

Data Centre Briefing

February 21, 2026

Global

Key themes:

Virginia 230 kV transmission rebuilds tied to data centre demand; UK public support rises with data centre waste-heat reuse; Heat networks/ectogrid models positioned as decarbonisation enablers; Energy security policy linking critical minerals and rising AI/data centre load; Workforce development and trade pathways for data centre build/ops; GPU infrastructure efficiency framed as OpEx and delivery lever; Public consultation and cultural landscape constraints affecting grid projects; Government innovation funding supporting broader tech/defence ecosystems

Global data centres, power & grid briefing (UTC 2026-02-21)

Top news (3)

- **US grid: new transmission rebuild proposals in Virginia.** [Dominion proposes 230 kV line rebuilds near Charlottesville, Gordonsville](#) covering ~22.3 miles (Dooms-Charlottesville) and ~20 miles (Charlottesville-Gordonsville), framed as responding to regional demand from data centres.
- **UK social licence: waste-heat reuse materially improves sentiment.** [Two-thirds of Brits favor local data centres using waste heat](#) reports 66.8% would view nearby data centres more favourably if waste heat is used for local heat networks.
- **Energy security focus: governments linking demand growth to data centres/AI.** [Japan official attends IEA ministerial on energy security](#) highlights calls for investment and government action amid rising energy demand from data centres and AI.

Key deals & projects

Europe (UK)

- **Heat networks / waste heat integration:** [Two-thirds of Brits favor local data centres using waste heat](#)

- Survey findings: **66.8%** more favourable views if waste heat is used; **75.6%** support cooperation between data centres, energy providers and local authorities.
- Referenced project: **E.ON “Silvertown ectogrid™”** in East London, covering **760,000 sqm**.
- Reported impact: **~4,000 tonnes CO2** saved annually; **88% lower emissions vs gas boilers** (per E.ON).

North America (Canada)

- **Innovation funding adjacent to digital/defence ecosystems:** [PacifiCan invests over \\$46.6M in B.C. defence innovation](#)
 - Total: **CAD 46,672,430** across **eight** projects to accelerate defence innovation and supply-chain integration.
 - Major allocations (selected):
 - **University of British Columbia: CAD 20,646,400** (three projects)
 - **Simon Fraser University: CAD 19,957,611** (two projects)
 - **UBC-Sauder CDL: CAD 1,579,809**
 - **Alacrity: CAD 2,621,746**
 - **Association of British Columbia Marine Industries: CAD 1,866,864**

Power & grid / interconnection highlights

North America (US - Virginia)

- **Transmission rebuilds tied to data centre-driven load growth:** [Dominion proposes 230 kV line rebuilds near Charlottesville, Gordonsville](#)
 - Projects:
 - **Dooms-Charlottesville: ~22.3 miles** (230 kV rebuild)
 - **Charlottesville-Gordonsville: ~20 miles** (230 kV rebuild)
 - Process and dates:
 - Public urged to comment to Virginia **SCC**; Dooms case referenced as **PUR-2025-00189**.
 - **Comments due March 25, 2026**.
 - Siting/environment themes raised:
 - Requests to work **within existing ROW** where possible, use **shortest towers**, and apply **avoidance/mitigation**.
 - Concerns include cultural landscape impacts (including **Monticello viewshed**).

Policy & regulation

Asia (Japan / IEA)

- **Energy security policy coordination with explicit data centre/AI load context:** [Japan official attends IEA ministerial on energy security](#)

- Japan's METI Counselor participated in the **IEA Ministerial (Paris, 18-19 Feb 2026)**.
 - Key messages: strengthen **finance, supply chains, and workforce**; urge investment and government action to secure supply amid rising demand from **data centres and AI**.
 - Output noted: ministerial declaration on **critical minerals**.
 - Bilaterals referenced: discussions with Poland's Energy Minister on **nuclear/LNG cooperation**; meeting with IEA Executive Director **Fatih Birol**.
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Market / operations / workforce

North America (US)

- **Workforce development for data centres (trade pathway emphasis):** [DataBank Hosts Atlanta Career Event to Showcase Data Center Careers](#)
 - Event: hosted at a **DataBank Atlanta** data center with **Opportunity Runway, Method Experts, and PRT Staffing**.
 - Attendance: **nearly 20** young people.
 - Pay datapoints cited: **IBEW apprenticeships \$45-\$55/hour** vs a cited typical **four-year college starting salary ~ \$60,000**.

Global (AI infrastructure / vendor positioning)

- **GPU efficiency as a cost and delivery risk for AI workloads:** [Choosing the Right AI Infrastructure to Avoid Hidden Inefficiencies](#)
 - Massed Compute positions **NVIDIA-backed GPU infrastructure**, secure storage, flexible contracts and engineering support.
 - Claimed pain points driving higher OpEx / slower delivery: low **goodput**, fragmented stacks, and lack of visibility.
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Two-line close

Investment bottlenecks are increasingly shaped by grid build timing, community acceptance, and supply-chain resilience rather than real estate alone. The most actionable near-term signals are where governments, utilities, and operators are already formalising processes, partnerships, and workforce pipelines.