FracTracker Alliance

Homer City Energy Campus

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Aerial view of Homer City Generating Station, October 27, 2024. Source: Designism via Wikimedia[1].

Adapted from the ArcGIS StoryMap: https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/d89d9d0aa1e1482ebbcb6c0cfe668556

1. https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?search=homer+city+generating+station&title=Special%3AMediaSearch&type=image

Site Overview

The Homer City Energy Campus sits on a former coal power plant site, straddling Center and Blacklick Townships in Indiana County, Pennsylvania. For more than 50 years[2], the site was Homer City Generating Station, which was once Pennsylvania's largest coal-burning power plant, before an abrupt closure[3] mid-2023. Today, the 3,200 acre brownfield is being redeveloped into a fracked gas-powered electricity plant paired with a data center campus. At full capacity, the power block of the campus would generate up to 4,500 megawatts,[4] enough to power 3.75 million U.S. homes. It is one of the largest[5] capital investments in PA's history. The site borders Two Lick Creek and Blacklick Creek, including the Two Lick Reservoir, originally built[6] to cool the former coal plant's operations. As it stands, much of the land still carries history of prior industrial use, shaping both the site's environmental risk profile and its future forward.

Quick Stats

- **Location:** 3,200 acres at the site of the former Homer City Generating Station coal plant
- **Power plant energy capacity:** 4,500 MW (4.5 GW)
- **Power source:** fracked gas
- **Data center tenant:** potentially Amazon Web Services
- **Status:** power plant is under construction

2. https://triblive.com/local/westmoreland/judge-halts-demolition-of-homer-city-plant-over-contract-dispute/
3. https://www.wesanews.org/environment-energy/2024-07-15/homer-city-pa-coal-plant-closes
4. https://www.indianagazette.com/local_news/hess-scheduled-to-testify-at-center-for-rural-pa-hearing-on-data-centers/article_b9a63dbe-fc4a-4a1c-9504-7e278c09664a.html
5. https://www.homercityredevelopment.com/post/former-homer-city-pa-coal-plant-officially-reopens-as-state-of-the-art-natural-gas-facility
6. https://capitalandmain.com/will-an-old-pennsylvania-coal-town-get-a-reboot-from-ai

Transition from Homer City Generating Station

March 20, 2025	**Demolition Plan Approved** DEP sets strict exclusion zone (3,000 ft for the public, 2,000 ft for essential employees) with no public or press viewing allowed on-site.
March 22, 2025	**Smokestack Implosion** One of three stacks, reportedly among the tallest in the country, only partially collapses.
April 2, 2025	**Redevelopment Announced** HCR, Kiewit, Knighthead, And GE Vernova jointly announce a new gas-fired power plant.
July 8, 2025	**Demolition Allowed to Resume** An Allegheny County judge sides with Frontier Industrial Corp. in a contract dispute that had temporarily paused development.
July 15, 2025	**First Open House** The event draws a 654-person capacity crowd at Toretti Auditorium.

Homer City Generating Station was at one point ranked 6th[7] in the nation for sulfur dioxide emissions. The 2GW plant was acquired[8] by Knighthead Capital Management out of a 2017 bankruptcy. Only 90 days' notice was given to the 120-plus workers at the plant, with no union outreach and few practical relocation options. At this point, within its final year, the plant had been running at just 17-25% capacity[9], kept alive by capacity market payments rather than electric demand. For the surrounding community, this closure meant immediate consequences. The local school district lost roughly 12%[10] of its real-estate tax revenue overnight, cited as the equivalent of five teachers' salaries.

7. https://www.publicsource.org/homer-city-power-plant-energy-generation-coal-gas-ai-pennsylvania/
8. https://capitalandmain.com/private-equity-kept-aging-pennsylvania-coal-plant-open-then-closed-it-with-no-plan-for-workers-and-community
9. https://www.alleghenyfront.org/homer-city-pennsylvania-gas-plant-data-center-ai/
10. https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2024/06/24/coal-pennsylvania-transition-trump-biden/



Bridge across Two Lick Creek. Source: FracTracker Alliance.
Static capture of an interactive map; explore the live version in the online StoryMap.

It was then in September of 2024 that Homer City Redevelopment began acquiring farmland along Power Plant Road as a demolition buffer zone,[11] moving to close off a portion of the road entirely. Soon, it was the only access point for eight residences sitting along a peninsula of Two Lick Creek, bounded on three sides, behind a gated, guarded checkpoint. This raised flooding-evacuation concerns, given that the same bridge had already been cut off once before, during flooding earlier that year. Township officials confirmed HCR had agreed to allow emergency access through the gate during flooding, with Robin Gorman later specifying[12] that guards would monitor conditions continuously and could open gates for necessary evacuations.

That same month, Gorman, a sitting Republican county commissioner and part of the county's Republican majority bloc since 2019, announced[13] she was resigning to become HCR's Vice President. During this announcement, she referenced that the company retained PJM grid interconnection rights, or the queue position that lets a power project connect to the regional grid.

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11. https://www.indianagazette.com/news/residents-raise-concerns-over-homer-city-power-plant-property/article_4561298a-6a63-11ef-b019-f3fa48e5fded.html
12. https://www.indianagazette.com/news/gorman-plans-for-generating-plant-to-include-natural-gas-production/article_f9a746ac-b29f-11ef-ac9e-6f6990b3d829.html
13. https://www.indianagazette.com/news/commissioner-gorman-resigning-to-join-homer-city-redevelopment-llc/article_a9b5e3a2-7b58-11ef-82bf-63ef189848d4.html

Concerning the demolition, the DEP approval cited[14] "some of the most comprehensive blasting regulations in the country," according to Gorman. The stack that failed to fully collapse[15] rested at roughly 775 feet. HCR called the outcome "not unexpected," and remediated it within 48 hours. Tremors from the demolition were felt as far as downtown Indiana and Jimmy Stewart Airport. The cooling towers came down twenty minutes later. For several months in mid-2025, HCR was legally barred[16] from further demolition and scrap work, after an Allegheny County judge sided with Frontier Industrial Corp. in a contract dispute. Frontier's contract had included the original right to implode the plant's structures, and Frontier had separately contracted with Kovalchick Corp. to purchase the resulting scrap. The injunction required Frontier to post a $50,000 bond and barred HCR from allowing anyone but Frontier to do site demolition work. A judge ruled in favor of Frontier[17] and the demolition was allowed to resume as of July 8, 2025. At a press briefing during this period, HCR's CEO Corey Hessen declined to comment on the litigation, citing company policy on ongoing legal matters.

The redevelopment itself was announced April 2, 2025; just 11 days[18] after the towers came down. HCR, Kiewit, Knighthead, and GE Vernova made the announcement jointly, claiming[19] 3,500 construction jobs at peak and 60-65% reduction in greenhouse gas emission per megawatt-hour compared to the old coal plant. It is also something to note, the air permit that would later govern the project's actual emissions is technically held by Homer City Generation LP (HCG). This is a legal entity separate from HCR LLC, though both share the same CEO, Corey Hessen. By July 2025, public interest in the project was already substantial. The first open house drew a 654-person capacity crowd at Toretti Auditorium, with some attendees watching from the lobby. On the panel, DEP's Northwestern Regional Director, Erin Wells, described[20] environmental oversight as "a balancing act every day," and said HCR was "following the rules and regulations to a T."

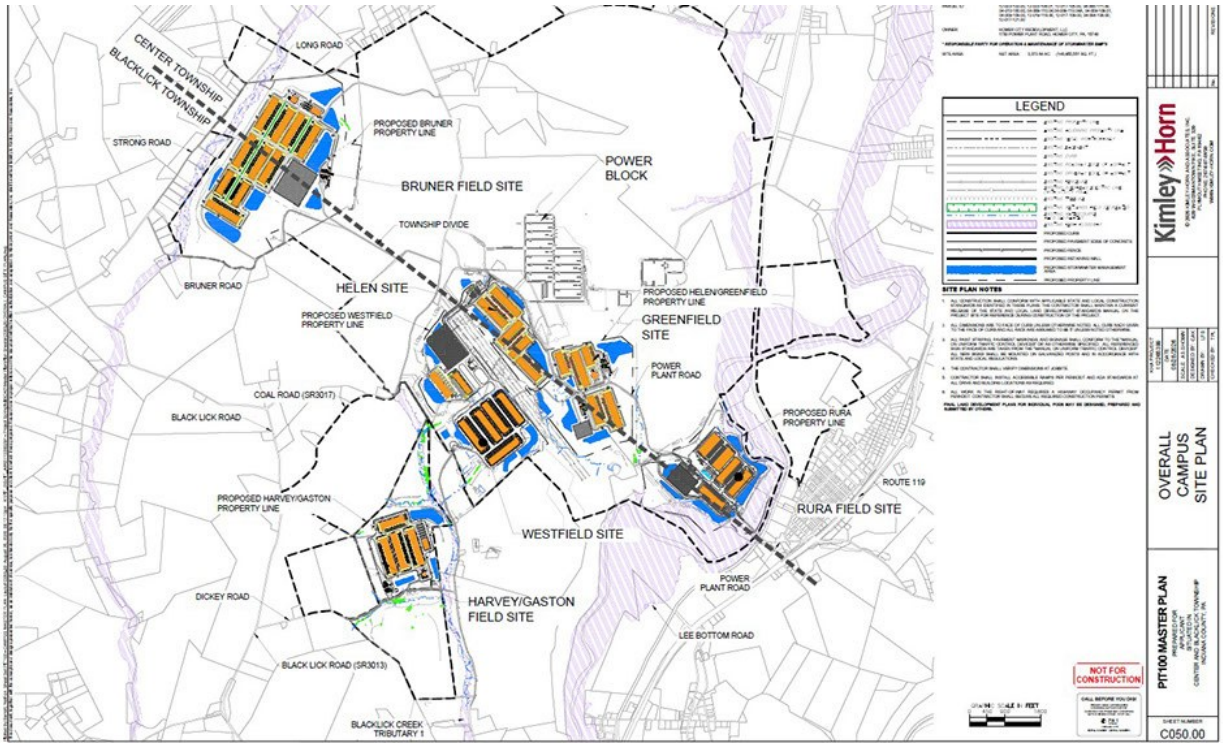
Homer City Redevelopment

Homer City Redevelopment (HCR)[21], the developer on record, is financially backed by Knighthead Capital Management, a New York City-based private equity firm which already held[22] equity position in the site for nearly eight years before the 2025

