



## A RED NETWORK ARTICLE DOWNLOADED FROM [WWW.REDNETWORK.IE](http://WWW.REDNETWORK.IE)

### Minister overturning data centre ban shows complete disregard for democracy

The Fine Gael Minister for Local Government Peter Burke is expected to overturn a democratic decision by South Dublin councillors to ban data centres.

I initially proposed the banning of any more data centres after seeing the impact they're having on our local communities and the planet. South Dublin County has over 30 data centres- more than half of all data centres in the country!

Data centres use a huge amount of energy and water to cool the servers that store data. They already consume 15% of all electricity in Ireland, and that is expected to increase to 30% by 2030.

We have already seen an increase in system alerts on the electricity grid due to data centres. In the space of 4 years, they contributed to an increase in energy use which is equivalent to 140 000 new households.

According to Irish Water figures, data centres here consumed 810 million litres of water annually in the state or over 2 million litres every day. This is likely to be much higher because Irish Water have records for only 24 data centre facilities while over 70 are in operation.

At the same time, I had families contacting me because they couldn't move into their new homes when Irish Water refused to connect them to the water supply. This was because the infrastructure in Newcastle, Co Dublin, was not able to cope with the new homes.

As always, there's one rule for the rich and the corporations and another for ordinary people. Data centres can get access to water supplies while ordinary families are left waiting for years.

The amount of data centres in Ireland is having a negative impact on our carbon emissions. The Environmental Protection Agency published a report in June 2022 which stated that Ireland won't meet its carbon emissions targets unless new measures are introduced.

Some argue that in this digital age we need more data centres. And yes, we need some data centres in order to watch Netflix or read an article on a socialist website.

But we don't know what type of data is being stored in these data centres. In all likelihood, a large amount of it is unnecessary data that is being stored only in order to sell targeted advertising. Other data is so called "dead data", for example old emails that you have deleted off your Gmail account, but that Google decides to store for an infinite amount of time.

If we lived in a socialist society the decisions about what kind of data to store could be made by workers and the public in the interest of the public good. If we could decide whether to store data for advertising purposes or to save the planet, I'm pretty sure I know what most people would choose.

But because these decisions are made by big corporations who are only interested in making profits, the planet and our communities are forced to suffer the consequences.

A ban on new data centres in South Dublin could lead the way to a nationwide ban. But in the long term we need a socialist society where all decisions are made by ordinary working-class people in the interest of the public good instead of massive corporations driven by greed.

If you want to fight for a socialist society then join the Red Network and People Before Profit.

**The RED Network (incorporating Rebel Telly) are a network of radical socialists within the political party People Before Profit, a 32-county people power movement on the island of Ireland.**

[www.rednetwork.ie](http://www.rednetwork.ie)