Navigating Partnerships with Data Centers: Strategies Every Utility Leader Needs

September 23 | 1:00 PM – 4:30 PM ET | Virtual Event

Current as of September 23, 2026

Wednesday, September 23

1:00 – 1:05 **Welcoming Remarks**

Kyle Dreyfuss-Wells, *NACWA President*
Chief Executive Officer
Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District | Cleveland, OH

1:05 – 2:15 **Stakeholder Perspectives**

The opening session will feature four speakers who will set the stage for the Virtual Event with remarks to frame the "navigating partnerships" theme from their unique vantage points. The speakers will outline how public utilities can work closely with key stakeholders and the data centers themselves to ensure maximum efficiency, safety, legal and regulatory security and ultimately benefit to the community and customer. Each perspective will cover a different angle of the data center expansion phenomenon – the public utility that must service the data centers' water and wastewater needs and growing power demand; the engineering perspective which has to directly navigate the crossroads between data center and public utility clients; the data center community; and the legal perspective seeking to keep both the utility and the data center out of potential legal trouble while also ensuring service agreements are sustainable and viable.

Keynote Address

Lauren Barbir, AVP, Business Development Director, Data Centers
HDR, Inc. | Southampton, PA

Utility Perspective Speaker

Brian Carnes, General Manager
Loudoun Water | Ashburn, VA

Data Center Perspective Speaker

Usman Khan, Principal - Water Strategy
Amazon Web Services | Alexandria, VA

Legal Perspective Speaker

Chris Pomeroy, President
AquaLaw PLC | Richmond, VA

2:15 – 3:15 **Finding the Sweet Spot: Balancing the Necessity of Data Centers and Ensuring Public Utility and Community Benefits**

This panel will provide a candid discussion on how the variety of interests involved in data center expansion perceive their role and responsibility to the community in which data centers operate. What efforts are being made to ensure the community is considered and that the sustainability of the utilities on which data centers rely is protected both ion the short and long-term?

Moderator

Brian Bakke, SVP, Global Wastewater Market Sector Director
HDR, Inc. | Des Moines, IA

Speakers

Angela Yuan, Senior Manager, Environmental Policy
Data Center Coalition | Leesburg, VA

Jeff Sparks, Director of Digital Water
Hampton Roads Sanitation District | Virginia Beach, VA

Tom Birmingham, Head of Global Water Strategy
Meta | Rye, NH

Calvin Farr, Jr., *NACWA Treasurer*
General Manager/Chief Executive Officer
Prince William Water | Woodbridge, VA

3:15 – 4:15 **Data Centers Driving WateReuse and Technological Innovation**

This panel will feature speakers looking at how serving data centers and other industrial water users is driving the clean water sector toward more reliance on water reuse, recycling, monitoring technology and pretreatment innovations, among others. As data centers expand and additional industries relocate to the US, how can we harness this shift to bring about a new generation of reuse and other water technologies?

Moderator

Trent Stober, SVP, Water Advisory Program Director
HDR, Inc. | Columbia, MO

Speakers

Bruno Pigott, Executive Director
WateReuse Association | Alexandria, VA

Gilbert Trejo, Vice President of Operations and Technical Services
El Paso Water | El Paso, TX

Anthony Giovannone, Manager of Water Supply & Infrastructure
Google, LLC

John Newsome
Administrator, Division of Water
Columbus Water & Power | Columbus, OH

4:15 – 4:30 **Closing Thoughts, Summary of Discussion, and Next Steps**

Brian Bakke, HDR, Inc.

Adam Krantz, Chief Executive Officer
NACWA | Washington, DC