Resolution on Just and Sustainable Data Center Management, Industrial Manufacturing, and Clean Energy Accountability in Idaho

Opening Values Statement & Introduction of Issues

Grounded in our Unitarian Universalist values, we affirm our profound commitment to justice, equity, and the systemic care of our interconnected web of existence. Our faith calls us to respond with moral courage to emerging ecological and social crises. The rapid, largely unregulated expansion of both hyperscale data centers and heavy advanced manufacturing across the Treasure Valley presents an unprecedented challenge to Idaho's communities, natural resources, and climate progress.

Because these massive developments consume immense amounts of water and clean electricity, they risk extending fossil fuel dependency, accelerating carbon timelines, burdening local ratepayers, and bypassing civic accountability through corporate non-disclosure agreements. Therefore, we offer the following structured public witness and framework for advocacy, explicitly distinguishing between the resource demands of cloud data structures and advanced industrial fabrication.

Part I: Resource Accountability & Water Aquifer Protection

Narrative Introduction

While hyperscale data centers consume water primarily through continuous cooling tower evaporation, large-scale semiconductor manufacturing requires massive volumes of ultrapure water directly within physical chemical processing. Micron has publicly noted its baseline operations maintain high historical recycling rates—reclaiming 70 to 80 percent of its manufacturing water for secondary uses like tool cooling, landscape irrigation, and boiler make-up to limit reliance on groundwater. However, as its multi-billion dollar manufacturing expansion significantly multiplies total campus water

demands, our commitment to ecosystem stewardship requires that alternative technologies are utilized and that corporate sustainability metrics are legally bound to local verification, advanced circular technologies, and absolute transparency.

- **WHEREAS,** evaporative cooling architectures in data centers permanently remove water from the local watershed, while advanced semiconductor fabrication demands high-volume aquifer extraction for precision industrial rinsing; and
- **WHEREAS,** corporate environmental policies celebrate localized recycling breakthroughs and the continuous reduction of chemical process emissions, yet the raw, cumulative volume of resource extraction required for massive new industrial expansions still poses an unquantified strain on local groundwater tables; and
- **WHEREAS,** proven industrial alternatives exist that drastically minimize or eliminate net water loss; now, therefore, be it
- **RESOLVED,** That we strongly advocate for local, and state regulatory and planning frameworks that mandate **the transition to alternative cooling architectures—such as closed-loop, liquid immersion, or zero-water air-cooling systems—to minimize regional water consumption** and protect our shared aquifers from evaporative loss; and be it further
- **RESOLVED,** That we call for strict regional mandates requiring advanced manufacturing entities to fulfill their public conservation targets by implementing transparent water permits, utilizing high-efficiency on-site recycling, and providing full public disclosure of all aquifer impacts.

Part II: Clean Energy Grid Integrity & Ratepayer Fairness

Narrative Introduction

The massive energy requirements of continuous digital data infrastructure are compounding with the heavy manufacturing loads of local industrial plants. While regional utility Idaho Power projects an unprecedented surge in peak electricity demand driven by these dual sectors, true equity requires that massive industrial consumers fully cover the costs of the new infrastructure they require and honor their corporate carbon-neutral milestones without burdening local families or delaying clean energy timelines.

- **WHEREAS,** the rapid buildout of massive cloud data infrastructure alongside heavy industrial manufacturing cleanroom expansions creates a dual strain on Idaho's electric grid, threatening to outpace regional renewable energy generation and delay fossil-fuel plant retirements; and
- **WHEREAS,** corporate consumers frequently establish corporate goals for renewable energy procurement, a standard that must be strictly enforced locally as massive new industrial loads are integrated into long-term energy forecasts; and
- **WHEREAS,** maximized system efficiency is vital to protecting grid capacity and reducing overall environmental strain; now, therefore, be it
- **RESOLVED,** That we advocate for utility rate frameworks that assign grid-expansion costs directly to the industrial rate class imposing them, ensuring local families do not subsidize corporate footprints; and be it further
- **RESOLVED,** That we call for binding rules requiring both hyperscale data developers and industrial manufacturing corporations to achieve **100% verifiable energy self-sufficiency** by funding or developing independent, additive clean energy resources and dedicated Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) to fully manage and smooth their localized supply and demand, preventing any resource depletion of the public grid; and be it further
- **RESOLVED,** That we insist that operators design facilities for absolute energy self-sufficiency and resource-efficiency, including mandating **localized waste-heat reuse** (such as supporting agricultural greenhouse operations) wherever Idaho's geography makes it practical and viable.

