

THE SILENT BOARDROOM

A Data Center Transparency Toolkit
for Michigan Residents Watching Their Township Board

SciFiBot©

Michigan Resident's Tactical Guide • Digital Download

WHY THIS GUIDE EXISTS

Michigan townships are quietly signing non-disclosure agreements with data center developers.

Across Michigan, tech companies are approaching township officials with proposals for large-scale data centers — facilities that can draw as much electricity as a small city and millions of gallons of water a year. In several documented cases, developers have asked local officials to sign non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) before any public discussion begins.

This is not a rumor. Public-records requests to Michigan municipalities in early 2026 confirmed that the City of Lowell, Lowell Charter Township, Dorr Township, and Gaines Charter Township had each signed NDAs related to data center development — agreements that can restrict what officials are allowed to tell the residents who elected them. Microsoft later terminated those four NDAs in February 2026 after public pressure. By mid-2026, at least 19 Michigan municipalities had responded by enacting moratoriums — temporary pauses — on new data center development while they figure out how to regulate them.

This toolkit exists because most residents find out about a proposal only after the deal is nearly done. The goal here is simple: give you the facts, the questions, and the paperwork before your township's vote, not after.

SOURCES FOR THIS PAGE

The Detroit News, "Data center details shrouded as 4 Michigan communities sign non-disclosure pacts" (Feb. 2026); The Detroit News, "Microsoft ends data center non-disclosure agreements in west Michigan" (Mar. 2026); Broadband Breakfast, "Michigan Township Opposition Fails to Stop OpenAI Data Center" (May 2026). Full links available on request — email scifibot.xyz@gmail.com.

THE TYRONE TOWNSHIP CASE STUDY

Sourced from a public video, captioned “Resident confronts officials about signing data center NDAs” (publisher: Perfect Union).

At a Tyrone Township (Livingston County) board meeting, a resident stood at public comment and asked the board a direct yes-or-no question. What follows is drawn from the video's own captions.

THE QUESTION

“Have you personally signed any NDA, any agreement, or had any private communication — such as meetings, phone calls, text messages, or emails — with any developer, company, or landowner, regarding any current or potential project that could affect Tyrone Township?”

THE RESPONSES

Official	Response (as captioned)	Result
Unnamed official	“I'm not answering your question. This is not the time or place.”	Declined
Unnamed official	“But we don't have to answer your question.”	Declined
“Jennifer”	“I didn't think you were supposed to do that.”	Deflected
Greg Carnes (named on camera)	Asked directly — “How about you? Yes or no?” Replied: “Not the place.”	Declined
Unnamed official	“We've already discussed this. Who's already discussed it?”	Deflected
Unnamed official	“I've not discussed this with you. What are you saying?”	Deflected

As the exchange continued, an audience member called out: “You work for us!”

What we can confirm from the video: multiple officials, including Supervisor Greg Carnes by name, were asked the same direct question on camera and none gave a yes-or-no answer.

What this page does not claim: an exact date, since it doesn't appear on screen in the source clip.

Publisher's note: Per SciFiBot's review of the complete recording, every official addressed declined to give a yes-or-no answer to this question.

THE ACCOUNTABILITY MATRIX

A blank scorecard for your own board — fill it out at your next meeting.

Bring this page to your next board meeting. Ask each official the NDA question below, in public, on the record. Mark their response. Share the completed matrix with your neighbors afterward.

Official (Name / Title)	Answered	Deflected	Declined / Silent	Notes
	■	■	■	
	■	■	■	
	■	■	■	
	■	■	■	
	■	■	■	
	■	■	■	

THE QUESTION TO ASK

“Have you personally signed, or discussed signing, any non-disclosure agreement with a data center developer or their representatives — yes or no?”

Scoring guide: A direct “yes” or “no” counts as Answered. A response that avoids the yes/no (“we follow all applicable laws,” “that’s not the right forum”) counts as Deflected. No response, or a refusal to engage, counts as Declined / Silent.

MICHIGAN DATA CENTER STATUS MAP

A working list of townships with moratoriums or active proposals — update as news develops.

By mid-2026, at least 19 Michigan municipalities had enacted moratoriums on new data center development. The list below reflects publicly reported activity as of this guide's publication date — confirm current status with your county or township clerk before relying on it.

