

DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation
FINAL

May 22, 2019

Honorable JB Pritzker, Governor
Dan Hines, Deputy Governor
Erin Guthrie, Acting Director, Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity
Michael Madigan, Speaker, Illinois House of Representatives
John Cullerton, President, Illinois Senate
Jim Durkin, Minority Leader, Illinois House of Representatives
William Brady, Minority Leader, Illinois Senate
Jeff Keicher, State Representative, 70th District
Dave Syverson, State Senator, 35th District
Brian Stewart, State Senator, 45th District
Tom Demmer, State Representative 90th District

Dear _____:

On behalf of the DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation (DCEDC), a public/private partnership of 200 businesses, governmental bodies, and institutions, I would like to communicate the importance of the data center industry and a competitive operating environment to attract data centers to DeKalb County and the State of Illinois.

Data centers employ highly skilled computer and information technology professionals, many of which are educated at Northern Illinois University and Kishwaukee College. The location of data centers would provide attractive jobs enabling students to settle and raise families locally, strengthening and diversifying the DeKalb County economy and contributing to the Illinois economy.

Research, Development and Information Technology has been identified as a target industry cluster in the *DeKalb County Thriving!* Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS Plan). Establishment of a viable Research, Development and Information Technology industry cluster would strengthen Northern Illinois University, DeKalb County's largest employer and economic engine, by providing transformational student experiences connecting business innovation with university research.

Data centers are valuable and sizable special purpose information storage facilities that would contribute to the economy of the City of DeKalb by providing high wage technology jobs and expanding the tax base to support schools, municipalities and other governmental services.

DeKalb County is distinctly equipped to support data center development due to the availability of high voltage electric power from ComEd, abundant municipal water supply from the City of DeKalb, and virtually unlimited broadband capacity through high-speed fiberoptic network built by Northern Illinois University, with the support of the State of Illinois and DeKalb County.

The data center development industry has shown great interest in DeKalb County, selecting the ChicagoWest Business Center as the last Illinois finalist for an 80-acre, \$350 million Fortune 50 data

center campus in 2013. This prospect was positively inclined toward DeKalb and Illinois, but instead selected an Iowa location due to more favorable sales tax treatment.

Most major technology firms, including Apple and Microsoft, have visited and seriously considered DeKalb, but instead developed data center campuses just over the border in Iowa. We are currently a finalist for another significant data center campus codenamed – Project Apogee – and are concerned that the State of Indiana just approved legislation providing for data center development incentives. We don't want to lose another project to a nearby out-of-state location.

DCEDC appreciates your consideration of our experiences and encourage your efforts to enhance the competitiveness of Illinois for data center development. We are confident your initiative will create quality jobs and expand the Illinois economy.

Sincerely,

Paul J. Borek
Executive Director