

**From:** Nick Rhinehart <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Monday, October 13, 2025 2:09 PM  
**To:** Env Review (EQB) <[Env.Review@state.mn.us](mailto:Env.Review@state.mn.us)>  
**Subject:** Request for a GEIS – Hermantown Data Center Area

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Dear Minnesota Environmental Quality Board,

I am writing as a concerned resident of Hermantown regarding the proposed data center development in the area currently covered by an AUAR.

Under **Minnesota Rules 4410.3800**, the EQB may require a **Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS)** when actions in a defined area have the potential for **significant environmental impacts, involve complex or cumulative effects, or when prior environmental review does not provide sufficient information for decision-making**.

It is my understanding that the AUAR in Hermantown was intended as a **planning tool** to evaluate potential cumulative development impacts across the area. However, it appears the City of Hermantown is using the AUAR to justify approval of a **specific large-scale project** without adequately assessing broader environmental, utility, and community impacts.

The proposed data center presents several concerns consistent with the criteria in 4410.3800:

- **Potentially significant environmental impacts** to wetlands, wildlife habitat, and stormwater systems.
- **Cumulative and complex effects** on local infrastructure and rural community character.

- **Insufficient prior review**, as the AUAR does not fully analyze the direct and indirect consequences of this particular project.

Given these factors, I respectfully request that the EQB **initiate a GEIS for the area in question**, which would allow for a comprehensive, cumulative environmental review and provide the public and decision-makers with the information necessary to make informed decisions.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I would appreciate confirmation of receipt and guidance on next steps in the GEIS review process.

Sincerely,

Nick Rhinehart

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**From:** Gretchen Kehoe <[REDACTED]>

**Sent:** Tuesday, October 14, 2025 11:42 AM

**To:** Env Review (EQB) <[Env.Review@state.mn.us](mailto:Env.Review@state.mn.us)>

**Subject:** Please consider a GEIS in Hermantown related to rezoning for a Data Center

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Dear MN Environmental Review Team,

I am a Hermantown community member, healthcare provider in the area and mother. I recently learned of the data center being considered in Hermantown. As a healthcare provider, I weigh risk/benefit situations all day. I looked into data centers after hearing this news and quickly came to the conclusion that there are significant risks/harm to bringing a facility like this into our community.

Many people move to our area due to its proximity to natural habits and being active outdoors. Data centers can negatively impact the environment due to significant water usage. I saw one statistic noting daily water consumption equals that of 160 homes. It sounds like they are planning to utilize wells for water usage. How does that impact the surrounding homes, wildlife, such as adjacent trout streams, and where is the used water/run off going?

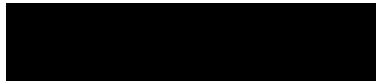
Data centers can impact air quality and contribute to both light and noise pollution. They can contribute to 35,000 tons of greenhouse gas. What is the community development and city council planning to

counter these factors? Many people in this area are environmentally conscious and will want answers to these questions.

Data centers are shown to consume significant electricity. It looks like this would contribute to an annual energy usage equivalent to 3600 homes in the Hermantown area. How is this impacting our power grid?

There has been very little community involvement in determining if Hermantown is an appropriate location for a data center. In addition, Hermantown completed an AUAR for re-zoning of natural wetlands for this project. I ask the Environmental Review Team to please consider a GEIS due to the size of the proposed data center and its proximity to native species and the impact on the local environment.

Regards,  
Gretchen Kehoe



**From:** Peter Taylor <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 14, 2025 11:40 AM  
**To:** MN\_EQB\_Info <[info.EQB@state.mn.us](mailto:info.EQB@state.mn.us)>  
**Subject:** MEPA compliance for hyper scale data centers

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Hello EQB,

The City of Hermantown recently approved a final AUAR for a hyperscale data center. The AUAR violated MEPA because it failed to disclose the nature and details of the proposed action. Apparently, City of Hermantown Councilors and officials may have signed a Non Disclosure Agreement with the project proponent which may have driven or contributed to the failures of the AUAR to describe the nature and details of the proposed action.

My request is that EQB clarify guidance on when AUARs are appropriate, as opposed to a project-specific EAW and/or EIS process. Hyperscale data center proposals are not appropriate for an AUAR. Instead, an EAW, and quite likely, an EIS are needed for such proposals so that specific project details are disclosed and provided for public comment-including naming the proposed action as a data center.

Otherwise or in addition, EQB should clarify what must be disclosed in an AUAR if it is used so that the proposed actions are disclosed and allow for meaningful public comment-which was not provided for in the Hermantown hyperscale data center AUAR, violating MEPA.

If EQB can also provide guidance on when Non Disclosure Agreements are likely to lead to MEPA violations, that would also be useful. The current environmental review trajectory of hyperscale data centers in Minnesota is apparently leading to violations of MEPA due to NDAs and secrecy of the proposed actions and their details.

thank you,

Peter Taylor

Hermantown, MN