Township / City	County	Status (as reported)
Tyrone Township	Livingston	Moratorium adopted Jan. 2026; active resident watch group
Meridian Township	Ingham	6-month moratorium adopted May 2026
Lowell Township	Kent	Moratorium proposal rejected; NDA controversy (2025–2026)
City of Lowell	Kent	NDA signed with Microsoft; later terminated Feb. 2026
Dorr Township	Allegan	NDA signed; later terminated Feb. 2026
Gaines Charter Township	Kent	NDA signed; later terminated Feb. 2026
Texas Township	Kalamazoo	12-month moratorium effective July 5, 2026
Oshtemo Township	Kalamazoo	Moratorium in place
Portage	Kalamazoo	Moratorium in place
Saline Township	Washtenaw	Board rejected proposal; developer sued and prevailed (2026)
Ypsilanti Township	Washtenaw	U-M / Los Alamos proposal under legislative scrutiny
Howell Township	Livingston	NDA use raised as a concern by residents
Van Buren Township	Wayne	NDA use raised as a concern by residents

Sources: The Detroit News, Michigan Advance, Michigan Public Radio, Broadband Breakfast, MichiganNewsSource (Jan.–July 2026 reporting). This list is not exhaustive — new moratoriums and proposals are being reported weekly.

THE SCRIPT

What to say at your next board meeting — two versions.

2-MINUTE VERSION

“My name is [NAME], and I live at [STREET / NEIGHBORHOOD]. I'm here about the data center proposal being discussed for our township. I have one direct question for the board: has any member of this board, or any township staff, signed a non-disclosure agreement with a developer regarding this project — yes or no? I'd like that answered on the record tonight, and I'd like to know when the public will see the full terms of any agreement this township enters into.”

5-MINUTE VERSION — ADD IF TIME ALLOWS

- State the water and energy impact you'd like disclosed (draw from EIA or utility filings, not estimates).
- Ask whether a Community Host Agreement or PILOT tax arrangement is being negotiated, and when residents will see draft terms.
- Ask whether the township has retained independent counsel, or is relying on the developer's representations.
- Close by requesting the question and answer be reflected in the written minutes.

IF THEY DECLINE TO ANSWER

Ask that your question and their response (or non-response) be entered into the record verbatim. You are entitled to do this under Michigan's Open Meetings Act public comment provisions. Do not argue with the board — the goal is a clean, quotable record.

RECORDING LEGALLY IN MICHIGAN

Michigan is a one-party consent state for audio recording, and public board meetings are open to recording under the Open Meetings Act. This is general information, not legal advice — confirm current rules with a Michigan attorney or your township clerk before recording.

FOIA REQUEST TEMPLATE

Michigan Freedom of Information Act, MCL 15.231 et seq.

Copy the text below, fill in the bracketed sections, and send it to your township clerk. Michigan FOIA requires a response within 5 business days (extendable by 10 business days with written notice).

[DATE]

[Township Clerk Name]
[Township Name] Clerk's Office
[Township Address]

RE: Freedom of Information Act Request (MCL 15.231 et seq.)

Dear Clerk [NAME],

Pursuant to the Michigan Freedom of Information Act, MCL 15.231 et seq., I am requesting copies of the following public records:

1. Any non-disclosure, confidentiality, or similar agreement entered into by [TOWNSHIP NAME], its officials,
or its staff, with any data center developer or their representatives, from [START DATE] to present.
2. All correspondence (email, letters, memoranda) between township officials and any data center developer
or their representatives from [START DATE] to present.
3. Any Community Host Agreement, Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) agreement, or similar economic development
agreement drafted or discussed regarding a proposed data center, whether finalized or not.
4. Minutes and any recordings of closed (executive) sessions in which a data center proposal was
discussed,
to the extent such records are subject to disclosure.

Please provide these records in electronic format if available. If any portion of this request is denied,
please cite the specific statutory exemption relied upon for each redaction or denial, as required by MCL 15.235.

If fees are anticipated to exceed \$50, please contact me with an estimate before proceeding.

Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,
[YOUR NAME]
[YOUR ADDRESS]
[YOUR EMAIL / PHONE]

NDA REGISTRY DEMAND LETTER

A formal request that your township maintain a public registry of any NDAs it signs.

