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How a Research Paper Helped Spark Utah's Data Center Water Law.

What began as an effort by three fellows at the Aspen Institute resulted in a push to bring more transparency around how data centers consume water in the state.

Utah this year became the first state to mandate more transparency around how data centers use and consume water, in a joint effort between lawmakers, researchers and advocacy groups.

The result was [a bill](#) that Republican Gov. Spencer Cox [signed in March](#) requiring new data centers in the state that are over 10,000 square feet in size and use at least 75 acre-feet of water a year to report their water usage to Utah's Division of Water Rights. Those reporting requirements include the sources of their water, what it will be used for, conservation efforts, water quality and more. While the data will be anonymized, total use will be aggregated and released to the public.

The law, which has since been [replicated in Nebraska](#), comes as data center operators and developers come under increasing pressure about the strain they may place on electricity and water. That's become especially apparent [in Utah](#), where the Stratos Project in Box Elder County has sparked months of controversy and is the subject of a [lawsuit](#). Cox signed an [executive order](#) in May to establish what he called a "higher bar" for data center development in the state.

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Route Fifty

By Chris Teale,
Managing Editor, Route Fifty

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