

North Dakota lawmakers zero in on AI, data centers

By Michael Alterling and Amy Dalrymple

North Dakota Monitor

North Dakota lawmakers recently announced a new interim committee that will study data centers and artificial intelligence ahead of the 2027 legislative session.

Senate Majority Leader David Hogue said the goal is to equip legislators with more expertise so they're better prepared to make policy decisions related to rapidly-changing technology.

"The decisions the Legislature makes in 2027 regular session will shape how the technology lands in our communities for the next two decades," said Hogue, R-Minot.

The committee's work will study data center development, including water and electricity consumption, and how other states are approaching where they're built.

Some states are calling for moratoriums, while others are trying to draw data centers to their communities with tax breaks, Hogue said.

"I would say the committee is going to be agnostic. We want to learn what everybody else is doing and do what's best for North Dakota," Hogue said.

The 12-member committee also plans to study how other states are regulating AI and attempts at the federal level to preempt state regulation. Members will consider statutory protections for children against AI harm and prohibiting external AI that shows signs of exceeding human control.

"There's a component of nefarious use that we want to protect our citizens from, especially our children," said Rep. Jonathan Warrey, R-Casselton, who will lead the committee.

Former North Dakota University System Chancellor Mark Hagerott, who has expertise in AI, and former North Dakota Public Service Commission



photo | Michael Achterling, North Dakota Monitor

REP. JONATHAN WARRY, R-CASSELTON, chair of the interim Artificial Intelligence and Data Center Committee, speaks during a press conference at the Capitaol on June 25, 2026. At right are former North Dakota University System Chancellor Mark Hagerott and Sen. Mike Wobbema, R-Valley City.

member Tony Clark will join lawmakers on the committee as citizen members. Clark also is executive director of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners and served on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

The committee plans to meet three to five times before the legislative session in January, with the possibility of some meetings including field trips, Warrey said. All meetings will be open to the public. The first meeting had not been scheduled,

but is anticipated within 30 days, he said.

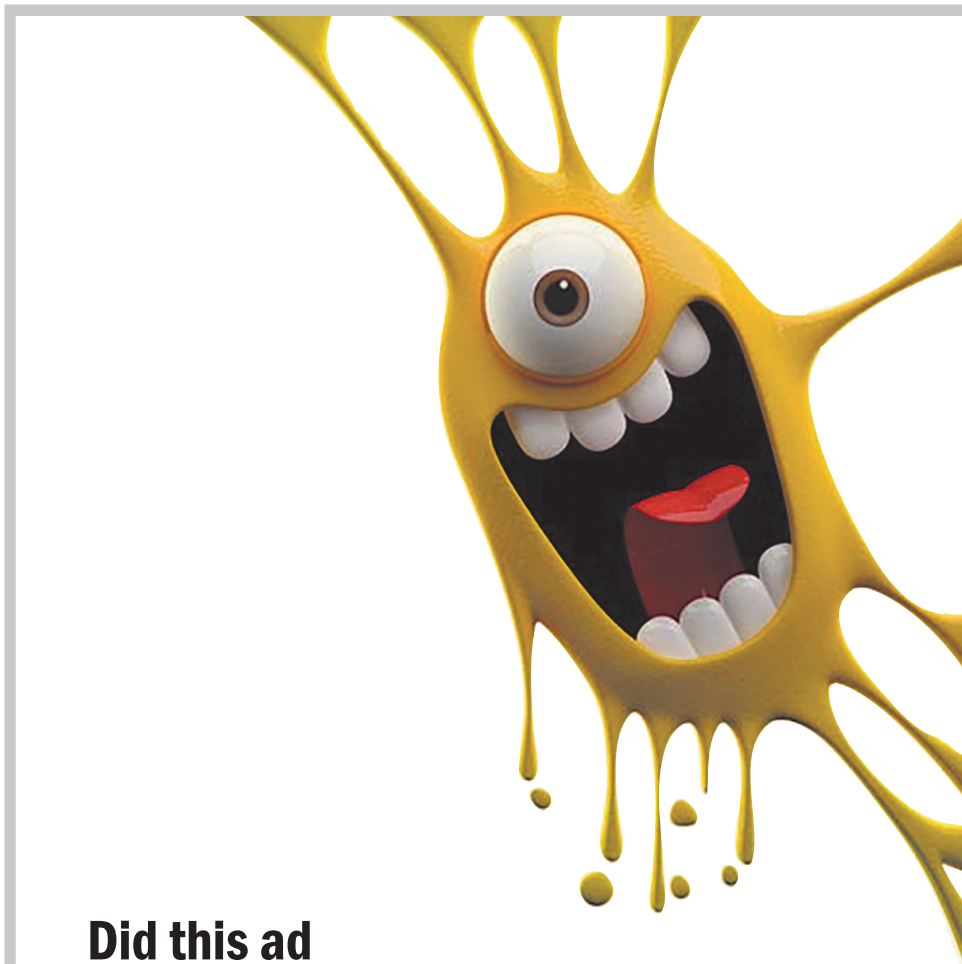
Hogue said lawmakers encourage public participation, including input from local officials who have been responding to data center development in their communities.

Oliver County in central North Dakota has recently attracted concerns from the public about data center development.

Mike Berg, a candidate for the Oliver County Commission, said in an interview Thursday the committee may be "too little, too late" now that local subdivisions have been responding to data center development for months.

Berg expressed concerns about cities and counties retaining local control over data center siting and said the new committee appears to be pro-industry.

"It's almost like a PR stunt," Berg said.



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Recipe: **Macaroni Coleslaw Salad**

From the kitchen of: *Joy Zimmerman*

Ingredients:

- 1 pkg. (7 oz.) ring or ditalini macaroni
- 1 bag (14-16 oz) coleslaw mix
- 2 green onions, finely chopped
- 2 celery ribs, finely chopped
- 1 cucumber, finely chopped
- 1 bell pepper, finely chopped
- 1 can (8 oz.) whole water chestnuts
- drained and chopped

Dressing:

- 1 + 1/2 C. Miracle Whip
- 1 Tbsp. white sugar
- 1/4 C. cider vinegar
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. black pepper

Directions:

Cook the macaroni according to the directions on the box. Drain and rinse in cold water. Put into a bowl, add in the rest of the veggies. In a small bowl, whisk the dressing until smooth. Pour over salad and toss to coat. Cover and put in the refrigerator for at least one hour.



To submit a recipe, email to: djzimm@westriv.com or mail: Joy Zimmerman, 7670 57th St. SW, New Leipzig, ND 58562