14. https://www.indianagazette.com/local_news/weather-permitting-homer-citys-stacks-will-be-demolished-saturday-morning/article_2589e5c3-8306-441c-a235-807e744b6945.html
15. https://www.indianagazette.com/local_news/homer-city-power-plant-smokestacks-imploded-marking-the-end-of-an-era/article_07022e5a-30a9-4357-b1e2-7c283c2bb7a6.html
16. https://triblive.com/local/westmoreland/judge-halts-demolition-of-homer-city-plant-over-contract-dispute/
17. https://www.u92radio.com/2025/07/08/judge-rules-in-favor-of-demolition-company-in-homer-city-plant-dispute/
18. https://www.publicsource.org/coal-gas-transition-homer-city-pennsylvania/
19. https://www.indianagazette.com/business/old-homer-city-site-to-host-new-10-billion-project-expected-to-hire-thousands/article_7a3e7bfc-8c75-4560-8d39-d8ca7284ddc1.html
20. https://www.indianagazette.com/local_news/public-jams-toretti-auditorium-for-first-homer-city-open-house/article_dd3d77d6-8455-4199-a15e-ed8310be6da7.html

redevelopment was announced. Kiewit Power Constructors Co., one of the largest construction firms in North America, is building the gas power plant. GE Vernova is supplying the seven main gas turbines to power the site. The power plant plans to supply[23] power to thousands of homes on the local grid, and is permitted and under construction. A recent application from Amazon Web Services confirms that a portion of the power generated onsite will serve a large data center.

All Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) permits and related documents can be found here[24].



Developer schematic of the proposed Homer City Energy Campus. Source: Indiana County Office of Planning & Development[25]

Property Description

The power plant campus is organized into three active construction zones.

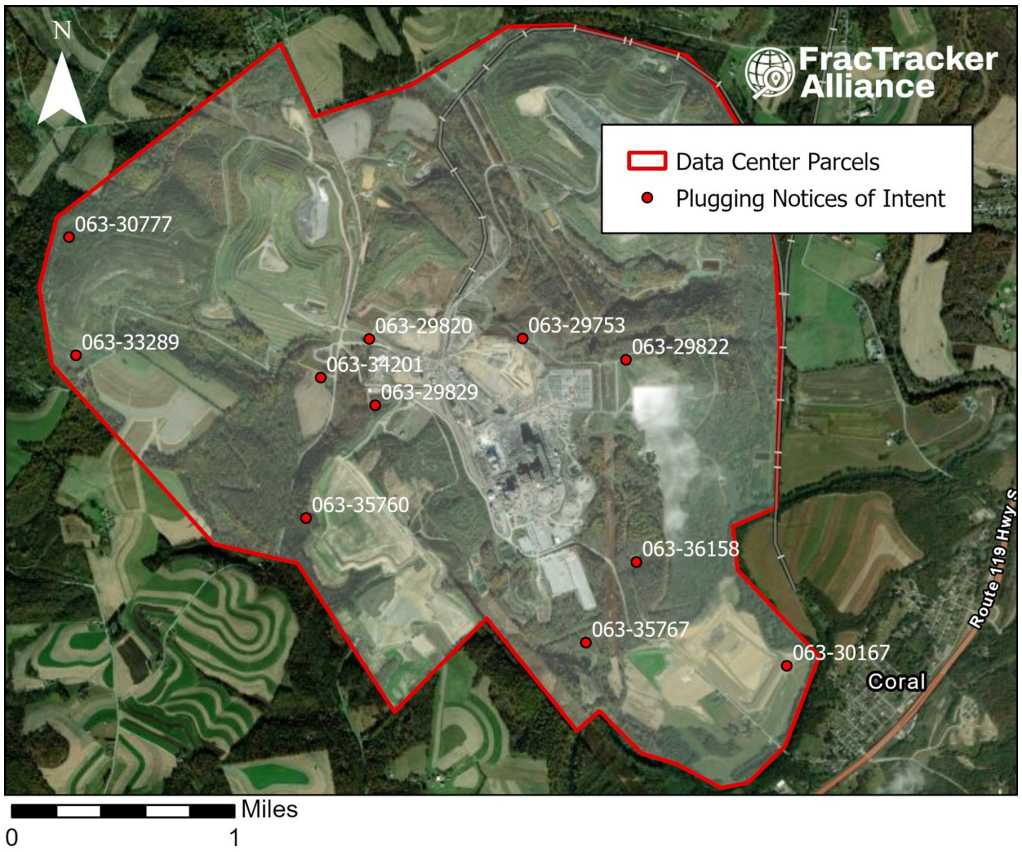
- The **Power Block** houses the main generating station, turbines, and switchyard.
- **West Field**, along the Center-Blacklick township line, is planned for four data center buildings totaling 200 MW of IT capacity.
- **Rura Field**, borders Two Lick Creek directly, and is planned for two data center buildings totaling 144 MW of IT Capacity.

21. https://www.homercityredevelopment.com/post/press-release-homer-city-redevelopment-announces-agreement-in-principle-for-eqt-corporation-to-supp
23. https://www.homercityredevelopment.com/project-overview
24. https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dep/dep-regions/northwest-regional-office/homer-city-generation-redevelopment
25. https://icopd.org/



Homer City's three active development zones, left to right: Power Block, West Field, and Rura Field. Source: DEP PCSM Plan Drawings (PAC320065[26], PAC320066[27]) and WQM Amendment Application - Outfall 027 Modification[28].

Eleven conventional wells existed on the property, many of which were plugged in 2025.



Wells with Notices of Intent to Plug on the Homer City Redevelopment property. Source: FracTracker Alliance and PA DEP[29].

26. https://files.dep.state.pa.us/RegionalResources/NWRO/NWROPortalFiles/Homer-City/Waterways%20Engineering%20and%20Wetlands/PAC320065/PAC320065%20PCSM%20Plan%20Drawings.pdf
27. https://files.dep.state.pa.us/RegionalResources/NWRO/NWROPortalFiles/Homer-City/Waterways%20Engineering%20and%20Wetlands/PAC320066/PAC320066%20PCSM%20Plan%20Drawings.pdf
28. https://files.dep.state.pa.us/RegionalResources/NWRO/NWROPortalFiles/Homer-City/CleanWater/NPDES%20Amendment%20Application%20-%20Outfall%20027%20Modification.pdf
29. https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dep/dep-regions/northwest-regional-office/homer-city-generation-redevelopment



FEMA Zone AE, Zone A, and Regulatory Floodway designations at Rura Field, where two of the campus's planned data center buildings sit within the mapped floodway. Source: FEMA National Flood Hazard Layer (NFHL)[30].

Static capture of an interactive map; explore the live version in the online StoryMap.

Flood risks are concentrated at two distinct points on the Homer City site, both tied to Two Lick Creek and its floodplain. The first is Power Plant Road, where a gated access point sits behind a flood-prone bridge. The second is at Rura Field, one of the campus's three active development zones, where two planned data center buildings sit on the "North Pad" within a mapped FEMA floodway. Defined as a "regulatory floodway," this is considered the strictest of FEMA's flood designations[31]. It means this area is essentially the part of the floodplain that must stay clear for floodwater to pass through, without flooding land elsewhere. Rura Field also carries mapped Zone AE and Zone A designations, and a 50-foot buffer along the stream is listed on the PCSM (Post-Construction Stormwater Management) Plan[32] filed with PA DEP, given its direct border with Two Lick.

30. https://www.fema.gov/flood-maps/national-flood-hazard-layer
31. https://www.fema.gov/about/glossary/floodway
32. https://files.dep.state.pa.us/RegionalResources/NWRO/NWROPortalFiles/Homer-City/Waterways%20Engineering%20and%20Wetlands/PAC320065/PAC320065%20PCSM%20Plan%20Drawings.pdf

Air Quality Concerns

Sept 17, 2025	**Air Quality Plan Approval Public Hearing** The hearing draws majority opposition. DEP gives preliminary approval to the air quality plan approval the same day.
Nov 18, 2025	**Final Air Quality Plan Approval** See the full document here[33].
Dec 17, 2025	**EHB Appeal Filed** Clean Air Council, PennFuture, and Sierra Club file a 12-claim appeal[34].
Dec 18, 2025	**Youth-Led Legal EHB Appeal Filed** Filed by Our Children's Trust[35], 15 PA residents (ages 2 months to 21 years) invoke the state's Environmental Rights Amendment, asking the EHB to vacate the permit and block construction. At the time of writing, this case was in the discovery phase[36].
Feb 26, 2026	**Final Air Quality Title V Approval** Technically a renewal of the 2004 issued permit for Homer City Generating Station. This document mainly establishes the transition from coal to gas electric generation, removes sources no longer in operation, and establishing emission reduction credits. See the full document here[37].