Part III: Democratic Oversight & Civic Transparency

Narrative Introduction

A just society requires a meaningful community voice in local development. The widespread use of corporate non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) between technology developers and local government entities strips the public of their democratic right to evaluate resource impacts before decisions are finalized.

- **WHEREAS,** democratic oversight is compromised when critical resource allocation decisions are shielded from the public via private covenants and legal design exclusions; and

- **WHEREAS,** communities deserve early public notice and absolute transparency regarding potential major environmental impacts and public health risks stemming from water overuse, air quality degradation, and energy grid strain; now, therefore, be it
- **RESOLVED,** That we advocate for a complete ban on non-disclosure agreements between corporate data center developers or industrial manufacturers and public municipalities with regard to critical resource allocations and/or major environmental impacts, maintaining open access to utility and impact data.

Part IV: Umbrella Resolutions Applying to All Focus Areas

To ensure the consistent and unified application of this public witness across all environmental and civic dimensions, be it further:

- **RESOLVED,** That we demand comprehensive, regular, and transparent public reporting of all water and energy consumption data from any industrial data or manufacturing facility operating within Idaho, and insist that this data be verified by independent, third-party auditors who are granted full administrative and physical access to the facilities to directly inspect, test, and calibrate all resource meters and instruments; and be it further
- **RESOLVED,** That we call upon all developers to enter into binding **Community Benefits Agreements**, established through open, well-defined timelines, negotiated directly with a broad community coalition comprising local municipal and county officials, environmental advocacy organizations, community-focused nonprofits, neighboring residential property owners, and representatives of marginalized populations most directly impacted by resource extraction; and be it further
- **RESOLVED,** That copies of this resolution be formally transmitted by the Climate Action Team and Fellowship leadership to regional public utilities, municipal planning boards, and state regulatory commissioners to serve as our active interfaith witness; and be it further
- **RESOLVED,** That the Climate Action Team and Fellowship leadership are fully authorized to advance the goals of this resolution through sustained community education, public witness, and active policy advocacy, building a unified coalition in direct collaboration with local climate and environmental justice organizations, including **Idaho Interfaith Power & Light (IPL)** and the **Idaho Sierra Club**.

💡 Informational Appendix: Frequently Asked Questions

This section is provided by the Climate Action Team as an explanatory guide for the congregation and community partners. It serves to clarify the context and intent of the policy goals and is not a part of the formal text being voted upon.

Q1: Why does this resolution combine data centers and advanced manufacturing like semiconductor fabrication?

A: While hyperscale data centers and semiconductor manufacturing facilities serve entirely different operational functions, they represent the dual engines driving the current industrial energy and water boom in the Treasure Valley. By addressing both sectors together, the resolution allows our fellowship to establish a unified, comprehensive public witness on regional utility planning, ratepayer equity, and local resource preservation.

Q2: How do the resource demands of a cloud data center differ from a manufacturing facility like Micron?

A: They consume resources in fundamentally different ways, which is why the resolution handles them distinctly:

- **Hyperscale Data Centers** are massive computing facilities. They use vast amounts of electricity to run processors 24/7, and they consume millions of gallons of water primarily through *evaporation* in cooling towers to keep equipment from overheating.
- **Semiconductor Manufacturing (e.g., Micron)** is a complex chemical fabrication process. It requires immense grid power to run ultra-clean industrial production lines ("fabs"), and it utilizes high volumes of *ultrapure process water* directly within manufacturing lines to rinse chemical layers off silicon wafers.

