

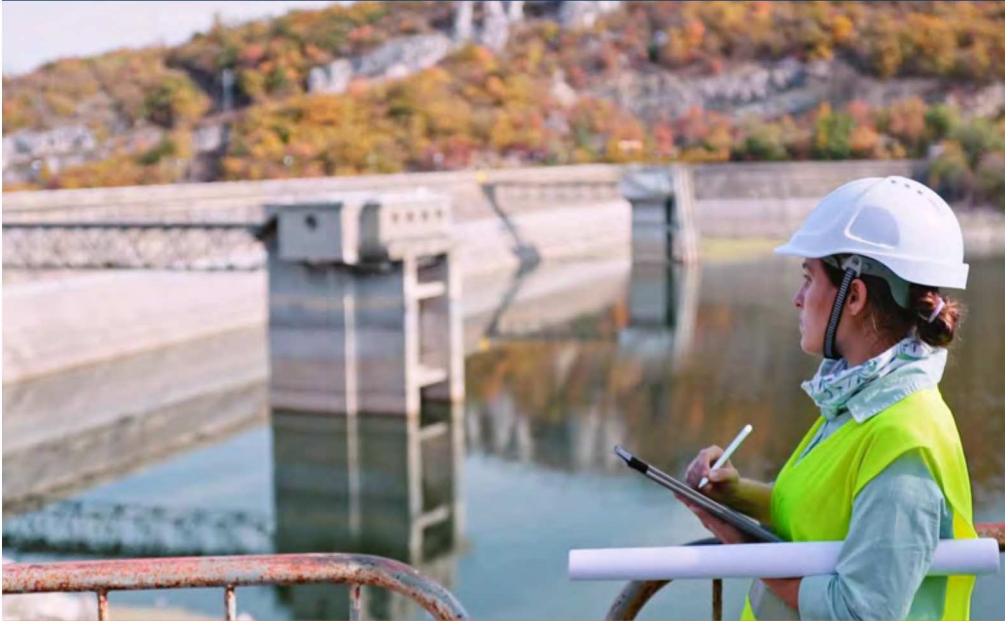
What the Numbers Look Like Up Close

Methodology arguments are important.
Real numbers are better.

A journalism student researching a planned data center facility in New York came to DataBank with a straightforward question: How much water would the facility use? Local municipal government sources had suggested the figure could be as high as 12,000 gallons per day. The estimate came from community meetings and local zoning discussions, and it sounded alarming.

Based on actual measured usage at a comparable facility using closed-loop cooling, the real figure for restrooms, kitchen, and landscaping combined is approximately 260 gallons per day. Core cooling operations consume essentially no ongoing water.

That gap between 12,000 gallons and 260 gallons is not a rounding error. It reflects what happens when the methodology behind a number goes unexamined. A modern facility using closed-loop cooling operates more like a standard office building than the industrial water consumer most people picture.



THE SAME DATA. A 60% DIFFERENCE.

A Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory report puts daily data center water consumption at 625 million gallons. That figure includes water lost to evaporation at hydroelectric reservoirs, water that would evaporate regardless of whether a data center exists. Remove that variable and the same data produces a figure of 250 million gallons. That’s not a rounding error. That’s a methodology question.

THE TRUTH ABOUT DATA CENTERS

A Drop in the Bucket

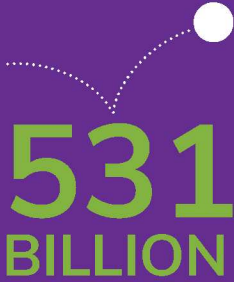
Water consumption figures for data centers look large in isolation. In context, they tell a different story.



Data centers consumed an estimated 625 million gallons per day in 2023 — less than 1% of total U.S. daily water use.¹⁷



California’s almond industry uses more than 1.3 trillion gallons of water annually, compared to roughly 17 billion gallons used by all U.S. data centers combined.¹⁸



U.S. golf courses collectively used approximately 531 billion gallons of water in 2024 — more than 30 times the direct cooling water used by all U.S. data centers combined.¹⁹



Closed-loop or air-cooled facilities use no more water than a large office building, and some use less than a typical household.

17. Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, 2024 United States Data Center Energy Usage Report, December 2024.
18. California Water Impact Network, California Almond Water Usage; Updated, September 2024.
19. Golf Course Superintendents Association of America and United States Golf Association, Golf Courses Reduce Water Usage by 31 Percent According to National Survey, December 30, 2025.