Plan Approval 32-00457A

On September 17, 2025, DEP held a 2.5-hour public hearing[38] at the Kovalchick Convention and Athletic Complex in Indiana, PA. Speakers opposed the draft permit, raising concerns over particulate matter, nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, and formaldehyde. The DEP's own framing at the time stated "we won't let them take any shortcuts on evaluating the air pollution controls," while also acknowledging the plant would add particulate matter to the air, accompanied with both short and long-term risk. The DEP cited a cancer figure of 5 in 10 million, assuming continuous 24-hour exposure over 70 years. When a resident pressed repeatedly on exactly what particulate matter would be tested for and when, the DEP representatives could not

33. https://files.dep.state.pa.us/RegionalResources/NWRO/NWROPortalFiles/Homer-City/Air/Final-AQ-Plan-Approval/FINAL%20PLAN%20APPROVAL%2032-00457A.pdf
34. https://cleanair.org/wp-content/uploads/Notice-of-Appeal__Plan-Approval-No.-32-00457A.pdf
35. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/655a2d016eb74e41dc292ed5/t/6944581e9fad1452f1c2f278/1766086686162/Homer+City+NOA_EHB+Case+No.+2025136.pdf
36. https://www.ourchildrenstrust.org/pennsylvania
37. https://files.dep.state.pa.us/RegionalResources/NWRO/NWROPortalFiles/Homer-City/Air/Final-AQ-Title-V/Homer%20City%20TVOP%20Renewal%20TVOP%2032-00055%20260226.pdf
38. https://triblive.com/local/westmoreland/dep-faces-concerns-about-air-pollution-from-proposed-homer-city-gas-plant/

give a clear answer. The resident presented a natural follow-up: "If you don't know what you're looking for, how can you test for it?" The DEP's stack-testing requirement, once finalized, called for third-party monitoring only once every two years.

The comment period formally closed September 29, 2025. DEP issued[39] the final air quality Plan Approval on November 18, 2025, authorizing up to 17.5 million tons of CO_2-equivalent emissions per year. HCR's framing[40] describes this as a 35-40% reduction compared to the old coal plant, but that figure is calculated relative per megawatt-hour, not in absolute terms, since this new plant is designed to run 24/7 at more than double the old plant's capacity. Clean Air Council argued that total emissions will be higher as a result, earning its place as the highest-emitting power plant in PA by wide margins.

Legal Appeals

To follow this, Clean Air Council[41], PennFuture[42], and Sierra Club filed an EHB appeal[43] in December 2025, and among its 12 claims, three stand out:

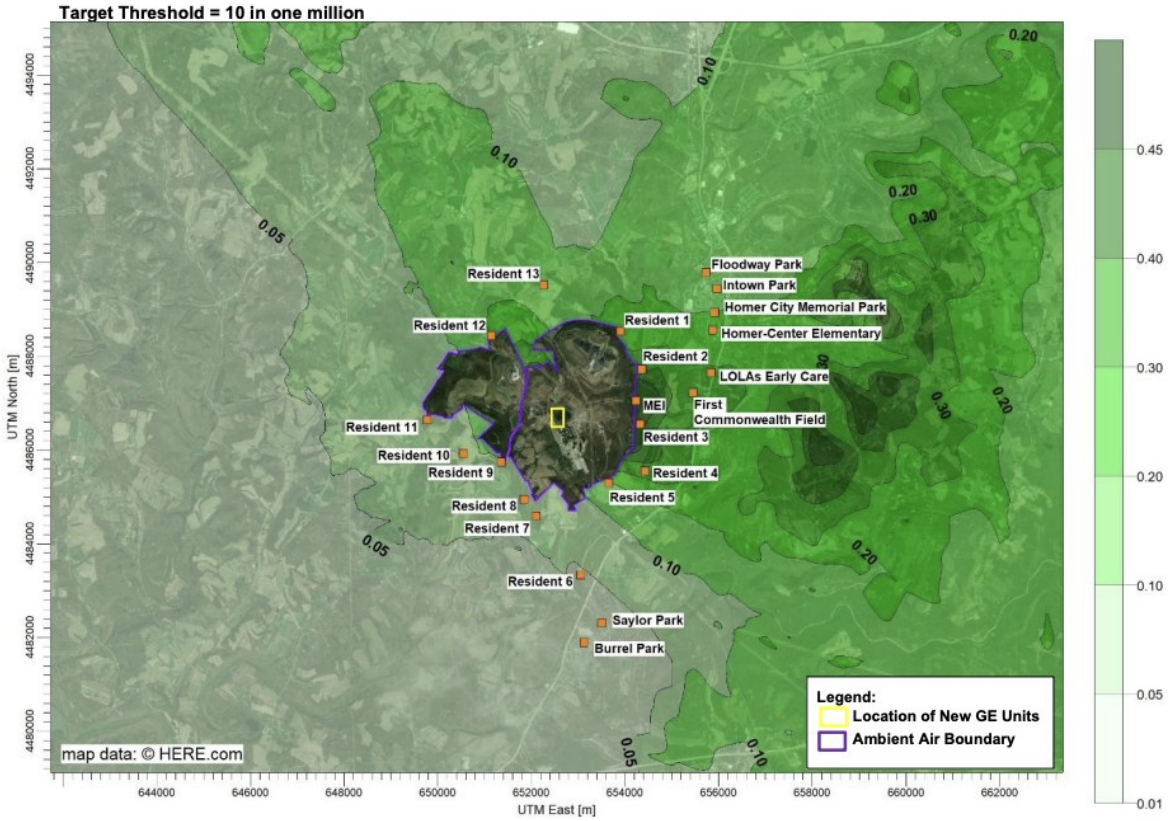
1. DEP failed to follow its own Environmental Justice Public Participation Policy, as the site sits within half a mile of a recognized EJ community
2. The DEP failed to properly review HCR's methodology for setting emission limits, which contained errors
3. The DEP failed to conduct a review consistent with PA's constitutional guarantee of clean air and water under Article I, Section 27

Unlike the first appeal, which sought corrections of specific technical deficiencies, the youth-led appeal[44] filed by Our Children's Trust[45] claimed[46] DEP had relied on "erroneous" pollution data to justify excessive emission limits, and that the permit was issued despite 571 public comments in opposition. HCR declined to comment on the appeal. It was during this time that DEP noted the permit only covers power generation, and that HCR had not, at the time, confirmed data center use or partnership for the site.

39. https://www.indianagazette.com/news/iup_news/hcr-dep-approved-air-quality-permit-for-center-township-project/article_3ea3fc2b-b1b9-4862-b2a4-2d89f25ca0dd.html
40. https://capitalandmain.com/will-an-old-pennsylvania-coal-town-get-a-reboot-from-ai
41. https://cleanair.org/homer-city-air-permit-appeal/
42. https://pennfuture.org/Policy-Brief/Clean-Air-Council-PennFuture-and-Sierra-Club-Appeal-Air-Pollution-Permit-for-Nations-Largest-Proposed-Fracked-Gas-Power-Plant-for-Homer-City-Data-Center
43. https://cleanair.org/wp-content/uploads/Notice-of-Appeal__Plan-Approval-No.-32-00457A.pdf
44. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/655a2d016eb74e41dc292ed5/t/6944581e9fad1452f1c2f278/1766086686162/Homer+City+NOA_EHB+Case+No.+2025136.pdf
45. https://www.ourchildrenstrust.org/pennsylvania
46. https://www.indianagazette.com/news/environmental-advocates-pa-youths-appeal-permit-for-homer-city-energy-campus/article_7a34ee2f-e81a-41e0-9138-a25f5cbd9de4.html

Emissions Estimates

The facility's full emissions profile, per DEP's comment response document,[47] includes particulate matter at 843.21 tons per year, nitrogen oxides at 1,142.8, carbon monoxide at 1,104.8, and volatile organic compounds at 332.16. It also expects roughly 1,000 tons per year of ammonia, used to control NOx through selective catalytic reduction. Ammonia reacts in the atmosphere to form fine particulate matter (PM2.5), meaning a chemical added to control one pollutant becomes a source of another. Formaldehyde, a known carcinogen, is the highest-volume hazardous air pollutant permitted, at roughly 32 tons per year.



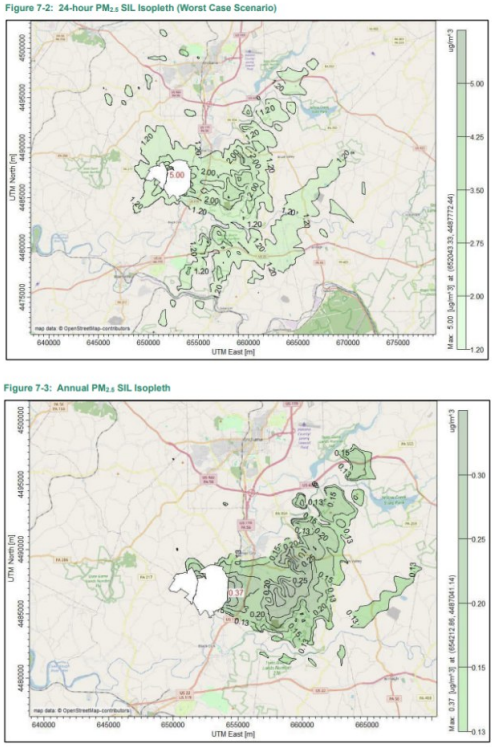
Modeled total cancer risk isopleths (per 1,000,000 people) for sensitive receptor populations: residences, daycares, schools, nursing homes, and hospitals, near the Homer City facility. Source: Inhalation Risk Assessment Report, Homer City, Aug. 1, 2025, pg 24.[48]

The DEP's dispersion modeling specifically assumed continuous exposure at named sensitive locations: residences, daycare facilities, schools, nursing homes, and hospitals, identifying the largest contributors to modeled cancer risk: formaldehyde, cadmium, hexavalent chromium, arsenic, and benzo(a)pyrene. As a formal response to

47. https://files.dep.state.pa.us/RegionalResources/NWRO/NWROPortalFiles/Homer-City/Air/Final-AQ-Plan-Approval/Final%20Comment%20Response%20Document%2020251118.pdf
48. https://files.dep.state.pa.us/RegionalResources/NWRO/NWROPortalFiles/Homer-City/Air/Homer-City-Risk-Assessment-Report_1-Aug25-final.pdf

public comment, DEP explained why several of these pollutants received particular scrutiny: they are classified as "mutagenic carcinogens" because children are more susceptible to cancer and tumor development if exposed.

