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September 15, 2026

The Honorable Brenda Stumbo
Township Supervisor
7200 S. Huron River Drive
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Dear Supervisor Stumbo and members of the Ypsilanti Township community:

The proposed University of Michigan-Los Alamos research computing center in Ypsilanti Township has become a deeply troubling example of what happens when a major project moves faster than meaningful community engagement, transparency, and public accountability. The University of Michigan (U-M) has repeatedly failed to adequately communicate with the community, particularly those who live closest to the proposed site. Residents have spent years asking basic questions about the project, its environmental impacts, its water and electricity demands, its noise, its long-term operation, and who ultimately has the authority to make decisions. Instead of receiving clear answers early in the process, the community has too often been left to piece together information without receiving the answers or facts it deserves.

That frustration was on full display at the recent U-M town hall on September 9, 2026, where residents expressed anger and distrust toward university officials. U-M itself acknowledged hearing “enormous anger” and “enormous distrust” from the community.¹ These concerns are not imaginary or isolated. Local officials and residents have repeatedly questioned the project’s potential effects on water, electricity, property values, quality of life, noise, and the environment. The community should and deserves to be treated as a partner, not as an afterthought, and U-M’s handling of the site-selection process has only deepened that distrust.

Making matters worse, the roles and responsibilities of the entities involved in this project remain unclear and insufficiently transparent. U-M’s current information states that the \$1.25 billion project involves \$300 million from Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), \$850 million from U-M, and \$100 million from the State of Michigan through a Strategic Site

¹ Allnutt, B. “University of Michigan’s Ypsilanti Township computing center plans meet with anger at town hall: ‘Enormous distrust’.” *Planet Detroit*. 10 Sept. 2026. Retrieved from: <https://planetdetroit.org/2026/09/ypsilanti-township-uofm-data-center-opposition/>.

Readiness Program grant.² The state has announced that the LANL facility would conduct federally funded research involving national security, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence (AI), and energy security.³

Governmental Authority and Public Accountability

We need to be clear about the roles of federal, state, and local governments in this project. The project involves different layers of authority, including U-M as a public university and the activities authorized by its Board of Regents; the State of Michigan, because the project is supported by \$100 million in state funding approved by the Michigan Legislature and is subject to applicable state laws and regulations; a reported agreement between U-M and LANL because of the stated federal research mission; and local government, with respect to the authority state law leaves to the township.

U-M has asserted that, as a state constitutional institution, it is exempt from ordinary local zoning and taxes. That legal question is central to this dispute. If a public university's constitutional authority permits it to override local land-use decisions, the Michigan Legislature needs to determine whether that framework remains appropriate for projects of this size and potential impact. This should not be decided project by project. Communities deserve clarity about their authority when a state institution proposes an industrial-scale facility in or near their neighborhoods.

No community should have to discover after decisions have been made who has authority over water, electricity, environmental protections, noise, traffic, emergency planning, and other impacts for a project of this size. Those responsibilities must be established publicly and in writing before a project of this magnitude moves forward.

I understand that legislation has been introduced by Michigan State Representatives, including Representatives Jason Morgan, Morgan Foreman, Carrie Rheingans, Jimmie Wilson, and Jennifer Conlin of the Washtenaw legislative delegation, to address some of these issues, and I urge state legislators to support it.⁴ Additional work and legislation across all levels of government are necessary to establish clear rules and accountability in this area.

² Love, L. "Legislative support bolsters U-M, Los Alamos computing facility." *The University Record*. 20 Dec. 2024. Retrieved from: <https://record.umich.edu/articles/legislative-support-bolsters-u-m-los-alamos-computing-facility/>.

³ Office of the Governor. "Governor Whitmer Announces More Than 600 New Jobs, \$1.5 Billion in Investment Coming to Ypsilanti and Redford Townships." State of Michigan. 10 Dec. 2024. Retrieved from: <https://www.michigan.gov/whitmer/news/press-releases/2024/12/10/governor-whitmer-announces-more-than-600-new-jobs>.

