

2026's Greenest States

Eco-friendliness and personal finance are related. Our environmental and financial needs are the same in many areas: providing ourselves with sustainable, clean drinking water and food, for example. We also spend money through our own taxes in support of environmental security.

Last year, the U.S. experienced 27 weather and climate disasters that did \$1 billion or more in damage each, with the total damage from all events adding up to \$182.7 billion. While some disasters are unavoidable, others are exacerbated by humans.

We should all try to do our part to save the world for future generations. In order to highlight the greenest states and call out those doing a poor job of caring for the environment, WalletHub compared each of the 50 states based on 28 key metrics.

"It's important for every American to do their part to support greener living and protect our environment. However, it's much easier being green in some states than others. For example, if a state doesn't have a great infrastructure for alternative-fuel vehicles, it becomes much harder for residents to adopt that technology. Living in a green state is also very beneficial for the health of you and your family, as you benefit from better air, soil and water quality."

Chip Lupo, WalletHub Analyst

Greenest States In America	Score
1. Vermont	75.00
2. Hawaii	74.77
3. California	72.67
4. New York	72.45
5. Washington	72.26
6. Maryland	70.44

7. Maine	69.84
8. New Hampshire	68.83
9. South Dakota	68.80
10. Colorado	68.77
11. Minnesota	68.72
12. Massachusetts	68.59
13. Connecticut	68.46
14. Oregon	67.51
15. New Jersey	67.40

22. Illinois..... 57.59

Least Greenest State In America	Score
36. Kansas	50.99
37. Missouri	50.56
38. Arizona	49.67
39. Indiana	48.05
40. Arkansas	44.82
41. Texas	44.58
42. Alaska	44.30
43. North Dakota	43.58
44. Oklahoma	43.44
45. Wyoming	42.75
46. Mississippi	39.82
47. Kentucky	37.70
48. Alabama	36.67
49. Louisiana	26.85
50. West Virginia	23.60

Key Stats

- ♦ Blue States are greener, with an average rank of 11.79, compared with Red States, which have an average rank of 33.90. (Rank 1=Greenest)
- ♦ South Dakota has the highest share of energy consumption from renewable sources, which is 27 times higher than in Alaska, the state with the lowest.
- ♦ New York has the highest share of people who do not drive to work, which is 2.9 times higher than in Mississippi, the state with the lowest.
- ♦ Vermont has the highest number of alternative-fuel stations per 100,000 residents, which is 8.8 times higher than in Louisiana, the state with the lowest.

Lawmakers Hear Debate Over Data Centers Including Revenue Headaches

By Sean Reed | The Center Square

With more than 100 new data center projects moving forward across Illinois in recent years, and thousands across the country, Illinois lawmakers heard about how the facilities are affecting local residents and town finances.

During an investigative hearing Wednesday, state representatives heard from multiple local government leaders that have data centers in their areas, speaking to some of the positive and negative impacts for some impacted residents.

DeKalb Mayor Cohen Barnes said a Meta data center in his city which began operating in 2023 – has allowed for significant tax relief to residents while still bringing in significantly more money for local bodies.

He said local aggregate tax rates have dropped from 11.5% to 7.9% since the data center project began.

As we all know, the most significant property tax generator or consumer is the school district. Our DeKalb school district, because of Meta alone, has \$19 million a year more added to their levy while being able to reduce the tax rate every single solitary year," Barnes said.

Aurora Mayor John Laesch said his city has also benefitted from data center investment financially, but there have also been some downsides.

"For the benefits, it is true that data centers bring revenue. In Aurora, that will mean approximately \$1.6 million annually in both property and utility taxes to the city each and every year," Laesch said.

Laesch told the committee residents are concerned with power consumption amid rising rates in the region. He also mentioned a lesser-discussed complaint he's received: Noise pollution.

"Aurora residents living near data centers have described a constant low-frequency hum day and night. It's not loud in a traditional sense, but persistent. People have described trouble sleeping, increa-

sed stress, a loss of quiet in their own homes," Laesch said.

Rep. Dan Ugaste argued that it's inconsistent for suburban residents to cite noise concerns when his rural constituents report that renewable energy projects, which the mayor said he supports, like wind turbines, create a similar hum.

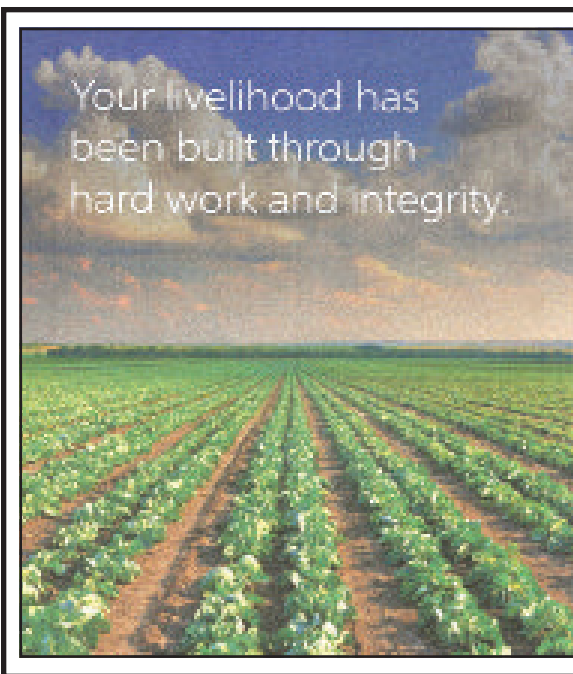
Laesch told the representative that complex state regulations on noise pollution make it hard to restrict the noise, and changes could help limit the acceptable amount of sound in both settings.

Former Sangamon County Board Representative Marc Ayers spoke on his experience firsthand hearing from community members about a highly debated proposed CyrusOne data center southwest of Springfield.

"It was predominantly activists that were opposed, but also the unions that were there in support. It was a contentious debate," Ayers said. "I think that more information still needs to come out about what data centers are, how much energy are they using on a year-to-year basis. I think that's something that we'd like to know locally."

Ayers voluntarily stepped down from his seat this week, completing his role after a hearing on a proposed data center Tuesday. Though Ayers voted against it, the board passed zoning changes allowing the data center to move forward.

The hearing was the first in a series the committee plans to conduct on data centers, with the next hearing expected to take place next Wednesday. The lawmakers hope the hearings will help inform future legislation on the



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We also want to thank all the individuals who gave raffle items, monetary donations, food that we served (that was totally donated), and any business that we failed to mention.

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Looking forward to bigger & better next year with your continued support!



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