The plant's seven stacks in particular stand 190 feet tall, cited as shorter than the old coal plant's, paired with lower-temperature flue gas. DEP's characterization and written response to public comments confirmed this makes the facility "more susceptible to downwash." This means that air around the building drags the emissions back down into the air people breathe instead of dispersing it higher. Therefore, less dispersion will disproportionately impact communities between Chestnut and Laurel Ridges. In response to public pressure, DEP did tighten stack testing from a proposed 5-year interval to every 2 years for particulate matter, VOCs, formaldehyde, and ammonia.



PM2.5 concentration isopleths near the Homer City facility: 24-hour worst-case scenario (max 5.00 µg/m³, top) and annual average (max 0.37 µg/m³, bottom). Source: PSD Application, Homer City, Aug. 4, 2025, pg 126-127.[49]

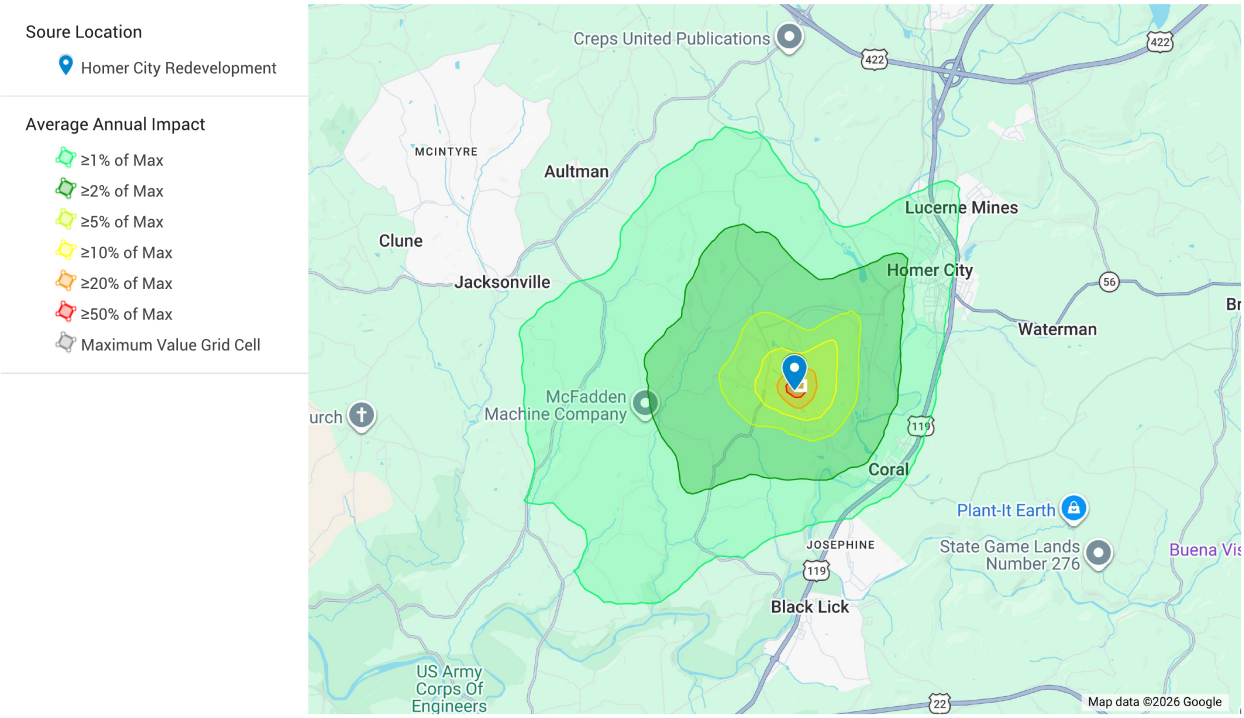
These modeled results give the abstract emissions figures physical shape. The PM2.5 isopleths[50], both the annual average (max 0.37 µg/m³) and the 24-hour worst-case scenario (max 5.00 µg/m³), trace concentration outward from the plant site, showing where elevated particulate matter is expected to land, not just how much is emitted from the source. Emissions are more than 13 times higher in the worst-case scenario

49. https://files.dep.state.pa.us/RegionalResources/NWRO/NWROPortalFiles/Homer-City/Air/PSD-Application-HomerCity-8-4-2025.pdf
50. https://files.dep.state.pa.us/RegionalResources/NWRO/NWROPortalFiles/Homer-City/Air/PSD-Application-HomerCity-8-4-2025.pdf

than the annual average, illustrating the difference between what residents nearby experience most days and what they may be exposed to during the plant's highest-emitting hours.

These isopleths are worth reading alongside the HYSPLIT dispersion model produced by the Environmental Health Project[51] (EHP). The model shows relative average annual concentration of primary air pollutants, uses meteorological data covering May 1, 2023 to May 1, 2024, and assumes constant emissions uniformly distributed 60-80 meters above ground level. EHP notes[52] that their map shows relative distribution only, not absolute pollutant concentration, and tracks primary emissions only. Thus, this excludes specific pollutants or secondary atmospheric chemistry forming compounds such as PM2.5 from ammonia after release. In practice, both sets of maps should be read as showing where pollution generally travels and which areas are most affected.

Homer City Dispersion



This map shows the modeled relative average annual concentration of primary air pollutants from the proposed Homer City Redevelopment site. Source: Environmental Health Project.[53]

Static export of an interactive Google My Maps map; explore the live version via the source link.

51. https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?usp=sharing&mid=1c-gtTOGWjFy1kaRwq98BmGzzIOaC5Nw
52. https://www.environmentalhealthproject.org/_files/ugd/a9ce25_c8fb5d4f381f448ea614615f5e38734e.pdf
53. https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1c-gtTOGWjFy1kaRwq98BmGzzIOaC5Nw&ll=40.52318912132301%2C-79.215445000000002&z=13

Separately, when asked why renewable alternatives were not pursued, DEP's comparison found an equivalent solar installation would require around 13,380 acres against this project's approximately 200-acre footprint. Carbon capture technology was evaluated and ruled out as technically infeasible for this specific turbine configuration.

Water Quality Concerns

May 1, 2026	**NPDES Permit Amendment and Water Quality Management Amendment Submitted** National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit amendment[54] was submitted, updating terms from the former Homer City Generating Station. A Water Quality Management (WQM) permit amendment - Outfall 027[55] was also submitted.
May 12, 2026	**DEP Pipeline NPDES Hearing** There were 25 commenters who spoke for 5 minutes. A rally occurred beforehand at IRMC Park.
June 18, 2026	**Pipeline NPDES Permit Approval** NPDES Permit (PAD320011)[56] was issued under 5-year term.
July 11, 2026	**NPDES Permit Amendment (second draft) Submitted** View the application[57] and fact sheet[58].

Outfall 027: Permit PA0005037

The power plant's cooling system operates as a closed-cycle recirculating system, such that water is reused through the cooling towers many times before being discharged once mineral buildup degrades the usefulness. This is meaningfully different compared to a true closed-loop system, which would produce no ongoing discharge at all. The confusion between the two has been a source of misunderstanding. It is important to note that if a system were closed-loop, discharge volume would decrease over time, instead of rising proportionally with use as expected here.

54. https://files.dep.state.pa.us/RegionalResources/NWRO/NWROPortalFiles/Homer-City/CleanWater/NPDES%20Renewal%20Application.pdf
55. https://files.dep.state.pa.us/RegionalResources/NWRO/NWROPortalFiles/Homer-City/CleanWater/WQM%20Amendment%20Application%20-%20Outfall%20027%20Modification.pdf
56. https://files.dep.state.pa.us/RegionalResources/NWRO/NWROPortalFiles/Homer-City/Waterways%20Engineering%20and%20Wetlands/PAD320011/Permit/PAD320011_Permit.pdf
57. https://files.dep.state.pa.us/RegionalResources/NWRO/NWROPortalFiles/Homer-City/CleanWater/NPDES%20Permit%20Amendment%20-%20Second%20Draft%20Permit.pdf
58. https://files.dep.state.pa.us/RegionalResources/NWRO/NWROPortalFiles/Homer-City/CleanWater/NPDES%20Permit%20Amendment%20-%20Fact%20Sheet%20Addendum.pdf



Outfall 027 (40.4819, -79.1931), discharging cooling tower blowdown to Blacklick Creek. Source: NPDES Amendment Application - Outfall 027 Modification, PA0005037 A-2, pg 127[59].

The discharge, up to 6.84 million gallons per day[60] at temperatures as high as 110° F, flows to Blacklick Creek through Outfall 027. Blacklick Creek is a designated Trout Stocking Fishery, and it is already impaired for metals contamination from historic acid mine drainage. It has been under a finalized federal cleanup plan (TMDL) since 2010. The creek's low-flow rate is 34 cubic feet per second. A discharge at this scale could represent substantial shares of total flow during hot, dry summer conditions, when dilution is weakest and any thermal or chemical impact can be most concentrated.

As per the DEP Permit Factsheet[61] for the amendment of the site's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit, the following table reflects projected discharge concentrations. They include chemical additives that go into the power plant's cooling system: a biocide, ChemChlor 160 (a sodium hypochlorite similar, used to prevent biological growth) and two scale inhibitors. It is stated that a de-chlorination step, adding sodium bisulfite before discharge, should result in no measurable chlorine reaching the creek at all. Nine metals were evaluated against the DEP's calculated safety thresholds for the stream. Four metals, including aluminum, copper, zinc, and

59. https://files.dep.state.pa.us/RegionalResources/NWRO/NWROPortalFiles/Homer-City/CleanWater/NPDES%20Amendment%20Application%20-%20Outfall%20027%20Modification.pdf
60. https://files.dep.state.pa.us/RegionalResources/NWRO/NWROPortalFiles/Homer-City/CleanWater/NPDES%20Permit%20Amendment%20-%20Fact%20Sheet%20Addendum.pdf
61. https://files.dep.state.pa.us/RegionalResources/NWRO/NWROPortalFiles/Homer-City/CleanWater/NPDES%20Permit%20Amendment%20-%20Fact%20Sheet%20Addendum.pdf

hexavalent chromium, came close enough to trigger formal permit limits. One, antimony, exceeded the safe threshold, with projected discharge at roughly double the concentration that the DEP's modeling considers protective of the stream.

