

October 4, 2024

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Jeffrey D. Zients
Chief of Staff
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Lael Brainard
Director, National Economic Council
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Delivered via email

Dear President Biden, Chief of Staff Zients, and Director Brainard:

As organizations who advocate for the public good and conduct independent research on the social implications of technology, we write to express our concern regarding the recent White House roundtable on U.S. Leadership in AI Infrastructure held on September 12, 2024, with executives from technology and energy corporations. After meeting with these special interest groups, the White House announced a set of priorities on data centers and energy infrastructure. We are alarmed about the lack of inclusive representation from key stakeholders in this process, and are concerned resulting policies will benefit the largest tech and energy monopolies at the expense of people and the planet.

The rapid growth of Big Tech's data centers, coupled with the interests of investor-owned utility monopolies and the fossil fuel industry, could threaten our ability to transition away from dirty energy in the coming years, reversing hard won progress by the Administration. A handful of tech corporations are rapidly building data centers that each use as much electricity [as small or even large cities](#), and at the same time, our energy infrastructure is already failing to meet existing capacity and climate demands. Coal plants that would have been retired are staying [open](#), closed nuclear plants are being [reopened](#), natural gas-fired power plants are [expanding](#), and

regular people are likely to pay increased prices for electricity. In nearby communities, both on-site and secondary energy infrastructure, from gas-powered generators to dedicated electrical substations, are sources of [air](#) and [noise](#) pollution that directly harm people and the environment.

Meanwhile, tech corporations are [underreporting](#) their climate impact, [walking back](#) emissions reduction commitments, and [lobbying](#) for weaker emissions reporting standards.

The White House roundtable was notably devoid of input from crucial public interest groups, including climate, labor, and consumer advocates. This omission undermines the comprehensiveness and effectiveness of the strategies being developed, and raises concerns about the conclusions and information gathered at the meeting, as well as the Administration's priorities. The invitees to the meeting might take it as given that building endless tech infrastructure will lead to greater prosperity, but prioritizing speculative corporate profits over public health and clean energy commitments jeopardizes our future.

Meanwhile, the public is subsidizing energy-hungry data center expansion and bearing the cost of sweetheart energy deals between the two sectors. States and localities are giving tech corporations like Amazon, Google, and Microsoft sales tax exemptions on both building materials and equipment, utility tax exemptions or discounts, property tax abatements, and corporate income tax credits. In states as diverse as [Washington](#), [Illinois](#), and [Virginia](#), the costs of these incentives have risen by three-to-four-digit percentages in recent years. Those are in addition to government contracts, federal energy tax credits, and higher utility costs for captive utility customers. In data center-heavy states, soaring tax revenue losses are undermining public education at the very moment we have a national consensus that more education spending is necessary, for instance on STEM education to help address the nation's skilled labor shortage.

We were especially disappointed to see that many of the companies that were invited to represent corporate interests in this meeting are being sued for illegal business practices. Your administration is suing [Alphabet](#), [Amazon](#), and [Meta](#) for breaking antitrust laws. In addition, the FTC has [launched an inquiry](#) into Microsoft, Open AI and Anthropic (as well as Amazon and Alphabet, previously mentioned) to scrutinize partnerships that may threaten competition in the very industry discussed at the September 12 convening. The Department of Justice has reportedly [issued subpoenas](#) to Nvidia in an antitrust investigation. Inviting these companies to opine on policies that stand to increase their profits and market share serves to undermine not only the pending litigation your administration is bravely undertaking, but also public trust in any AI infrastructure policies that result from the September 12 meeting. The administration brought these cases to address the threat of consolidation in the technology sector, but the race to expand data center infrastructure and secure exclusive power deals only serves to entrench consolidation and undermine U.S. innovation.

Incorporating the perspectives of stakeholders is not just a matter of inclusivity but a necessary step to create well-rounded policies that align with the Administration’s goals of responsible innovation, AI safety and clean energy. Without the [participation of the people who will be most affected](#) by AI, tech governance efforts—including policies around data, energy infrastructure, and water —are likely to consolidate the most harmful impacts of new technologies.

Thank you for your time and attention to these concerns. We look forward to discussing how AI infrastructure can be built with the best interests of the public in mind together with inclusion of environmental, labor, consumer, and utility customer stakeholders.

Sincerely,

Demand Progress Education Fund
Athena Coalition
350 National
Accountable Tech
Access Now
Adasina Social Capital
Amazon Employees for Climate Justice
Autistic Women & Nonbinary Network
Blue Future
Center for Biological Diversity Action Fund
Center for Digital Democracy
Citizens Action Coalition of Indiana, Inc.
Data and Society
Food and Water Watch
For the Many
Free Press Action
Green America
Good Jobs First
Illinois Public Interest Research Group (PIRG)
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Institute for Local Self-Reliance
Missouri Workers Center
National Consumer Law Center, on behalf of its low-income clients
National Employment Law Project
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
NextGen Competition
Open Markets Institute
People’s Tech Project
PowerSwitch Action

Public Citizen

Revolving Door Project

Surveillance Technology Oversight Project

The Tech Oversight Project

Turkopticon

U.S. Public Interest Research Group (PIRG)