

JASON KNAPP

Commander, U.S. Navy (Retired) • Reedville, Virginia

July 22, 2026

District Engineer
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Norfolk District
Fort Norfolk, 803 Front Street
Norfolk, Virginia 23510-1011

RE: Public Comment and Request for Public Hearing — NAO-2026-00282 / VMRC# 26-0360, Project Skye Data Center, Chesterfield County, Virginia

Dear District Engineer:

I write to comment on the Department of the Army permit application by Google, LLC for the Project Skye data center campus, and to formally request a public hearing under the comment procedures described in the June 29, 2026 public notice.

I am a retired Navy commander and a resident of Virginia's First Congressional District, where the project site is located. I served 21 years on active duty, including assignments focused on energy and installation resilience, and was a Veterans Advanced Energy Fellow at the Atlantic Council, where my work addressed energy infrastructure and grid reliability. I am currently a candidate for Congress in this district. I submit this comment as a citizen whose neighbors will live with this project's consequences.

Request for Public Hearing

The notice states that hearing requests must state their reasons with particularity. I have three.

First, the scale of the impacts. The application seeks to permanently fill 17.99 acres of forested wetlands and impact 8,115 linear feet of stream channel on Deep Creek, a tributary of the James River in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Once filled, forested wetlands of this maturity will not return in our lifetimes. Purchased mitigation credits from an off-site mitigation bank do not replace the hydrological and water quality functions these wetlands perform for the neighborhoods surrounding this site.

Second, the public interest is demonstrated, not assumed. On July 15 and 16, 2026, approximately 300 Chesterfield residents each night attended open houses on this project. Those events were hosted by the applicant, produced no public record, and by press accounts left attendees without project-specific answers. Residents raised water sourcing and consumption, diesel generator noise, light pollution, proximity to schools, and rising electricity costs, and multiple attendees said publicly that the information provided was incomplete and that decisions had been made without resident input. County officials have themselves criticized the nondisclosure agreements that limited what they could share with constituents. No on-the-record public forum on this project's environmental impacts has yet occurred. A Corps hearing would be the first, and sustained turnout at every related meeting in this county demonstrates that the interest is not insubstantial.

Third, this is one of three. Project Skye is one of three data center campuses the same applicant is pursuing in this county, totaling more than 1,500 acres, with a separate Clean Water Act application pending for the Project Loch site adjacent to Tomahawk Creek. The public interest review requires consideration of cumulative impacts. Evaluating these applications piecemeal would understate their combined effect on the county's wetlands, streams, water supply, and the James River system. The Corps' own preliminary determination that the project may affect a threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, with Section 7 consultation not yet complete, further underscores the need for a public hearing before any decision.

Comment on the Public Interest Factors

The evaluation criteria include economics, water supply, energy needs, and the general needs and welfare of the people. On those factors: the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission projects that unconstrained data center demand could add \$14 to \$33 per month to a typical Virginia residential electric bill by 2040. Dominion customers in this district have already absorbed a base rate increase this year, with a fuel charge increase behind it. The benefits of this project go to the applicant. The costs, environmental and financial, fall on residents who have never had a formal opportunity to be heard. A permit decision made without a public hearing would extend that pattern into the federal record.

Requests

I respectfully ask that the Corps (1) grant a public hearing in Chesterfield County; (2) evaluate the cumulative impacts of the applicant's three proposed campuses together, including the pending Project Loch application; (3) require the applicant to place project-specific water withdrawal and consumption figures on the public record before any permit decision; and (4) reopen the comment period if material new information is added to the application.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Jason Knapp

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Veterans Advanced Energy Fellow, Atlantic Council (2024–25)

Reedville, Virginia