Parameter (Total)	Discharge Concentration	Safety Threshold	Basis	Status
Antimony	45.8 µg/l	22.7 µg/l (WQBEL)	Stream protection	Exceeds threshold (2x)
Zinc	457.9 µg/l	770 µg/l (WQBEL)	Stream protection	Under, limit added (≥50% of WQBEL)
Copper	101.8 µg/l	110 µg/l (WQBEL)	Stream protection	Under, limit added (≥50% of WQBEL)
Hexavalent Chromium	<15.3 µg/l	16.3 µg/l (WQBEL)	Stream protection	Under, limit added (≥50% of WQBEL)
Aluminum	508.8 µg/l	750 µg/l (WQBEL)	Stream protection	Under, limit added (≥50% of WQBEL)
TDS	2,800 mg/l	500 mg/l (PWS criteria)	Drinking water	Exceeds threshold (5.6x)
Sulfate	1,190 mg/l	250 mg/l (PWS criteria)	Drinking water	Exceeds threshold (4.8x)
Chloride	540.9 mg/l	250 mg/l (PWS criteria)	Drinking water	Exceeds threshold (2.2x)

Discharge concentrations from Outfall 027 compared against DEP's calculated safety thresholds. Metals are compared against Water Quality-Based Effluent Limits (WQBELs) calculated specifically for Blacklick Creek; total dissolved solids (TDS), sulfate, and chloride are compared against Public Water Supply (PWS) protection criteria. Source: NPDES Permit Fact Sheet, PA0005037 A-2, pg 6-7.[62]

The nearest downstream public water intake, Buffalo Township Municipal Authority's Freeport Plant, sits 55 miles away, far enough that the DEP did not treat it as an immediate drinking-water threat. However, by the DEP's analysis, three separate parameters tied to protecting that water supply (total dissolved solids, chloride, and sulfate) are discharged at concentrations several times higher than safety criteria. Thus, new monitoring for chloride and sulfate was added specifically because of this finding.

What warmer water does to the creek is a separate concern. Warmer water holds less dissolved oxygen[63], as fish and various aquatic organisms' metabolic demand for oxygen increase. This proves to be a documented mechanism behind fish die-off events elsewhere, and one that can shift a fishery toward warm-tolerant, less diverse species over time. The antimony exceedance coincides with these same warm-water conditions. Causal analysis from the EPA[64] notes that warmer waters tend to increase dissolution of

62. https://files.dep.state.pa.us/RegionalResources/NWRO/NWROPortalFiles/Homer-City/CleanWater/NPDES%20Permit%20Amendment%20-%20Fact%20Sheet%20Addendum.pdf
63. https://www.nps.gov/voya/learn/managing-coldwater-fish-populations-in-a-changing-climate.htm
64. https://www.epa.gov/caddis/temperature

compounds like metals, meaning that the same discharge concentration may become more abundant as temperatures rise. This means that there will be two sources of stress on the creek: chemical and thermal.

Blacklick Creek Recreation

It is important to highlight that Blacklick Creek, the ultimate receiving water for Outfall 027, supports recreational use[65] across its watershed. The Ghost Town Trail, 48-mile rails-to-trails path runs from the village of Blacklick to Ebensburg, parallel to the creek and its South Branch. The 10-mile Hoodlebug Trail connects Indiana to Blairsville. Multiple sections of the watershed are stocked trout streams, with local trout clubs maintaining their own stocking efforts along the South Branch. And though water quality was said to have improved enough in recent years to support this, Blacklick Creek Watershed Association still recommends catch-and-release fishing, since the watershed remains in recovery.

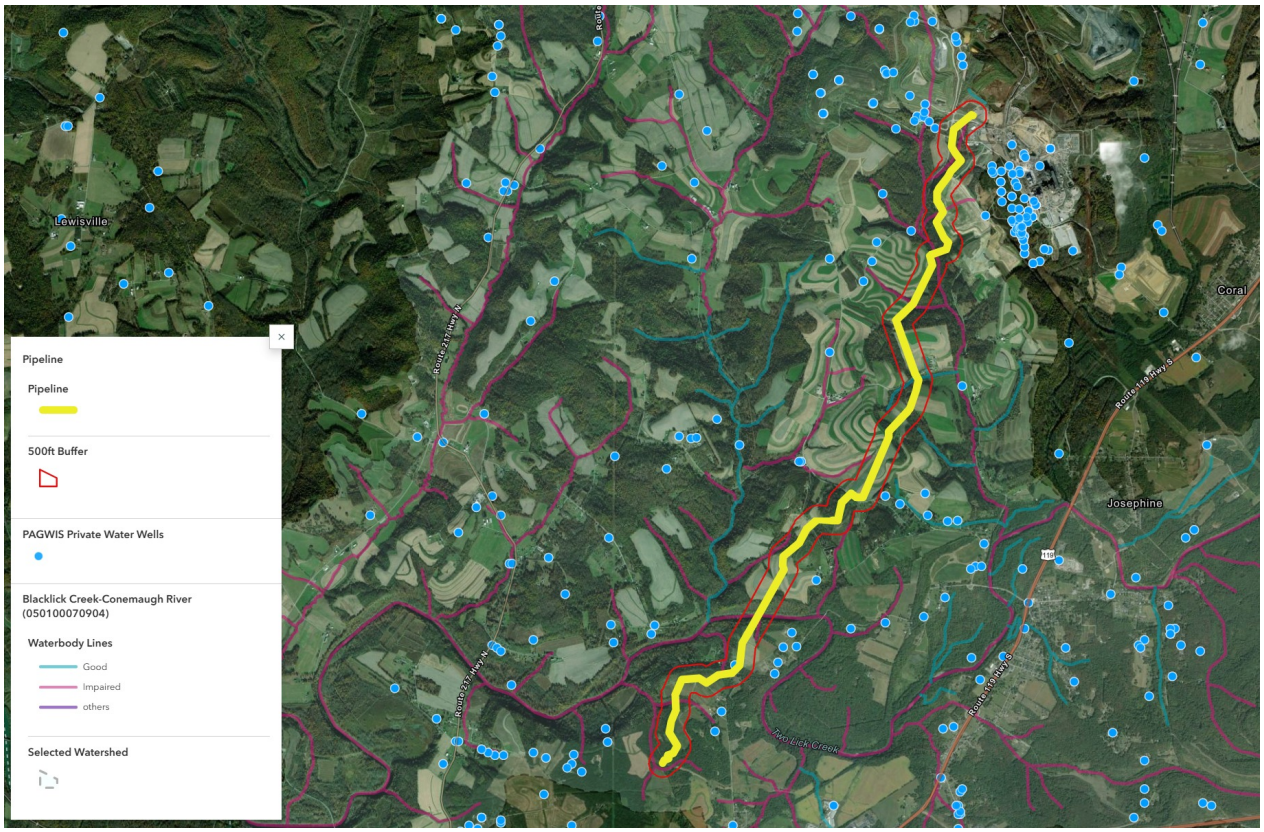
Pipeline

The volume of public comments on the project's pipeline[66] pushed the DEP to schedule a formal hearing. HCR's natural gas supply depends on a 5.8-mile, 30-inch steel pipeline connecting a metering and regulation interconnect facility in Burrell Township to the plant site in Center Township. Along this route, the pipeline crosses Falling Run Road, McConnell Road, Blacklick Road, Dickey Road, and Power Plant Road, passing through Burrell, Blacklick, and Center Townships. An additional 0.4 miles of overhead power lines connect a separate power tap site on Country Lane to the same interconnect facility. It is on the pipeline's far end that gas reaches the site through two interstate transmission lines[67]: Texas Eastern (TETCO) and Eastern Gas Transmission and Storage (EGTS), to give HCR two independent supply routes rather than a dependence on a single line. HCR received a $5 million grant[68] from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to design and construct the pipeline.

On May 12, 2026[69], roughly 25 commenters spoke for five minutes each at a hearing that DEP narrowly scoped to the pipeline's stormwater discharge; though, many speakers used the time to raise concerns about the power plant more broadly regardless. A rally[70] organized by Concerned Residents of Western PA (CROW)[71] and Indiana County Common Good[72] preceded the hearing at IRMC Park. At

65. https://blacklickcreekwatershed.org/bcwa-history/recreation/
66. https://files.dep.state.pa.us/RegionalResources/NWRO/NWROPortalFiles/Homer-City/Waterways%20Engineering%20and%20Wetlands/PAD320011/Review/HCPP%20Public%20Hearing%20Factsheet.pdf
67. https://www.indianagazette.com/local_news/hess-scheduled-to-testify-at-center-for-rural-pa-hearing-on-data-centers/article_b9a63dbe-fc4a-4a1c-9504-7e278c09664a.html
68. https://triblive.com/local/regional/developers-offer-details-on-planned-natural-gas-fueled-power-generating-plant-in-homer-city/
69. https://files.dep.state.pa.us/RegionalResources/NWRO/NWROPortalFiles/Homer-City/Waterways%20Engineering%20and%20Wetlands/PAD320011/Review/Oral%20Testimony%20Transcripts.pdf
70. https://www.indianagazette.com/news/power-plant-opponents-urge-dep-to-delay-deny-npdes-permit-at-public-hearing/article_d7df7ee7-60d4-4dff-a1fa-01a8b63d4aca.html
71. https://www.concernedresidentsofwesternpa.com/

the hearing, one resident raised concerns about whether the region's worsening drought pattern should factor into approving new water-crossing infrastructure at all. Another resident, a local farmer, testified that the area has experienced near-yearly droughts since 2020, including a flash drought in 2025, stretching nearly 11 weeks. Others asked whether pipeline construction and trenching could open new paths for acid mine drainage to reach streams and groundwater, and whether reviewing this pipeline, the power plant's air permit, and its water discharge permit separately allows anyone to truly evaluate cumulative impact. One called the pipeline route a "sacrifice zone," criticizing the developer for "paying into a mitigation bank" rather than avoiding environmental harm outright. Another asked how the DEP would ensure private well water would not be affected during horizontal directional drilling (HDD) beneath streams. The DEP acknowledged[73] that HDD can result in inadvertent returns of bentonite clay slurry used as drilling lubricant. Ultimately, the NPDES stormwater permit[74] was issued June 18, 2026.



