

Resolution Regarding Urban Data Centers and Waste Heat

Resolution #2025.05

WHEREAS, many data centers have been built in urban areas in Washington State to support artificial intelligence and other data processing needs; and,

WHEREAS, urban data centers tend to use very large quantities of electricity and sometimes water to prevent chips from overheating; and,

WHEREAS, currently, most energy associated with cooling is wasted but this does not have to be the case. The Washington State Labor Council has supported many policies to make it easier to generate and transmit more electricity. But these projects are still very hard to develop so we must use our existing resources wisely; and,

WHEREAS, some data centers have already been built in urban areas that provide free or low-cost heat and hot water to many kinds of buildings. These include: data centers that occupy a single floor of a highrise office tower, data centers that are physically connected to new highrise housing, and data centers that are built near master-planned residential housing developments that have neighborhood heating networks; and,

WHEREAS, data centers could potentially reduce the cost of housing construction if infrastructure costs are shared; and,

WHEREAS, in the face of the climate crisis and the challenges of expanding electrical capacity, reducing energy waste in data centers is a critical step toward the future. By taking the lead now, Washington State can position itself for long-term prosperity; now therefore, be it,

RESOLVED, the Washington State Labor Council calls on the Washington State Legislature and State agencies to study how data centers could provide community benefits such as free or low cost heat, hot water, lower-cost housing and agricultural applications.