⁴ Mich. H.B.6264, 103rd Leg., Regular Session. 2026.

Federal Funding and the University of Michigan-Los Alamos National Laboratory Agreement

We need clarity about the federal agreement between U-M, LANL, and federal partners. Specifically, does a contractual financial commitment exist between Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), the University of Michigan, and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) regarding this proposed facility? If so, what are the roles, responsibilities, financial interests, and contractual obligations of each party?

I have repeatedly sought answers from DOE, U-M, and the State of Michigan's appropriations officials regarding whether there is any federal appropriation, federal construction funding, federal grant, executed federal contract, or other binding federal financial commitment for this proposed facility.

At the time the program was announced, the University stated in its "Make It In Michigan FAQ National AI Research Center" memorandum:

Has the federal funding already been approved/Is there a chance they won't have it? Federal funding to support this project has not yet been appropriated. However, Los Alamos National Lab has consistently received its funding because its purpose is so vital to national security. In fact, in January 2023, it was reported that LANL received an unprecedented \$4.6 billion budget (Source: Albuquerque Journal).⁵

There is an important distinction between a statement that LANL may contribute \$300 million under an agreement and an executed federal appropriation or federal contract that has obligated federal taxpayer dollars for this facility. My understanding from multiple official inquiries that I submitted is that there is no federal money appropriated and there is not a federal financial commitment.

The public should not have to rely on conflicting descriptions. That is why I urge U-M and LANL to publicly produce the agreement, identify the legal authority and source of the dollars, identify whether the dollars have actually been appropriated or obligated, and identify every condition that must be satisfied before any federal money can be spent. This is basic transparency for a project involving more than \$1 billion dollars and a federal national laboratory.

⁵ "Make It In Michigan: FAQ National AI Research Center." 5619-241127. Michigan Economic Development Corporation & University of Michigan. 2024.

I will be seeking answers from the University of Michigan in a separate letter regarding the exact agreement between LANL and U-M. The public should be able to understand:

- The date of the agreement;
- The parties who signed it;
- Whether it is legally binding;
- Whether any federal dollars have actually been appropriated, obligated, or transferred;
- What legal authority allows LANL to make the proposed \$300 million contribution;
- Whether DOE has approved or authorized the agreement;
- What conditions must be met before any money is provided;
- Whether the \$300 million is contingent on site selection or environmental or other regulatory approvals;
- What happens to the commitment if the project is delayed, changed, or cancelled;
- Who is responsible for cost overruns;
- Whether there are any federal guarantees or commitments; and
- Whether there is a federal contract, cooperative agreement, grant agreement, memorandum of understanding, or other federal instrument associated with the proposed facility.

Concerns at the Textile Road Site

The selection of the Textile Road Site in Ypsilanti Township, despite ongoing environmental concerns, requires additional scrutiny. There are specific environmental concerns related to the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) designation of the site under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), commonly known as Superfund, including its close proximity to the former General Motors (GM) Willow Run Plant.

The federal cleanup of the site was conducted under CERCLA and its implementing regulations under the National Contingency Plan. Today, EPA maintains a CERCLA record [EPA ID MID980825558] for the Textile Road Site.⁶ EPA has stated that removal and cleanup work was completed and that the site is now in an oversight and management phase. EPA's administrative record identifies the Textile Road Site as a Superfund site and documents EPA's response actions under CERCLA. That history requires scrutiny, transparency, and answers for the community.

Likewise, the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) maintains the state's contaminated-site databases and RIDE Mapper, which includes federal

⁶ "Detailed Facility Report, ECHO." U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Retrieved from: <https://echo.epa.gov/detailed-facility-report?fid=110009292327>.

Superfund sites and Michigan-regulated contaminated properties.⁷ EGLE also has responsibilities under Michigan's environmental laws governing environmental remediation.⁸ EPA and EGLE should publicly establish the current environmental status of the site and clearly identify which agency has responsibility for each aspect of monitoring, remediation, and construction oversight.

