

A Positive Future for Eastern Kern: The Facts About the RB Inyokern Data Center

Recently, an article published on Roadrunner395 raised concerns about the proposed RB Inyokern Data Center. While it is natural for the community to ask questions about new development, it is equally important that those questions are answered with facts, engineering data, and a clear understanding of the economic benefits this project brings to Eastern Kern County.

The RB Inyokern Data Center is not a speculative venture; it is a carefully planned, \$250 million infrastructure investment designed to bring high-paying jobs, significant tax revenue, and economic diversification to a region that needs it now more than ever.

Here are the facts about the project, its water usage, and its benefits to the local community.

Economic Impact: Replacing Lost Industry with Future-Proof Jobs

Eastern Kern County is facing an economic transition. With the recent layoffs from Searles Valley Minerals in March 2026, over 300 jobs were lost in the Ridgecrest and the Eastern Kern area. The region urgently needs economic diversification to replace lost industry with stable, high-tech careers.

The RB Inyokern Data Center provides exactly that opportunity:

- **Construction Phase:** The project will create over **1,600 direct construction jobs** over an approximately 4-year construction envelope, generating a \$250 million total construction economic impact. All work will be performed at California prevailing wage rates, putting local union members—including IBEW Electricians, Ironworkers, Laborers, Plumbers, and Operating Engineers—to work.
- **Permanent Operations:** Once operational, the facility will support **30 to 60 direct permanent jobs** and over 530 total permanent jobs when including indirect and induced employment.
- **Tax Revenue:** The project is estimated to generate over **\$6 million in annual local government tax revenue**. This tax revenue directly benefits local special districts that serve the community every day, including the **IWV Airport District**, the **Sierra Sands Unified School District**, the **Inyokern Community Services District**, and the **Inyokern Special District**.

The Truth About Water Usage

The most significant concern raised in the Roadrunner395 article was water usage, with claims that the facility would consume millions of gallons per day. This is factually incorrect.

The RB Inyokern Data Center utilizes a highly efficient hybrid cooling system specifically engineered for the high desert climate. The project's estimated water consumption is approximately **37 to 49 acre-feet (AF) per year**.

To put 37 to 49 AF in context:

- **Total Basin Demand:** The Indian Wells Valley groundwater basin has a total demand of approximately 28,000 AF per year. The data center's 37 to 49 AF represents just **0.15%-0.20%** of that total demand.
- **Commercial Comparison:** A single 18-hole desert golf course typically uses between 150 and 300 AF of water per year. The data center will use between one-eighth and one-third the water of a single golf course.

The project operates well within the sustainable limits of the local utility, representing less than one percent of even the most conservative estimates of the basin's safe yield.

Infrastructure Funded by the Developer, Not Taxpayers

Another common concern with large developments is the impact on local infrastructure. For the RB Inyokern Data Center, **all project-driven infrastructure costs are funded by the developer**.

There will be zero cost burden to taxpayers or existing ratepayers. In fact, the developer-funded upgrades to local infrastructure will benefit the broader community by improving grid resilience and utility reliability. The site was chosen specifically for its direct proximity to the SCE 115 kV substation and the Digital 395 fiber corridor, meaning no major downstream upgrades are required.

Environmental Responsibility

The project is currently undergoing rigorous review through the California Energy Commission's (CEC) Small Power Plant Exemption (SPPE) process (Docket No. 26-SPPE-01) and a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) with Kern County.

This includes a comprehensive environmental application addressing every category required by CEQA. The facility is designed with advanced air quality controls (including SCR, DPF, and

DEF systems on all backup generators) and integrates solar canopies for on-site renewable power generation.

Conclusion: A Choice for Kern County's Future

As the Bakersfield Californian recently noted, "Kern County has a choice: help build it, or be left out". Across California, cities are restricting data center development, pushing these massive investments to other states. Kern County stands apart as a business-friendly environment ready to lead the AI infrastructure boom.

The RB Inyokern Data Center is committed to building this project with Kern County workers, for Kern County families. We invite the community to review the facts, read the official CEC filings, and support a project that brings sustainable growth, high-paying jobs, and long-term economic stability back to Eastern Kern County.

Sincerely,



Robbie Barker
Chief Executive Officer
R&L Capital, Inc.