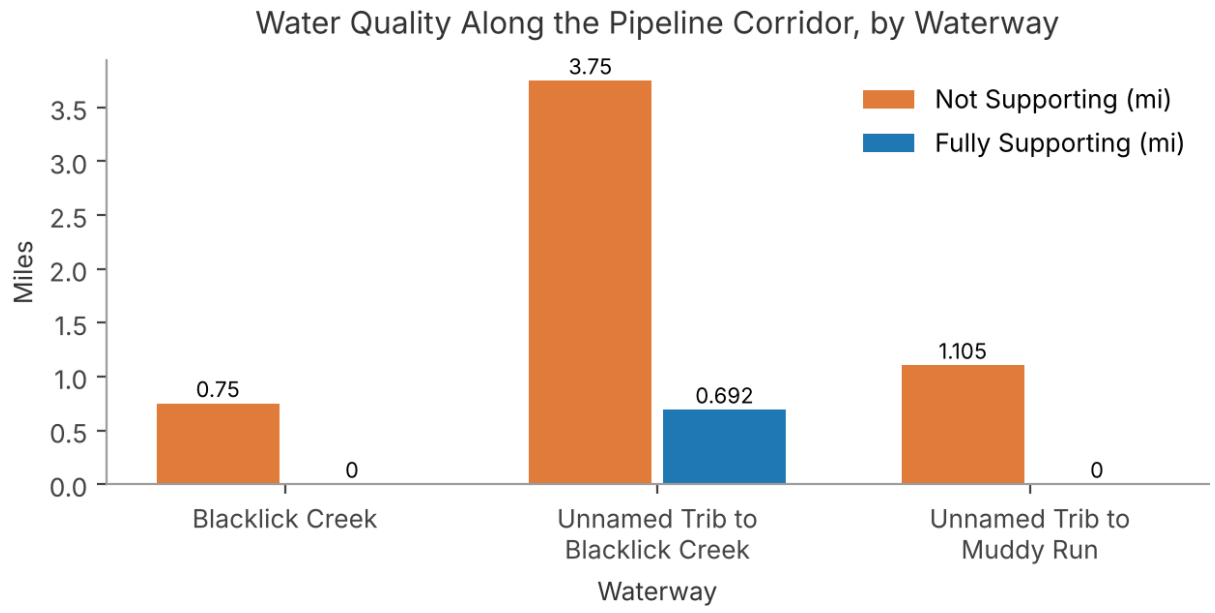
Pipeline route, watershed boundary, and nearby private wells within the 500-ft construction buffer. Sources: PA Groundwater Information System[75], EPA's How's My Waterway[76].

Static capture of an interactive map; explore the live version in the online StoryMap.

72. https://www.facebook.com/p/Indiana-County-Common-Good-ICCG-61577898774283/
73. https://files.dep.state.pa.us/RegionalResources/NWRO/NWROPortalFiles/Homer-City/Waterways%20Engineering%20and%20Wetlands/PAD320011/Review/HCPP%20Pipeline%20Comment%20Response%20Doc.pdf
74. https://files.dep.state.pa.us/RegionalResources/NWRO/NWROPortalFiles/Homer-City/Waterways%20Engineering%20and%20Wetlands/PAD320011/Permit/PAD320011_Permit.pdf
75. https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dcnr/conservation/water/groundwater/pa-groundwater-information-system
76. https://mywaterway.epa.gov/

The map above shows the relationship between the pipeline route, the surrounding watershed, and private water wells nearby. According to the DEP,[77] using PA's groundwater information system[78], only one private water supply well falls within the pipeline's 500-foot buffer, and no public water supply wells sit within a protected Zone 1 Wellhead Protection Area (100-400 foot radius) of the project. That single well sits at a location where the pipeline is proposed to be a "trench-cut" and installed at shallow depth, with the excavation backfilled to restore the land to its original grade once construction is complete. Notably, ongoing monitoring of well water or other private water supplies after construction is not required under the permit, meaning that if the pipeline's construction were to affect that well's water quality, there are no built-in mechanisms to detect it.

What the pipeline crosses matters as much as its length. A review of every EPA-assessed water body segment[79] within the pipeline's 500-ft construction buffer (20 segments in total) found that 17, or 85%, are either already failing to meet water quality standards or "Not Supporting", most commonly due to siltation, metal contamination, and toxicity. These effects can be traced back to the region's history of acid mine drainage. Thus, the route runs directly through a watershed still carrying the consequences of the area's mining history. For further context, the majority of these waters are considered Cold Water Fisheries, with two Blacklick Creek main-stem segments specifically carrying the Trout Water Fishery status.

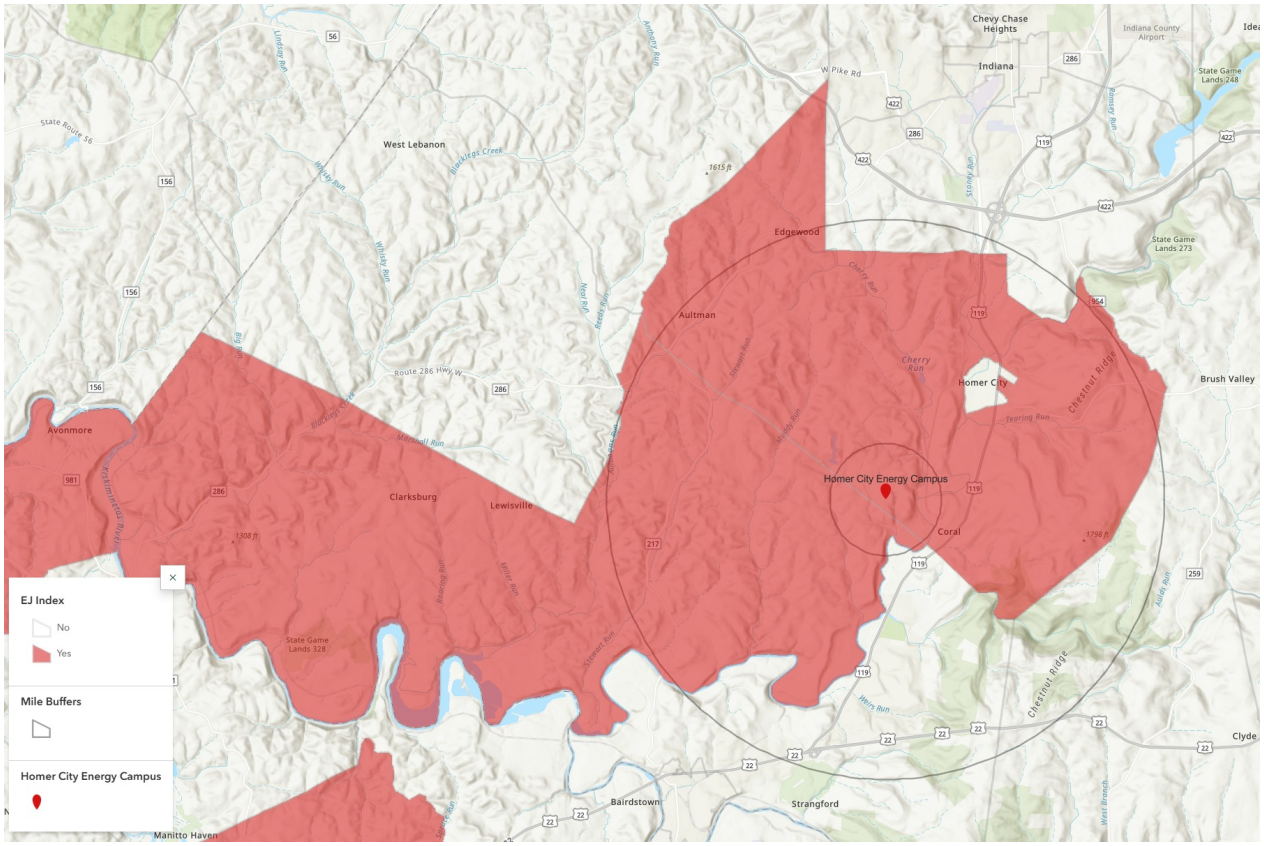


Within the 500-ft buffer, 17 segments are classified as "Not Supporting" under EPA water quality standards. Source: EPA's How's My Waterway, 2024 assessment data[80].

77. https://files.dep.state.pa.us/RegionalResources/NWRO/NWROPortalFiles/Homer-City/Waterways%20Engineering%20and%20Wetlands/PAD320011/Review/HCPP%20Pipeline%20Comment%20Response%20Doc.pdf
78. https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dcnr/conservation/water/groundwater/pa-groundwater-information-system
79. https://mywaterway.epa.gov/
80. https://mywaterway.epa.gov/

The DEP's comment response document[81] for NPDES permit PAD320011 reveals real limits to what this specific permit actually governs. Asked to quantify expected additional deaths or cancer cases, DEP redirected commenters to the separate Air Quality Plan Approval process. When asked to establish a permanent fund for future spill cleanup, DEP confirmed neither the permit nor state law provides for one. Sampling also identified one location along the route, near Station 141+00, with confirmed acid-producing rock material from the area's mining history. The DEP's plan calls for excavating, neutralizing, and reburying it on-site as a buffer layer, rather than removing it entirely.

