

# ALMIRA TOWNSHIP

## Ordinance #26-01 of 2026

AN ORDINANCE IMPOSING A MORATORIUM ON APPLICATIONS UNDER THE ALMIRA TOWNSHIP ZONING ORDINANCE FOR HYPERSCALE AND REGULAR SCALE DATA CENTERS

THE TOWNSHIP OF ALMIRA ORDAINS:

### Section 1. Legislative Findings.

The Almira Township Board hereby makes the following findings:

1. Under Chapter 5 of the Almira Township Master Plan, the Township has determined that its residents are one hundred percent (100%) dependent on groundwater for drinking and household use within the Township.
2. Research and technical information shows that hyperscale data centers can use up to five million gallons of water a day which is the equivalent of up to fifty thousand residents such that one such facility would use as much water in a single day as almost thirteen times the entire population of Almira Township which is three thousand eight hundred and seventy-three residents based on the 2020 census.
3. The Almira Township Master Plan mandates the protection of cold-water fisheries as critical biological resources which are reliant on groundwater within the Township.
4. The use of water within the Township for regular scale and hyperscale data centers will result in a large amount of water being heated as part of the cooling operations at any one or more data center being discharged back into the Township's ground water and/or surface waters resulting in a threat to cold water fish species such as Brown Trout and Cisco and which can also increase harmful algae blooms in lakes and streams as well as reduce dissolved oxygen in the Township's surface waters.
5. Almira Township's economy is heavily reliant on tourism based on the Township's unique natural features and beauty directly related to lakes and streams of high-water quality within the Township.
6. Thermal pollution related to data center cooling needs will directly impact the Township's lake dependent communities with possible water quality declines based on thermal pollution resulting in the possibility of declines in property values and the Township's tax base.

7. The Township Board is in the process of considering reasonable application procedures and other ordinance provisions concerning the possibility of the new land use of regular and hyperscale data centers.
8. The Planning Commission will begin the process of considering reasonable zoning regulations addressing data centers as new land uses within the Township in the near future.
9. The Township Board and Planning Commission contemplate that they will be able to complete their respective regulations by the enactment of zoning ordinance amendments within twelve (12) months after the effective date of this ordinance.
10. The Almira Township Board, therefore, desires to impose a moratorium on accepting applications under the current Zoning Ordinance for a period of six (6) months after the effective date of this ordinance, or until the effective date of amendments to the Zoning Ordinance providing reasonable zoning regulations addressing the new land use of data centers within the township, whichever occurs first.

## Section 2. Moratorium; Time Limit.

The Almira Township Board hereby imposes a moratorium on accepting applications under the Zoning Ordinance for the construction of regular and hyperscale data centers for a period of six (6) months after the effective date of this ordinance, or until the effective date of an amendment to the Township Zoning Ordinance which specifically addresses regular and hyperscale data centers under the Almira Township Zoning Ordinance, whichever occurs first.

If the Almira Township Board finds that the Planning Commission requires additional time to complete its study and recommendation of zoning amendments as directed in Section 3 of this Ordinance, the Board may, by resolution, extend the term of this moratorium for up to two (2) periods of three (3) months each. Any such extension shall also terminate upon the effective date of an amendment to the Township Zoning Ordinance which specifically addresses regular and hyperscale data centers, even if such amendment occurs prior to the expiration of the extension period.

## Section 3. Planning Commission Directive.

The Almira Township Planning Commission is hereby directed to begin the process of considering reasonable zoning regulations applicable to the new land use of regular and hyperscale data centers as soon as possible.

## Section 4. Severability.

If any section, provision or clause of this Ordinance or the application thereof to any person or circumstances is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect any remaining portions or application of this Ordinance which can be given effect without the invalid portion or application.

## Section 5. Effective Date.

This Ordinance shall become effective the 8<sup>th</sup> day following its publication in a newspaper of general circulation within the Township.

## Adoption

Ordinance #26-01 of 2026 was adopted on January 28, 2026, by the Almira Township Board as follows:

Motion by: Rineer

Seconded by: Therrien

Yeas: Clous, Rineer, Therrien, Florip, Roper

Nays: None

Absent: None

Tammy Clous, Clerk

Mark Roper, Supervisor

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## Certification

I certify that this is a true copy of Ordinance #26-01 of 2026 that was adopted at a special meeting of the Almira Township Board on January 28, 2026 and published in the Benzie County Record Patriot on February 5, 2026.

Tammy Clous, Clerk

Date

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