

CCDCFACTS

Cedar Creek Data Centers: Questions That Still Need Answers

Two projects so far, one community. What's been asked, what hasn't, and what you can actually do about it.

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Introduction — A Statewide Boom Arrives in Cedar Creek

Texas is in the middle of the largest data center construction wave in its history. As of mid-2026, the state has roughly 335 operating data centers with another 248 planned — figures that have grown so fast that even the state agencies tracking them can't fully keep up. Two of those projects are now in Cedar Creek, in Bastrop County: EdgeConneX's Campus 1 and 2, already under construction, and Pacifico Cedar Creek's proposed \$2.2 billion power-and-data campus, filed just weeks ago.

What this could mean locally, in plain terms: more water drawn from local sources, new industrial infrastructure in what has been a rural, unincorporated community, new tax revenue and new tax breaks, new jobs and new questions about who actually gets them, and new pressure on roads, land, and the aquifer this community depends on.

Is this happening to Cedar Creek specifically, or everywhere? The honest answer is: everywhere, and that's part of the story. Nearly half of all planned Texas data centers are sited in unincorporated areas statewide — not because Bastrop was singled out, but because Texas counties, unlike cities, have no zoning authority over that land. Other small Texas communities are living through the same fight right now: San Marcos became the first Texas city to ban data centers outright; Hill County's moratorium was reversed after a \$100 million lawsuit threat; residents in Granbury, Childress, and Lubbock have all organized against projects in their own backyards. We're not comparing Cedar Creek to those places directly — different aquifers, different economies, different deal terms — but the pattern of what happens next is worth watching, because it's happened elsewhere first.

Even the Governor is sending mixed signals. After praising a \$40 billion Google investment in November 2025, Gov. Greg Abbott spent late June 2026 calling for a ban on rural data centers and an end to their tax breaks — from the campaign trail, three months before his reelection, while some of his largest recent donors have direct financial stakes in the industry continuing to grow.

One local question we don't yet have an answer to, and are actively working on: do EdgeConneX and Pacifico draw from the same aquifer, or different ones? EdgeConneX has stated it uses Carrizo-Wilcox water through Aqua WSC and is separately exploring a Trinity aquifer source. Pacifico's specific water source hasn't been confirmed publicly yet. If both projects end up drawing from the same underground water source, the cumulative impact matters more than either project looked at alone — and right now, nobody's asked that question out loud.

And it's not just about which aquifer — it's about how much. Aqua WSC has confirmed one permit: up to 210 GPM, tied to Campus 1's 350 LUE (living unit equivalents — the standard way water utilities measure demand). But EdgeConneX's own plans go further: Campus 2 is already filed, its water allocation not yet made public, and the company's own stated build-out — anywhere from four to nine total buildings, depending on which of its own public statements you believe — means nobody actually knows the real ceiling yet. How much water is Aqua WSC actually contractually obligated to provide as this project grows? Does each new building trigger a new

permit and a new public number, or does the first agreement quietly cover whatever comes next? That's a real, answerable question — and as far as we can tell, nobody's asked it in public yet.

Part 1 — EdgeConneX (Wolf Lane / Campus 1 & 2): 25 Years. Do We Know What Bastrop Signed Up For? Not Really.

1. How does a \$440M+ facility get “no expected adverse impact” approved on every environmental category — air, water, waste, noise, floodplain — based on a self-certified checkbox, with no independent review required?

Ask: Bastrop County Commissioners Court. *Find:* the original Tax Abatement Application, Section VI.

2. Which of three wildly different reported revenue figures is real — \$100M over 10 years, \$60M a year, or \$1.6B over 20 years? These come from three separate sources — Todd Workman (the county's site-selection consultant, December 2024), Commissioner David Glass (a public panel, March 2026), and EdgeConneX itself (its own June 2026 town hall) — and none of them reconcile, even generously accounting for the project growing from four to six buildings.

Ask: Todd Workman, Commissioner David Glass, EdgeConneX directly. *Find:* Community Impact reporting, Commissioners Court records.

3. Was the county's own local-hire and feasibility-study policy actually followed — or weren't followed, and nobody's explained why?

Ask: County Judge Gregory Klaus's office. *Find:* Bastrop County Tax Abatement Policy, Exhibit A.

4. Does Aqua WSC's Drought Contingency Plan actually cover this contract — and if water runs short, are residents protected or just told to wait their turn?

Ask: Aqua WSC Board. *Find:* file a records request for the DCP directly.

5. EdgeConneX has publicly stated it's exploring brackish (naturally saline) groundwater for cooling. Where does the concentrated waste brine go? How much extra energy does treating that water require? Is the brackish source hydrologically connected underground to the freshwater aquifers neighboring wells depend on?