Community Concerns



1-mile and 5-mile buffers around the Homer City site, overlaid on PA DEP's PennEnviroScreen environmental justice designations. Click on the red areas to see indicator data. Source: PA DEP PennEnviroScreen[82].

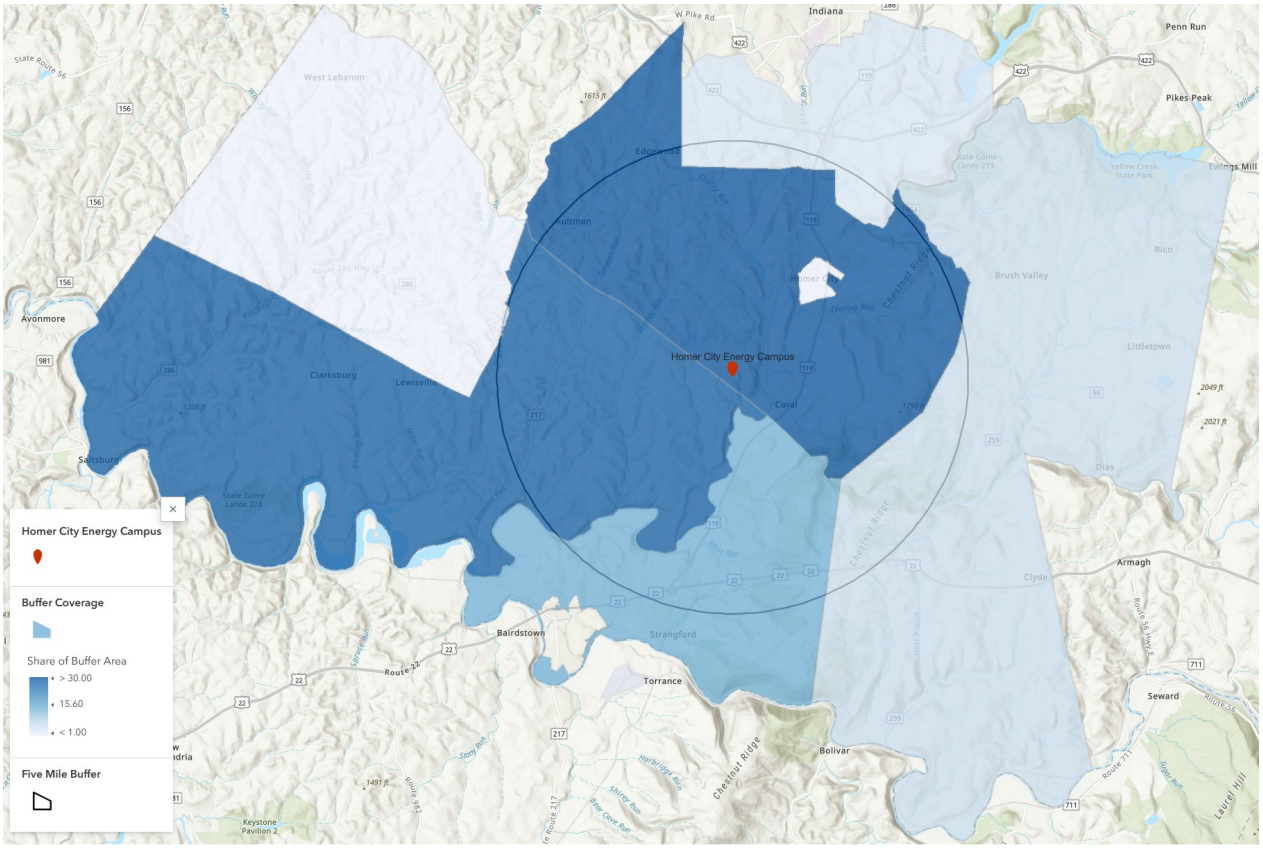
Static capture of an interactive map; explore the live version in the online StoryMap.

Environmental justice (EJ) designations are meant to trigger scrutiny in permitting decisions and increased public awareness and participation. EJ areas face disproportionately higher environmental pollution exposure risks and are often

81. https://files.dep.state.pa.us/RegionalResources/NWRO/NWROPortalFiles/Homer-City/Waterways%20Engineering%20and%20Wetlands/PAD320011/Review/HCPP%20Pipeline%20Comment%20Response%20Doc.pdf
82. https://gis.dep.pa.gov/PennEnviroScreen/

marginalized low income and/or black and brown communities. On March 25, 2026, DEP formally designated the site an environmental justice community, with a PennEnviroScreen[83] score in the 83.8th percentile. The 80th-percentile threshold is what the DEP uses to define an EJ area. The score is calculated using 32 indicators to evaluate cumulative environmental and socioeconomic impacts across the commonwealth, including 19 pollution burden indicators and 13 population characteristic indicators. In this context, the county itself had already ranked as the highest 20% of PA for cancer rates.

Health and Demographics



Census tracts within the 5-mile buffer, shaded and labeled by their share of total buffer area. Click a tract for the area's percent share of the buffer. Source: PA DEP PennEnviroScreen[84].

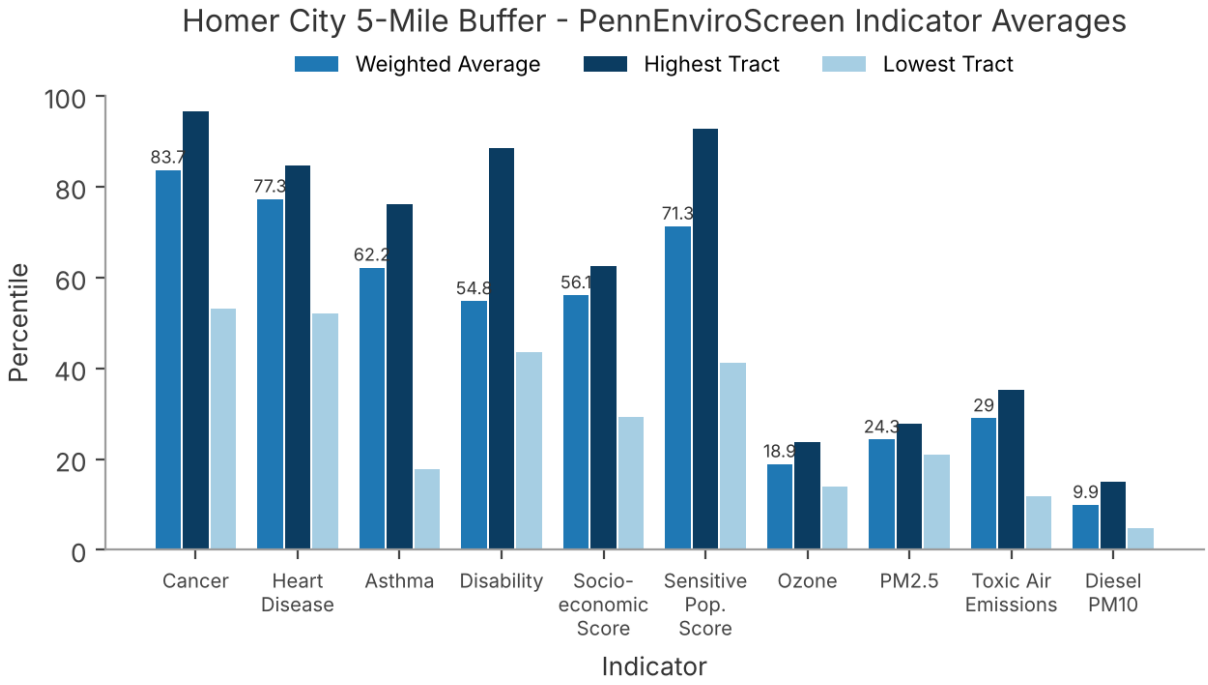
Static capture of an interactive map; explore the live version in the online StoryMap.

Arguably, Homer City's health and demographic picture can be captured and documented more thoroughly than any other aspects of this analysis. PennEnviroScreen ranks each Pennsylvania census tract or block group against the statewide distribution of values, such that percentiles reflect how a tract compares to the rest of Pennsylvania, not the nation as a whole. Data cited below is drawn from PA DEP's PennEnviroScreen (v1.1)[85], last updated August 26, 2026. An area-weighted

83. https://gis.dep.pa.gov/PennEnviroScreen/
84. https://gis.dep.pa.gov/PennEnviroScreen/

analysis covering every census tract within 5 miles of the plant confirms and extends the assignment of its EJ designation. Because tracts vary in size and overlap with the buffer unevenly, each tract's indicators are weighted by its share of the total buffer area. Thus tracts covering more of the buffer contribute proportionally more to the composite figures reported below. Two of the seven tracts carry their own EJ Area designation, together accounting for more than 70% of the buffer's total area.

Cancer prevalence is elevated across nearly every tract in the buffer, ranging from the 53rd to 97th percentile, with an area-weighted average in the low-to-mid 80th percentile. Heart disease follows a similar pattern, averaging in the mid-70th percentile. Neither is concentrated in a single tract, with high rates consistent across the buffer regardless of a given tract's individual EJ designation. This pattern does not just remain statistical. Residents in the area have described first hand how many people they know who have been diagnosed with health problems, consistent with the elevated percentiles found across nearly every tract in this analysis.



Source: PA DEP PennEnviroScreen[86].

It is worth asking whether these elevated readings reflect the buffer's more rural tracts, or whether smaller populations can produce noisier percentile estimates. Checking density against cancer and the buffer's other health and social indicators shows no clear or consistent pattern in either direction. The most rural tracts are not systematically higher or lower than the denser ones. With only seven tracts in the

85. https://gis.dep.pa.gov/PennEnviroScreen/
86. https://gis.dep.pa.gov/PennEnviroScreen/

buffer, one cannot say this is a rigorous statistical test, but it does refute the idea that rural-ness alone is the explanation for the elevated readings observed here. The area also skews older: several tracts show a population 65 and older above the 75th percentile, directly implicating respiratory and cardiovascular vulnerability given the particulate matter, ammonia, and volatile organic compounds confirmed in the plant's air permit. Population density varies within the buffer, from under 50 residents per square mile in its largest tracts to over 3,000 per square mile in its smallest. This means the health burden documented here reaches both rural and densely residing portions of the surrounding community alike.