I will be requesting in a separate letter that EPA and EGLE formally review the current status of the Textile Road Site and determine what environmental protections, monitoring, and restrictions remain in effect. We need answers to the following questions:

- What contamination remains at or near the proposed development site?
- What soil and groundwater monitoring is currently required?
- Who is responsible for conducting that monitoring?
- How frequently are samples taken?
- What contaminants are being tested for?
- Where are the monitoring wells located?
- What are the most recent test results?
- Are there existing land-use restrictions, institutional controls, environmental covenants, or other restrictions on the property?
- Could excavation, grading, foundations, utility installation, dewatering, or other construction activities disturb contaminated soil or groundwater?
- What agency has the authority to stop construction if contamination is discovered or disturbed?
- What additional environmental review is required before construction?
- Who will pay for any additional testing, remediation, or environmental response necessitated by the project?

Concerns about nearby schools are also important, and U-M must address potential impacts on nearby students, teachers, and school operations. That should include construction traffic, noise, air quality, emergency planning, environmental risks, and any other foreseeable impacts. Parents should not have to wait until construction begins to find out what a high-performance computing facility could mean for schools in the surrounding area.

⁷ *The RIDE Mapper is an online tool that identifies environmentally contaminated and regulated sites in Michigan, including sites regulated under Parts 201 and 213, Superfund sites, Formerly Used Defense Sites, and properties with land or resource use restrictions. It also provides information about nearby land uses and environmental resources.* ["RIDE Mapper." Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy. Retrieved from: <https://www.michigan.gov/egle/maps-data/ride-mapper>.]

⁸ Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 Mich. Pub. Acts 451, pt. 201, as amended, Mich. Comp. Laws §§ 324.20101–324.20142

Federal and State Guardrails for AI and Data Centers

The concerns raised by this project also point to a much larger national and state issue. The United States and Michigan need comprehensive guardrails for large-scale AI and data-center development. AI development can and should continue, but it must be responsible development that protects communities, clean water, environmental protections, and residential ratepayers.

The recent warnings by AI executives themselves, their employees, and other experts are chilling and require immediate policy action.⁹ That's why I believe at the federal level, Congress must act now to establish appropriate guardrails. At a minimum, these standards should ensure:

- Large data centers, not residential ratepayers, pay the costs of the generation, transmission, and distribution infrastructure required to serve them;
- Developers disclose projected electricity and water demand and the sources of those resources;
- Major facilities undergo comprehensive environmental review addressing water, air quality, stormwater, wetlands, wildlife, emissions, backup power, noise, traffic, and cumulative impacts;
- Water use is independently monitored, publicly reported, and subject to enforceable protections for drinking water, groundwater, rivers, and wetlands;
- Noise limits are independently measured and enforceable;
- Nearby schools and residential neighborhoods are protected;
- Emergency-response planning is developed with local officials;
- Communities have meaningful participation and enforceable community-benefit agreements; and
- There is clear public accountability for which governmental entity has authority to enforce each requirement.

If Congress does not act swiftly to enact appropriate measures, we should pause further development until clear guardrails are put in place. Importantly, a moratorium cannot just be words, it requires action. That time must be time spent working toward a comprehensive solution. No community should have to accept a massive facility first and figure out the rules afterward.

Congress must also examine the rapid expansion of AI infrastructure and determine how existing laws should be strengthened to protect communities. We need to know who is paying for these facilities, who ultimately pays for the electricity and infrastructure they require, how much water

⁹ Johansen, B. & Dahlkamp, O. "AI leaders endorse slowdown in their risky technology." *Politico*. 12 Sept. 2026. Retrieved from: <https://www.politico.com/news/2026/09/12/anthropic-ceo-dario-amodei-seeks-immediate-slowdown-artificial-intelligence-01073519>.

they consume, how that water is monitored, what environmental safeguards are in place, and which federal agencies have responsibility for oversight. We cannot simply move full speed ahead without clear rules and regulations and meaningful oversight and accountability.