[DATE]

[Township Supervisor / Board Chair Name]

[Township Name]

[Township Address]

RE: Request to Establish a Public Registry of Non-Disclosure Agreements

Dear [NAME],

I am a resident of [TOWNSHIP NAME]. I am writing to formally request that the Township Board adopt a policy requiring that any non-disclosure, confidentiality, or similar agreement entered into by any township official or staff member – with a data center developer or any other private party – be:

1. Disclosed to the full Board in open session within 30 days of signing;
2. Logged in a public registry maintained by the Clerk's office, listing the parties, date, and general subject matter (without necessarily disclosing protected trade-secret content); and
3. Reviewed by independent legal counsel before execution, at the township's discretion.

Residents cannot evaluate decisions made on their behalf if the existence of relevant agreements is itself hidden from view. A registry does not require disclosing confidential business terms – it only requires that residents know such an agreement exists.

I respectfully request a written response describing whether the Board will consider this policy, and if so, on what timeline. I intend to raise this request at a future public meeting and to share the Board's response with other residents.

Sincerely,

[YOUR NAME]

[YOUR ADDRESS]

[YOUR EMAIL / PHONE]

SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLKIT

Copy, paste, and adapt for your local groups.

FACEBOOK / NEXTDOOR POST

“Did you know [TOWNSHIP NAME] officials may have signed non-disclosure agreements with a data center developer? Several Michigan townships have — and some later had those agreements terminated after public pressure. If you want to know what's being discussed about our township before it's decided, come to the next board meeting on [DATE]. Bring a question. Full toolkit link: [YOUR LINK].”

SHORT VERSION FOR COMMENTS / REPLIES

“Worth asking at the next meeting: has anyone on the board signed an NDA about this? It's a fair, public-record question.”

SUGGESTED HASHTAGS

#DataCenterWatch #MichiganZoning #TownshipTransparency #YouWorkForUs #FOIA

GRAPHIC IDEAS (build in Canva)

- A simple “NDA?” graphic with your township name and next meeting date.
- A before/after: “Confused resident” vs. “Resident with the accountability matrix.”
- A quote card using a verbatim, timestamped line from your own meeting footage.

WANT A CUSTOM REPORT FOR YOUR TOWNSHIP?

SciFiBot© report generator.

Send your board meeting video or agenda to SciFiBot© and receive a written accountability report for your township, built the same way this toolkit was: verified facts only, unsourced claims flagged for review, and no fabricated quotes.

A custom report includes:

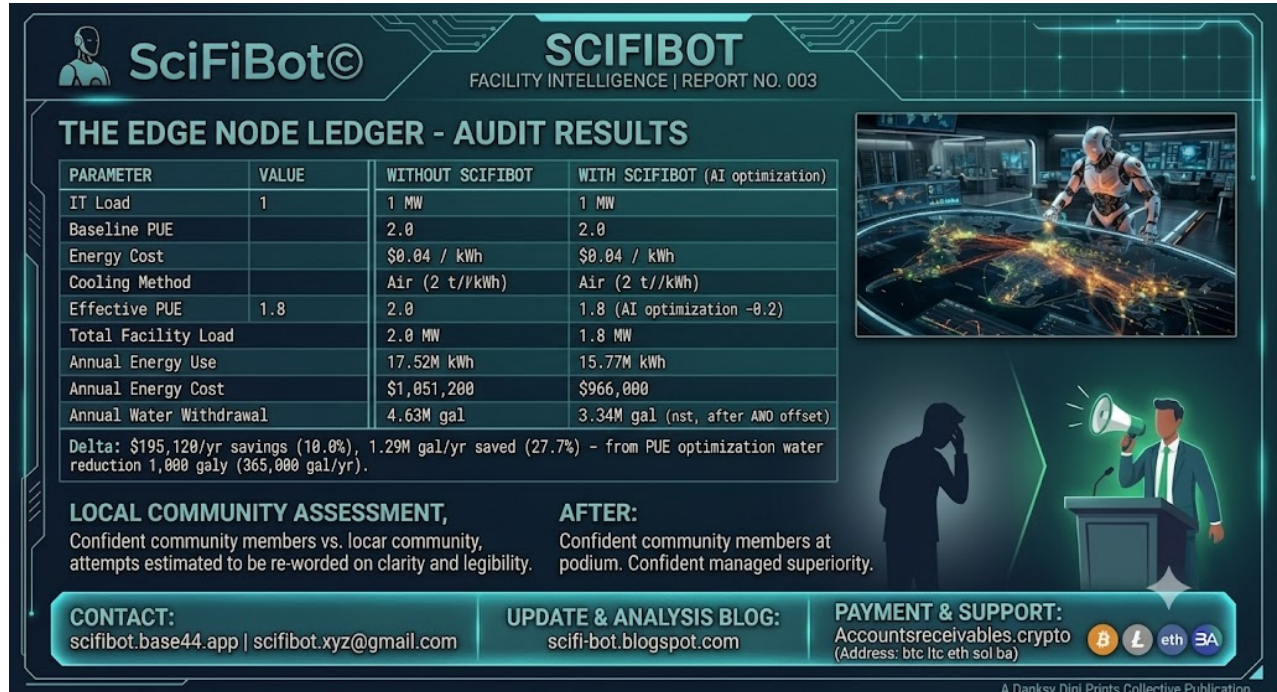
- A transcript-based summary of the meeting segment you send
- A completed accountability scorecard for the officials present
- A plain-language risk summary (zoning, water, energy, tax) where public data supports one

