

## **Data Centers and Microgrids in New Mexico: Issues to Address**

**Speaker: Senator Antoinette Sedillo Lopez**

**April 9, noon to 1pm**

Data centers are computer server farms and have been around for decades. But the newest type of data center is called “hyperscale” because very high-capacity server farms are needed for the anticipated growth in artificial intelligence (AI). Hyperscale data centers require vast amounts of electricity and water to operate. The race is on among Big Tech companies to dominate AI so there is enormous pressure to develop data center sites with associated microgrids to provide electricity.

In New Mexico, Meta established a very large data center in Valencia County in 2019 and is expanding there. Three other data centers have recently been announced in southern New Mexico (Project Jupiter in Dona Ana County; Project Zenith in Roswell; and a Lea County data center operated by New Era Energy & Digital). Up to 12 additional sites are in discussion around the state. Questions have been raised about where the electricity and water will come from if these projects go forward. What types of air pollutants might be emitted? Will the electricity come from renewable sources (such as solar, wind, and geothermal) or from fossil fuels with their high levels of greenhouse gases? How much and what sources of water are available that can be redirected from current uses?

The April 9 educational meeting of LWVCNM will focus on what criteria should be applied to evaluate data center and microgrid development and which public agencies should evaluate and approve them. Senator Antoinette Sedillo Lopez will provide information and options at our in-person meeting at the LWVCNM conference room and on Zoom. Senator Sedillo Lopez co-sponsored the Microgrid Oversight Act in the 2026 Legislature that called for compliance of microgrids with the Energy Transition Act. The bill was passed in the Senate but stalled in the House so it did not pass.

The Senator has a BA from UNM and JD from UCLA. She taught at the UNM Law School for over 25 years, including service as Associate Dean for 8 years. She was appointed and later elected to the New Mexico Senate representing District 16. She is Vice Chair of the Senate’s Conservation Committee and serves on the Senate Health and Public Affairs Committee.