

Statement from Democratic Nominee for Congress Michael A. Chiaradio on Data Center Development and Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence and the data centers that support it are an important part of a future that I hope can lead to significant increases in productivity and living standards but we must be thoughtful about how they are regulated and where they are built.

Some decisions regarding the location and regulation of individual data centers will fall outside the direct authority of the federal office I seek. However, I do believe there is an appropriate federal role in establishing reasonable environmental standards.

I support federal law requiring every data center nationwide, regardless of size, to have an adjacent advanced water purification system capable of offsetting their net freshwater consumption. I also support many of the other low cost environmental regulations that protect wildlife, reduce noise, and preserve natural ecosystems.

But some of the most difficult questions surrounding artificial intelligence and data center development are economic and I believe we should consider them within the context of our broader national economic strategy. One of my major policy priorities is bringing idle and degraded farmland back into productive use and making it available through long-term leases to small and medium-sized farmers and ranchers. If we're going to make major national investments to put land back into agricultural production, we should also be thoughtful about allowing enormous computing facilities to consume productive farmland unnecessarily.

Some construction location decisions will fall outside federal authority but I would be willing to strategically support a single experimental data center project with federal dollars in an effort to develop a model that substantially reduces the overall land footprint. Multi-story facilities, for example, could allow significantly more computing capacity on considerably less land, although the weight of computing and cooling equipment currently creates unique engineering challenges. Other unconventional designs should also be explored as technology develops.

Another cornerstone of my platform is making massive investments in infrastructure, particularly our energy grid and freshwater systems. We need to make these investments regardless of data centers. Rather than viewing increased demand from data centers only as a burden on existing infrastructure we should use it as another reason to quickly build more capacity.

Federal investment can strengthen and expand electricity transmission, modernize water systems, increase recycling and purification capacity, and revitalize natural fresh waterways across the country.

I have also long advocated for a different approach when taxpayer money is invested directly into private, revenue-producing projects of any kind.

Rather than simply providing public money to private companies, I believe taxpayers should receive securitized financial interests in return. Over time, those securities can be distributed to the American people through facilities like the tax system, thereby helping to expand capital income and asset ownership without significant tax increases.

However, I would be cautious about applying that model broadly to data center development because lower-cost competition could pressure profitability and, in the case of debt financing, rapid technological advancement could cause collateralized hardware to depreciate or become obsolete unusually quickly. Therefore, where federal participation in a novel data center project can help solve a specific national problem, such as dramatically reducing land consumption, I am open to it. But I do not currently support indiscriminately subsidizing conventional data center construction.

I also recognize that artificial intelligence could disrupt employment in some industries. I believe that threat is real, although it may prove transitory and could ultimately be overstated.

My broader economic platform calls for major investments in infrastructure, agriculture, healthcare, education, and small businesses. If technology displaces workers in some areas of our economy, the federal government should simultaneously be investing in opportunities for people to build infrastructure, provide healthcare, educate the next generation, and otherwise participate in productive enterprises of their own.

Finally, embracing artificial intelligence does not mean developing it without reasonable safeguards. I support transparency requirements that disclose when AI is being used, privacy protections governing how personal information is collected and retained, and commonsense human-in-the-loop requirements for critical decisions.

I am broadly committed to structuring policy that gives Americans the tools they need to produce more efficiently and profitably. America needs political innovation rooted in sensible economic policy to overcome the challenges we face. Creating a responsible regulatory framework while also positioning America to be a global leader in emerging technology will make us more resilient and strengthen our competitive position in global markets for generations. If elected, I will work to turn these proposals into policy.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Chiaradio
Democratic Nominee for Congress, MS-03