Q3: Micron's environmental policy highlights an impressive 70–80% water recycling rate. Why is this resolution still necessary for them?

A: We celebrate and honor Micron's historical leadership in local water reclamation and chemical reduction. However, a high recycling rate is a percentage, not a raw volume limit. Micron's multi-billion dollar manufacturing expansion in Southeast Boise is projected to scale up campus water demands toward an unprecedented 10.2 million gallons per day for its first new fab alone. Even with excellent recycling loops in place, the raw, cumulative volume of groundwater extraction required for an expansion of this

magnitude creates a massive new strain on our shared aquifer. This resolution simply insists that these corporate recycling promises are tied to binding local verification and absolute data transparency as they grow.

Q4: Why doesn't the resolution mandate one specific type of closed-loop cooling engineering?

A: Cooling technology is changing rapidly. While closed-loop chilled water systems are standard today, direct-to-chip liquid immersion and advanced zero-water air cooling are quickly emerging as more efficient alternatives. By demanding a broader performance standard—meaning any *alternative cooling architecture that eliminates evaporative water loss*—our policy remains flexible, future-proof, and protected from technical engineering disputes during civic planning meetings.

Q5: What is a Community Benefits Agreement (CBA), and why do we advocate for them?

A: A Community Benefits Agreement is a legally binding contract signed by a developer and community coalitions. It ensures that when a massive corporation builds a high-impact facility, the local neighborhood directly shares in the planning benefits—such as corporate funding for community solar installations, independent groundwater monitoring, regional environmental upgrades, or protections for local utility rates. CBAs ensure that regional development happens *with* local communities, not just *to* them.

Q6: Why expand the targeted frameworks to include local, county, and state entities?
A: Industrial developers do not look exclusively within city boundaries. They often target unincorporated county lands to bypass municipal regulations, while the fundamental power over groundwater usage rests with a state agency, the *Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR)*. Ensuring our advocacy framework covers municipal, county, and state regulatory structures ensures no developer can hide behind a jurisdictional loophole.

Q7: What is a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and why is it mandatory for grid self-sufficiency?
A: Data centers draw enormous blocks of electricity constantly, 24/7/365. Variable renewable energy sources like wind and solar cannot provide constant power without backup. Requiring on-site or dedicated BESS ensures developers capture and smooth out their own clean energy generation to meet their constant consumption demands, rather than draining public grid capacity or forcing regional utilities to activate fossil-fuel plants during peak loads.

Q8: Why name explicit public health risks and potential impacts under the transparency requirements?
A: Corporate entities routinely shield project details during early planning stages under the pretense that precise environmental damage is "not yet proven." Recognizing the *potential* for environmental degradation removes this stall tactic. Explicitly naming public health risks—such as the air quality degradation and utility rate inflation caused by over-allocated resources—shifts the legal and moral dialogue directly onto human safety and community well-being.

Q9: Why reject corporate self-reporting in favor of independent, physical on-site meter auditing?
A: Industrial tech and fabrication operations have massive financial and PR incentives to present highly polished conservation data. Independent, third-party auditing with guaranteed physical facility access ensures that data integrity is absolute, allowing verification teams to check, test, and validate that meters are functioning accurately.

Q10: Who comprises the community coalition required to negotiate a Community Benefits Agreement (CBA)?
A: To ensure a CBA possesses actual legal leverage and genuine local support, the negotiating table cannot be hand-picked or fragmented by developers. This framework enforces a broad, balanced community coalition linking municipal and county leadership with environmental watchdogs, local non-profits, neighboring property owners, and representatives of marginalized communities who frequently absorb the brunt of localized industrial strain.