Email: scifibot.xyz@gmail.com

Web: scifibot.base44.app

SAMPLE REPORT

An example of a SciFiBot© Facility Intelligence report — shown here for a facility energy/water audit, one of several report types available.



Custom reports for your own township — covering NDA accountability, zoning risk, or facility impact — are built the same way: real data, unsourced items flagged, no invented figures.

GLOSSARY

Plain-English definitions for your next meeting.

NDA (Non-Disclosure Agreement)

A contract restricting what a signer can publicly share about a topic — in this context, details of a proposed development.

FOIA (Freedom of Information Act)

Michigan law giving residents the right to request copies of most public records, MCL 15.231 et seq.

OMA (Open Meetings Act)

Michigan law requiring most government decision-making to happen in public meetings, with limited exceptions for closed session.

Moratorium

A temporary, board-approved pause on approving a type of development while rules are written.

Zoning Ordinance

The local law governing what can be built where, and under what conditions.

Rezoning

A formal change to how a parcel of land is zoned, usually requiring public hearings.

PUD (Planned Unit Development)

A zoning tool allowing a customized development plan that may differ from standard zoning rules.

Community Host Agreement

A negotiated agreement between a developer and a municipality covering local benefits, fees, or conditions tied to hosting a facility.

PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes)

An agreement where a developer pays a negotiated amount instead of standard property taxes.

BONUS: DIGITAL ART PRINTS

Two share-ready graphics included with your download — save separately for social posts or printing.

TYRONE TOWNSHIP, MICHIGAN

**“Have you personally signed any NDA...
with any developer, company, or
landowner?”**

THE ANSWER, ON CAMERA:

“This is not the time or place.” — official
response

“How about you, Greg Carnes? Yes or no?” →
“Not the place.”

[Audience]: “You work for us!”

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The Silent Boardroom: Data Center Transparency Toolkit

THE SILENT BOARDROOM

Data Center Transparency Toolkit — What's Inside

- The Tyrone Township case study — sourced, quoted, verified
- Blank accountability scorecard for your own board
- Michigan data center status map (13+ townships)
- The Script — 2-minute and 5-minute meeting versions
- Michigan FOIA request template (statute-cited)
- NDA public-registry demand letter
- Social media organizing toolkit
- Glossary: NDA, FOIA, OMA, PILOT, and more

SciFiBot© — Instant PDF Download

Transparency is infrastructure. Build it before you need it.

\$9.99

RESOURCES

Where to go next.

- Michigan Municipal League — data center model ordinance guidance
 - Your county's Freedom of Information Act coordinator listing (usually the township or county clerk)
 - Michigan Advance and Planet Detroit — ongoing statewide data center reporting
 - Local legal aid organizations, for residents who cannot afford private counsel
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Transparency is infrastructure.

Build it before you need it.

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This guide provides general information and templates, not legal advice. For guidance specific to your situation, consult a licensed Michigan attorney.