The State of Michigan has an equally important responsibility. Michigan should slow down and establish a data center “bill of rights” with clear, legally enforceable standards for energy, water, environmental protection, ratepayer protection, local participation, and community benefits before approving additional large-scale AI and data-center projects. These standards should apply to every major facility, regardless of who owns it or where it is located. Michigan cannot write the rules after communities have already absorbed the impacts.

Additionally, every major facility must be subject to transparent analysis of projected electricity and water demand, legally enforceable requirements ensuring developers bear the costs they create, and comprehensive environmental review. Water use should be independently monitored and publicly reported, facilities should prioritize closed-loop water systems, and projects should establish continuous safeguards for drinking-water supplies, groundwater, rivers, and wetlands. There should be enforceable requirements for what happens if actual water use exceeds projections or monitoring identifies an adverse impact. Noise standards should also be independently measured and enforceable, with baseline measurements, operating limits, monitoring requirements, and a clear process for resolving violations.

Communities should have enforceable community-benefit agreements established early in the development process, with measurable commitments for local hiring, union construction, workforce development, infrastructure investments, environmental protections, emergency planning, and public reporting. Those commitments must be contractual, measurable, and enforceable, with strong consequences when they are not met. Non-disclosure agreements cannot be allowed. They stifle discussion or limit the community’s ability to access vital information regarding the project.

A temporary pause on new large-scale AI and data-center development should also be considered while these standards are established, so that Michigan does not continue approving projects before the necessary rules and protections are in place.

This week, Congress will vote to pass the Ratepayer Protection Act, which would require states to consider policies to ensure large-load customers bear the costs of the generation, transmission, and distribution upgrades necessary to serve them. This is a step toward ensuring local communities are not subsidizing the energy demands of large data-center projects through residential utility bills. I will be supporting this legislation, but it is far from enough and much more needs to be done at all levels of government.

A National Responsibility

This is also far bigger than one project. AI and high-performance computing are transforming our economy, but technological advancement cannot mean abandoning basic principles of public accountability. We can support innovation while insisting on responsible development. We can support research while protecting residents. And we can welcome investment while making sure residential ratepayers, water users, and local communities are not the ones left carrying the costs.

The fact that a project may have important research goals does not eliminate the obligation to answer legitimate and critical questions. AI is one of the most consequential technologies we have ever created, with extraordinary potential to improve lives. But we cannot ignore the risks, that if left unchecked, could threaten humanity itself.

We need clear guidelines on national security, healthcare, education, employment, law enforcement, elections, consumer protection, intellectual property, cybersecurity, environmental impacts, and the use of AI by government agencies. We cannot wait until something goes terribly wrong to establish guardrails. We need strong standards for human oversight of AI, safety, transparency, accountability, biocybersecurity, energy use, and the data centers that power it.

Where We Go From Here

The lesson from the U-M-LANL proposal is clear: the United States and the State of Michigan need the rules now, not later. The public deserves transparency before commitments are made, enforceable protections before construction begins, and a meaningful voice when a project has the potential to fundamentally change a community.

For all of these reasons, I strongly oppose the proposed Textile Road Site in Ypsilanti Township. My opposition is not opposition to the University of Michigan, it is not opposition to research, and it is not opposition to artificial intelligence. Rather, my opposition is a demand that a project of this size and significance be developed responsibly, transparently, and with the people who will live with its consequences having a meaningful voice. The environmental history of the site makes the need for independent review even more important. The questions about water, electricity, schools, noise, and local authority make meaningful community involvement essential.

We should not build first and regulate later. Innovation matters, but protecting our lives, our freedoms, our humanity, and our future must come first.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Debbie Dingell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Debbie" and last name "Dingell" clearly legible.

Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress

CC: Dr. Domenico Grasso, President, University of Michigan