Ask: EdgeConneX directly. *Find:* Elgin Courier's June 16, 2026 town hall coverage; LPGCD hydrology records.

6. What is the real local-hire percentage — still listed as “TBD” on the original application?

Ask: EdgeConneX, Bastrop County Development Services. *Find:* the original application, Section IV.

7. Have the required Owner's Annual Certifications actually been filed?

Ask: Bastrop County Auditor's office. *Find:* public records request.

8. What's the real building count — four, six, or nine? Three different sources give three different numbers: the original 2024 county filings describe four buildings; EdgeConneX's own June 2026 town hall statement described six; a separate outlet (KVUE) reported plans for

up to nine. Nobody has publicly reconciled which is accurate.

Ask: EdgeConneX directly. *Find:* compare county filings against company statements.

9. Which assessed-value figure applies — the whole tract, or Building 1 alone?

Ask: Bastrop Central Appraisal District. *Find:* the Tax Abatement Agreement vs. the original Application.

10. What happens if ownership changes hands without the County’s required consent process — and what happens if a new owner then declares bankruptcy specifically to dodge cleanup or compliance obligations? Neither scenario appears to be addressed in the agreement as written.

Ask: County legal counsel, a bankruptcy/municipal-finance attorney. *Find:* the agreement’s Article 6-7 gap, already flagged internally.

Part 2 — Pacifico Cedar Creek: A New, Even Bigger Project, Same Old Questions

1. Given EdgeConneX’s environmental self-certification went essentially unchecked, will Pacifico’s \$2.2B project get the same free pass — and who’s actually reviewing this one?

Ask: Bastrop County Commissioners Court. *Find:* Pacifico’s Tax Abatement Application once filed.

2. Who is the actual data center tenant? Pacifico is only building the power plant. The tenant may simply not be disclosed publicly yet at this stage of the application — that’s not necessarily concealment, just early timing. Worth asking directly rather than assuming either way.

Ask: Pacifico Cedar Creek LLC, county officials. *Find:* the JETI application filed with the Comptroller.

3. Pacifico says this will be “off-grid,” bypassing ERCOT entirely — does that mean it escapes the state’s new large-load interconnection rules (SB6) altogether? Who’s actually checking?

Ask: PUCT, ERCOT. *Find:* PUCT Project 58481 filings.

4. Which water utility or aquifer supplies this site, and how much will it use?

Ask: Lost Pines Groundwater Conservation District, Aqua WSC. *Find:* well permit applications for the Earl Callahan Road area.

5. Is the competing Ohio site being used as leverage to extract a bigger giveaway from Bastrop?

Ask: County Judge’s office. *Find:* the JETI application’s own site-comparison language.

6. Who actually owns and runs Pacifico Group/Pacifico Energy?

Ask: Texas Secretary of State filings. *Find:* SOS records for Pacifico Cedar Creek LLC.

7. Pacifico already runs a similar off-grid, gas-fired project in Pecos County (GW Ranch, 7.65 GW). What has that county’s actual experience with this company been — and has anything gone wrong there?

Ask: Pecos County officials directly. *Find:* Pecos County Commissioners Court records.

8. The power source is natural gas plus battery storage, not coal. Lithium-ion battery fires are a real, documented industry risk — thermal runaway events have already damaged data centers elsewhere, releasing toxic gas and requiring specialized emergency response most fire departments aren’t equipped for. Does Pacifico have a published emergency response plan for a battery fire or chemical spill at this site? Will Pacifico help fund training for local emergency responders on battery-specific hazards, given most fire departments aren’t currently equipped for this? What is the expected lifespan of the battery system, and what’s the disposal or remediation plan once batteries are replaced or the facility eventually closes?

Ask: Pacifico directly, Bastrop County emergency management. *Find:* TCEQ air/safety permit filings, local fire department mutual-aid agreements.

9. Will Bastrop’s local-hire and feasibility-study requirements be enforced this time — or weren’t followed, and nobody’s explained why?

Ask: Bastrop County Commissioners Court. *Find:* compare the new application against county policy once filed.

10. What is Pacifico actually offering the community in return, and will they argue this boosts the local tax base and economy — the same case made for Pecos County? Does that math actually hold up here?

Ask: Pacifico, county economic development office. *Find:* compare any Bastrop-specific economic claims against the Pecos County precedent once available.

Curious what a good deal actually looks like? Read CCDCFACTS’ three-part series, “*Did the Community Get a Good Deal?*” — a close look at whether Bastrop’s first data center agreement really served residents, and what it might mean for what comes next. See ccdcfacts.org/good-deal.

Part 3 — The Bigger Picture: Why Does This Keep Happening Here?

