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Domenico Grasso
President
University of Michigan
3190 Ruthven Building
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Dear President Grasso:

This letter is regarding the proposed University of Michigan-Los Alamos data center planned for Ypsilanti Township.

As you know, there are a number of data centers being proposed across my district in Southeast Michigan. The two that are getting significant attention are the proposed Saline data center, where OpenAI, Oracle, and Related Digital intend to develop a $7 billion artificial intelligence facility served by DTE Energy and the planned $1.25 billion joint high-performance computing and AI research center by U-M and Los Alamos National Laboratory.

For months, there has been anxiety and distress in the Ypsilanti Township community about this proposed joint project with Los Alamos for a data center. I first learned of the project from Ypsilanti Township, and still have very little background information from U-M. When Ypsilanti Township asked if I would host a town hall, I attempted to coordinate with U-M but was told officials were unable to answer questions or provide information. Therefore, without the ability to share facts, I could not hold the town hall I requested.

As anxiety and stress were increasing in the Ypsilanti Township community, I held an Eastern Washtenaw town hall so residents could express their thoughts. However, the meeting was dominated by Saline Township residents focused on the Saline data center proposal. Subsequent to that, the Saline project has received more attention, given it is further along, with established facts, timelines, and processes, but concern in Ypsilanti Township has only intensified as more issues arise with the Saline data center.

Despite repeated requests, U-M has still not met with residents in Ypsilanti Township. I participated in a meeting with Township officials, who expressed strong feelings that they did

not want this data center at the designated site. I also attended a meeting with several senior U-M officials and the Ypsilanti Township supervisor, clerk, and trustees, where concerns about the site of the project were discussed and asked that alternative sites be considered. At that meeting, the request for U-M to engage directly with the community was reaffirmed. Yet instead of meeting in Ypsilanti Township, U-M hosted an open house in Ann Arbor. Holding a meeting miles away from the affected community, which sent the message that Ypsilanti Township's concerns are secondary and further undermines trust in the process. This week, the Ypsilanti Township Board of Trustees passed a resolution to immediately claw back the funding previously awarded for the proposed data center project.

The University of Michigan has a responsibility to directly engage with the Ypsilanti Township community. The plans for this project are not as far along as the Saline data center, and decisions about the site have not been made yet, but the community does not understand even the state of play because U-M has not met with them directly or explained the status of the project. The lack of information has caused significant stress and anguish for residents, who are dealing with daily anxiety and growing mistrust because their questions remain unanswered.

I have been working for months to help encourage transparency and ensure public input in this process, yet U-M's reluctance to meet with the community is troubling. When answers have been provided, they have often lacked specificity and have raised more questions than they have resolved. This has led to confusion about key issues the community cares about, including energy usage, water demand, renewables, environmental impacts on the Huron River, costs to ratepayers, surveillance and drone-related technologies, first responder capacity, and whether the project will deliver meaningful local investment. Communities have a right to understand and weigh in on projects proposed in their own backyard and to ensure that environmental and economic concerns are addressed transparently.

Ypsilanti residents' concerns are reflective of the broader public uncertainty about the proliferation of data centers across Michigan. We must acknowledge that the proposals in Ypsilanti and Saline are at very different stages of development. The Saline project is already moving through a formal process with the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC), and in that process, I led an effort requesting that the developers be accountable and provide frequent, clear communication with the public to ensure that all commitments made to the community are upheld. By contrast, the Ypsilanti project is far from finalized and its future is uncertain.

There are too many unanswered questions, and Ypsilanti residents deserve clarity and to be part of this process. It is long past time for U-M to hold a public meeting in Ypsilanti Township to explain its vision, present any plans under consideration, and answer the outstanding questions from residents. I urge U-M to immediately host a public forum in Ypsilanti and take these unresolved concerns seriously. If U-M wants to gain the trust of the community, there must be

real public input in the process, this must be an open, transparent dialogue, and it must occur before any further decisions or commitments are made.

Southeast Michigan communities should reap the benefits of innovation and economic development, not shoulder their burdens. If a community has serious concerns, they cannot be ignored. They must be listened to, and their concerns must be addressed. I expect U-M to meet its responsibilities to the public with transparency, accountability, and respect. Thank you, and I am looking forward to a prompt response regarding when a public forum will be scheduled in Ypsilanti Township.

Sincerely,

Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress