FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

With More Than 120 Data Centers Proposed on or Near Indigenous Land, Native Leaders Question the Cost of AI

New York, *November 3, 2026* — As companies seek more and larger sites for the data centers that power artificial intelligence, Indigenous lands, including areas containing sacred sites, are being eyed as potential locations. On November 5, the G20 Interfaith Forum (IF20), the world's leading organization focused on the intersection of faith and policy, will host Indigenous leaders for "AI Data Centers on Indigenous Lands," a Native American Heritage Month webinar presented with the International Academy for Multicultural Cooperation, and Honor the Earth. This webinar is co-sponsored by Seventh Generation Fund and the International Academy for Multicultural Cooperation.

Krystal Two Bulls, executive director of Honor the Earth, who has called the data center boom a modern form of colonialism, said the discussion has to reach beyond the technology itself.

"This conversation is important because we cannot just talk about generative AI or hyperscale data centers on their own," Two Bulls said. "We need to talk about the infrastructure that allows them to exist, the extreme consolidation of wealth and power and the targeting of Indigenous Peoples' land, air, water and communities."

The infrastructure behind AI presents a paradox. The Hamburg Declaration on Responsible Artificial Intelligence for the Sustainable Development Goals, launched at the 2025 Hamburg Sustainability Conference, expresses the hope that AI will "accelerate solutions for climate change mitigation and adaptation." Yet the centers that train and run AI systems require hundreds of acres of flat land with water sources and access to power grids, and they consume massive amounts of energy and water, compounding environmental injustice in communities already burdened by industrial development.

Cheyanna Morgan pointed out: "The development of generative AI infrastructure through manufactured consent is something that cannot be ignored. Our communities are familiar with the impacts of colonization through extraction. Tech companies are now funding a false solution to the problems they are creating.

Tribal lands hold particular appeal. As states and local communities increasingly oppose data centers, developers see tribal lands as attractive alternatives whose different regulatory frameworks could expedite approval. Honor the Earth reports that more than 120 hyperscale data center projects have been proposed on or near Indigenous land.

Indigenous nations are responding in different ways. Developers have come with promises of economic growth, digital sovereignty, jobs and tax revenue for schools and public services, and some nations have embraced the projects, even becoming stakeholders or investors. Others are developing guidelines that respect Indigenous rights and priorities, and some, including the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, have banned data center construction on their lands.

Cheyenna Morgan, coalition coordinator of Stop Data Colonialism, a national Indigenous coalition, said Native communities have seen this pattern before.

“The development of generative AI infrastructure through manufactured consent is something that cannot be ignored,” Morgan said. “Our communities are familiar with the impacts of colonization through extraction. Tech companies are now funding a false solution to the problems they are creating.”

Opponents are also concerned that the current administration might try to change the regulations governing lands belonging to sovereign Native nations. That concern follows July proclamations that shrank the Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante national monuments in southern Utah, opening excluded land to uses such as mining. The Bears Ears proclamation said public lands there “can and should be put to a higher-priority use.”

Panelist Ashley Nicole Leitka, director of Honor the Earth’s Department of Sovereignty and Self-Determination, joins the discussion after organizing campaigns in Oklahoma, where Tulsa and Oklahoma City voted to pause new data center development.

For moderator Ja:no’s—Janine Bowen, a Seneca Faith Keeper, the issue comes down to balance.

“Our Mother Earth already carries the scars of development, a process that regularly disregards her health and well-being,” Bowen said. “Now, she must share her precious water with a rapidly growing industry willing to destroy her balance to further human technological feats. How can we use technology to assist our Mother in finding balance, instead of draining her resources?”

With AI advancing quickly and high on this year’s G20 agenda, the webinar offers a forum for these questions at a critical juncture. It will take place Thursday, November 5, 2026, at 9 a.m. HST / 11 a.m. PST / 12 p.m. MST / 1 p.m. CST / 2 p.m. EST. Bowen will moderate. Register at bit.ly/ai-and-data-centers-on-indigenous-lands.

Speakers will include:

- **Ja:no’s—Janine Bowen (Moderator)** — Director of Seneca Language Teacher Support and Community Outreach for the Seneca Nation. A member of the Beaver Clan and a Faith Keeper of the Cold Spring Longhouse, she has devoted her career to Seneca language revitalization, beginning in 2002 as a teacher on the Allegany Territory. She serves on the G20 Interfaith Forum’s Anti-Racism Initiative and the Seneca Nation’s Natural Resources Committee, and she holds degrees from the Harvard Graduate School of Education and the Harvard Kennedy School.
- **Krystal Two Bulls** — Executive Director of Honor the Earth, an Indigenous-led organization dedicated to protecting the lifeways and sovereignty of Indigenous Peoples. Oglala Lakota and Northern Cheyenne, she lives in Northern Cheyenne territory in southeastern Montana and previously directed NDN Collective’s LANDBACK Campaign. Under her leadership, Honor the Earth launched the Stop Data Colonialism coalition in 2025 and tracks proposed data center projects on or near Indigenous land.
- **Cheyenna Morgan** — Coalition Coordinator of Stop Data Colonialism, a national Indigenous coalition of tribal members organizing to stop the mass expansion of hyperscale data centers and generative AI on tribal lands and to educate tribal and municipal leaders about their

impacts. She is an enrolled member of the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians and comes from the Oglala Lakota Nation.

- **Ashley Nicole Leitka** — Director of the Department of Sovereignty and Self-Determination at Honor the Earth. She is Absentee Shawnee and Oglala Lakota, and her work centers on supporting Indigenous communities and local leaders as they respond to proposed hyperscale data centers.

For more information, please visit www.g20interfaith.org.