. Heatmap News - released Pennsylvania and Amazon correspondence on Hazelnut
6. Data Center Ledger - Pennsylvania project directory
7. PSEG 2025 Form 10-K
8. Vistra 2025 Form 10-K