Why can a company self-certify “no environmental harm” with no independent check? Should that be allowed to stand?

This isn’t unique to Bastrop — it’s how Texas’s Chapter 312 abatement process is written statewide, and national policy groups have flagged the same gap in other states. That doesn’t make it acceptable, just not a local conspiracy — it’s a structural loophole every Texas county faces, and every county has the same power to close it.

Is Bastrop being targeted because it’s a small, unincorporated area — or is this just how the whole state works?

The data says the second one: nearly half of all planned Texas data centers statewide are sited in unincorporated areas, because Texas counties — unlike cities — have no zoning authority over that land. Bastrop isn't uniquely exposed; it's caught in a statewide gap nobody in Austin has closed.

Part 4 — What You Can Actually Do

Right now, at the county and water-authority level:

- Push the Commissioners Court to amend the county's own Tax Abatement Policy to require independent environmental review before any future abatement is granted, and to make local-hire and environmental commitments binding instead of "TBD" — no new state law needed, entirely within local authority.
- Attend Lost Pines GCD board meetings. Formally comment on well permits.

At the state level — the bigger, slower fix:

- Push state legislators (2027 session) for beneficial-ownership disclosure on any entity receiving a state tax exemption.
- Push for zoning authority reform for unincorporated counties statewide.

Competence Over Opposition — the strongest communities aren't the loudest, they're the hardest to fool. We don't need a room full of concerned citizens yelling and screaming. We need citizens teaching residents how abatements, water permits, and records requests actually work. If you are concerned enough to come to this meeting, you are eligible to be part of the solution.

A Civic Intelligence Network — one person can't watch everything, but twenty people each watching one thing can: Aqua WSC, LPGCD, Commissioners Court, ERCOT, TCEQ, Comptroller filings, property records, corporate filings. No one has to carry the whole burden. If each volunteer watches one agency well, everyone benefits.

A Better Agreement — research what other counties negotiated (water protections, emergency funding, workforce agreements, transparency clauses), publish it as a scorecard, and use it as leverage: "here are twelve protections other communities got — why aren't they in ours?" That's the case for a real Community Benefit Agreement, negotiated directly with the developer, outside the tax abatement entirely — paired with a built-in review clause every 3-5 years, tied to real performance benchmarks and clawback provisions, so no 25-year deal runs blind the whole way through. This isn't a new idea: it's part of what the county's own hired consultant, PFM Group, was specifically brought on to evaluate as "best practice." Should every future agreement require one — this time, before the ink is dry?

What Happens at Year 26 — and Every Year Before It? — server and cooling equipment typically only lasts 5-10 years, meaning hardware disposal isn't a one-time event at the end of a 25-year

agreement — it's recurring, starting now. Nobody's asked where that equipment goes, how often, or who's responsible. And at the actual end, in 2050 or later: who removes what's left, restores the land, and closes it out?

Will the Power Plant Help Locals When It Matters? — If Pacifico's deal goes through, their model is private, off-grid generation, deliberately disconnected from the public grid. After Winter Storm Uri, that's worth asking directly: will any of that capacity be made available to the community during a declared emergency? Can we future-proof this potential?

Institutional Memory — every one of these ideas depends on the same thing: a lasting record of what worked, what promises were made, who answered and who didn't. CCDCFACTS has already begun collecting facts and supporting documents.

Today it's data centers. Tomorrow it could be water infrastructure, battery plants, transmission corridors, or another industry entirely, in your backyard. If the methodology is built well, the subject matter can change while the framework stays useful.

Ultimately, this community has the power to shape its own future. You have elected and appointed people to handle this — but the best way to know you got a good deal is to trust them, but verify.

Communities that stay informed don't eliminate change — they shape it. The future gets built with us or without us. The choice is whether we help decide what it looks like.

Remember — you can't win if you don't play.

Sources

Introduction

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2. Conflicting revenue figures — Community Impact; Elgin Courier

3. Local-hire/feasibility-study policy — Bastrop County Tax Abatement Policy, Exhibit A
4. Aqua WSC Drought Contingency Plan requirement — Texas Water Code §11.039; TCEQ
5. Brackish water — Elgin Courier, June 16, 2026
6. Local-hire percentage “TBD” — Bastrop County Tax Abatement Application, Section IV
7. Owner’s Annual Certifications — Tax Abatement Agreement, Section 3.04(8)
8. Building count discrepancy — KVUE, ConnectCRE, Elgin Courier
9. Assessed-value discrepancy — Tax Abatement Application vs. Agreement, Section 1.03
10. Ownership-transfer gap — Tax Abatement Agreement, Articles 6–7

Part 2 — Pacifico Cedar Creek

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Part 3 — Bigger Picture

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