



Meeka D. Owens
Cincinnati City Councilmember

June 1st, 2026

Dear Colleagues,

At the end of May, the Ohio Department of Taxation, at the direction of Governor DeWine, paused consideration of any new data center tax exemption requests. This is a significant step toward ensuring that the City of Cincinnati and the Greater Cincinnati region are better positioned to prevent the costs of data center development from being placed on residents' doorsteps and paychecks.

The intention behind these sales tax exemptions was well founded, to attract new technology businesses to Ohio and breathe additional life into a key sector of our statewide economy. Unfortunately, the consequences have shifted the burden onto residents and local governments in unintended ways.

In 2024, the Department of Taxation reported that \$555 million in tax revenue was exempted; in 2025, that number rose to \$1.6 billion, well below initial projections. Local governments that levy sales taxes also lost \$166 million in 2024 due to these exemptions.

The statewide sales tax is one of the primary sources of revenue for the state's General Fund, which supports Medicaid, school funding, public safety, human services, and the Local Government Fund. In FY24, the sales tax generated nearly 45% (\$13.9 billion) of the state's total revenue, and funding needs are only increasing.

It is also important to recognize that many of the companies receiving these tax exemptions are among the largest and most profitable in the world, Meta (Facebook), Alphabet (Google), Amazon, and others.

In the FY27 budget, on page 15, you can see the reduction in funding from the State of Ohio since calendar year 2011. For FY27, we expect to receive \$16.5 million from the Local Government Fund and other state sources, over \$23 million less than in 2011.

I appreciate the action taken by Governor DeWine's administration and hope that, collectively, this Council can rally to establish a deliberate and effective process to ensure that the costs of data center development are not passed on to our residents.

Signed,

Councilmember Meeka D. Owens