TOWN OF WATSON LOCAL LAW NO. 3 OF 2026

Temporary Moratorium on Data Centers

A LOCAL LAW ESTABLISHING A TEMPORARY MORATORIUM ON DATA CENTER DEVELOPMENT

BE IT ENACTED by the Town Board of the Town of Watson, County of Lewis, State of New York, as follows:

Section 1. Title
This Local Law shall be known as the **"Temporary Moratorium on Data Centers Law of the Town of Watson."**

Section 2. Authority
This Local Law is adopted pursuant to the Municipal Home Rule Law and the Town Law of the State of New York, including but not limited to §8 261-263, authorizing the Town to regulate land use to protect the public health, safety, and general welfare.

Section 3. Legislative Findings
The Town Board hereby finds that:
A. Data centers are large-scale, utility-intensive developments which may impose substantial impacts on municipal infrastructure, including electric systems, water supply, waste water and roadways;
B. The Town's existing zoning regulations do not adequately address the unique land use, environmental, and infrastructure impacts associated with data center development;
C. The Town is currently undertaking a comprehensive review and update of its zoning law and land use regulations;
D. The Town Board finds that a temporary moratorium is necessary to preserve the status quo while the Town studies, develops, and adopts appropriate regulations governing data centers; and
E. Without such a moratorium, applications for data center development could be submitted and approved under current regulations that do not adequately protect the Town and its residents.

Section 4. Definitions
For the purposes of this Local Law, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:
Data Center: A building or facility used to house computer systems, servers, and associated components for the storage, processing, or distribution of data, including any associated substations, cooling systems, or support infrastructure

Section 5. Moratorium Imposed
A. For a period of thirty-six (36) months from the effective date of this Local Law, or until such earlier date as the Town Board may determine, the following are hereby prohibited:

1. The acceptance, processing, or approval of any application for:
    *Special Use Permits
    *Site Plan Approval
    *Building Permits
    *Subdivision Approval
    *Use Variances or Area Variances relating to the siting, construction, expansion, or operation of any data center;

2. The issuance of any permits or approvals for data centers by any Town board, agency, or official.

Section 6. Applicability

This moratorium shall apply to:

A. All new data center developments;

B. The expansion or modification of existing data centers; and

C. Any applications not yet approved as of the effective date of this Local Law.

Section 7. Exemptions

This Local Law shall not apply to:

A. Routine maintenance or repair of existing legally permitted structures not resulting in expansion or intensification of use;

B. Projects fully approved and vested prior to the effective date of this Local Law.

Section 8. Hardship Relief

A. Any applicant subject to this moratorium may apply in writing to the Town Board for relief from the provisions of this Local Law.

B. The Town Board may grant such relief, in whole or in part, upon a finding that:

1. The applicant will suffer unnecessary hardship if the moratorium is strictly applied; and
2. The requested relief will not undermine the purpose and intent of this Local Law.

C. In making such determination, the Town Board may refer the application to the Planning Board or other consultants for review and recommendation.

Section 9. Enforcement

A. No Town officer, employee, board, or agency shall accept, process, or approve any application in violation of this Local Law.

B. Any permit issued in violation of this Local Law shall be null and void.

Section 10. Severability

If any clause, sentence, paragraph, or part of this Local Law shall be adjudged invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, such judgment shall not affect the remainder thereof.

Section 11. Supersession

This Local Law is intended to supersede any inconsistent provisions of the Town Law, to the extent permitted by the Municipal Home Rule Law.

Section 12. Effective Date

This Local Law shall take effect immediately upon filing with the New York State Secretary of State.

State filed 8/17/2026