Presenting social vulnerability as a singular score obscures exactly the kinds of nuances that matter. The socioeconomic score that captures income, education, and employment stays relatively moderate across the buffer at 29th-63rd percentile, which singularly suggests lower-end vulnerability. However, the sensitive population score, reflecting age and health-based vulnerability rather than income, runs higher in the tracts, reaching the 92nd percentile. Breaking the two apart shows this community's vulnerability more concentrated in age and health rather than income.

Concerned Residents of Western PA (CROW)

Concerned Residents of Western PA (CROW)[87] formed in November 2025 and began weekly meetings following a month of informal gatherings centered around Clean Air Council-led coalition calls. Their goal is not just to spread awareness, but to mobilize residents into action. Built on the ideas of open community, their range of involvement spans from outreach, to speaking with local officials, notifying the public of comment deadlines, and attending and speaking at public meetings. CROW meetings are, in a word, contagious. A group that very clearly cares about the community and its future, these meetings allow one to lean into the conversations happening at local and statewide levels. The passion is easy to see.

87. https://www.concernedresidentsofwesternpa.com/



CROW billboard along Route 119 raises awareness of the Homer City project. Source: Concerned Residents of Western PA, via Facebook[88].

Construction

Vertical construction of the power plant began[89] on April 1, 2026. The FAQs[90] on the developer's website state that they plan to deliver the gas turbines to the site in 2026 and expect to begin producing power in 2027. They cite intent to utilize legacy PJM and NYISO transmission lines, substations, and water access.

88. https://www.facebook.com/ConcernedResidentsofWesternPA/
89. https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20260401716982/en/Homer-City-Redevelopment-Crosses-the-First-Steel-Threshold
90. https://www.homercityredevelopment.com/faq



April 1st 2026 demolition of the remaining former coal plant structures. Source: FracTracker Alliance.

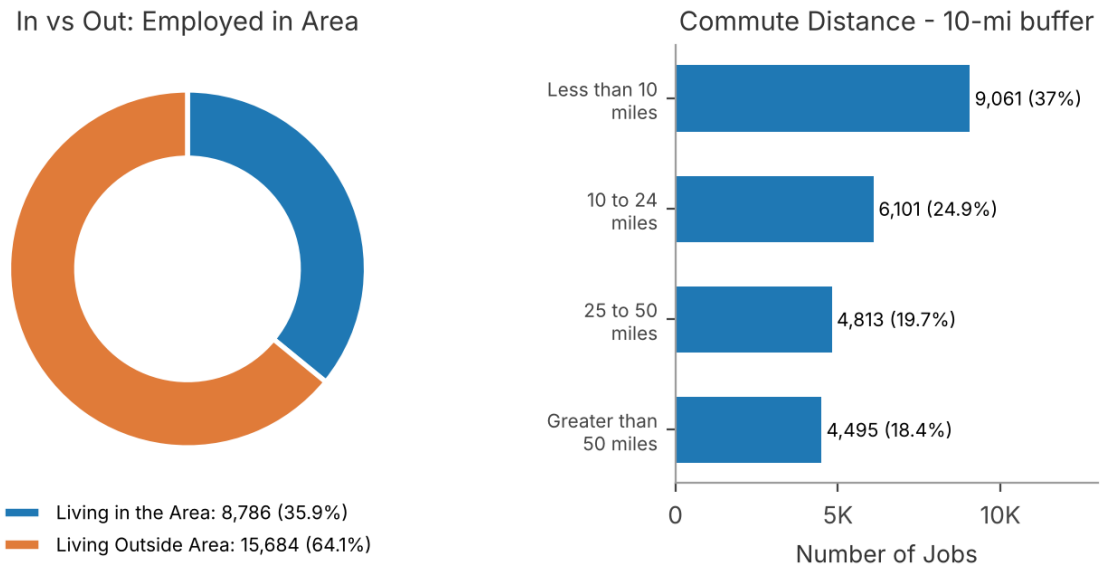


Aerial imagery of Homer City Redevelopment, Fractracker Alliance. Read the full story.[91]
Photo citation: Kyle Ferrar, FracTracker Alliance, April 2026. View on Flickr.

91. https://fractracker.org/2026/04/homer-city-ai-campus-gas-power-construction/

Job Analysis

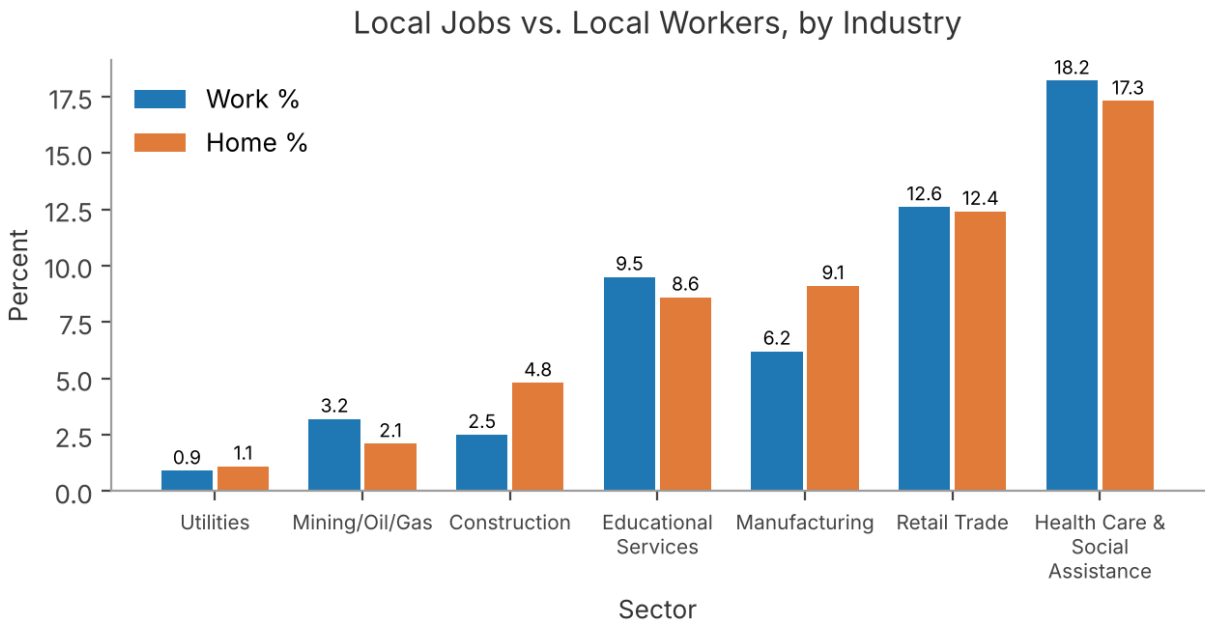
HCR projects[92] more than 10,000 direct construction jobs over the project's build-out with roughly 1,000 permanent positions in technology, operations, and energy infrastructure. Independent research offers a different picture of what data center jobs look like at scale. The Ohio River Valley Institute[93] notes that operating data centers typically employ between 27 and 111 people, and Good Jobs First's[94] national research finds data centers average roughly $2 million in public tax breaks for every job actually created. U.S. Census OnTheMap data offers a baseline for what the existing local labor market already looks like. Even before construction, only 35.9% of jobs in the area were filled by people who also lived there, while 64.1% were filled by workers commuting in. Those outside-filled jobs disproportionately skewed toward higher pay. Only 37% of workers employed in the area lived within 10 miles of their job. Separately, nearly 1:5 commuted more than 50 miles.



Both charts reflect Census OnTheMap data for the 10-mile area around the Homer City site as of 2023. Together, they show that most jobs located in the area are already filled by workers commuting from outside regions, and most of those workers lived well beyond a short drive. Source: U.S. Census OnTheMap[95].

The HCR project will provide jobs in construction, natural gas extraction, transport tied to the plant's fuel supply, warehousing, technical services, and environmental remediation work. Across these sectors, existing local presence is moderate, if not low relative to the area's dominant industries of healthcare, retail, and education.

92. https://www.homercityredevelopment.com/project-overview
93. https://ohiorivervalleyinstitute.org/why-data-centers-will-be-economic-development-duds/
94. https://goodjobsfirst.org/study-state-and-local-governments-pay-2-million-job-tech-giants-data-centers/
95. https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/



Comparison of industries for jobs located in the area ("Work") versus industries employing area residents ("Home"), for the 10-mile region around Homer City as of 2023. Utilities, the sector the plant itself falls under, accounts for less than 1% of the local job market on both sides. Source: U.S. Census OnTheMap[96].

Nationally, the gaps between construction and permanent jobs at the data center is well documented. OpenAI's Stargate[97] facility in Texas is being built by roughly 1,500 workers but will employ only about 100 people full-time at completion. For comparison, a similarly sized cheese-packing plant within the same city was projected to employ 500 people, a far higher jobs-per-square-foot ratio than data centers typically produce. That gap exists in part because construction crews are migratory in nature rather than local. Data center construction specialists often move from one project to another, meaning new positions do not necessarily draw from the region's existing residents. What HCR's "technology, operation, and energy infrastructure" jobs actually mean in practice is worth unpacking. The Uptime Institute[98] organizes data center staffing into nine functional domains, from design and construction through IT, hardware, controls and monitoring, and ongoing operations. However, only a subset require staff physically on-site day to day, and the same research confirms that meaningful shares of any project's promised jobs are often filled by contractors rather than direct employees of the company itself.

To house the thousands of workers construction would bring in, HCR proposed three RV parks which are either approved or under review across White, Burrell, and Center Townships: a 140-unit site on Lucerne Road and a smaller six-unit site, both in White Township[99], a 600-unit development on Newport Road in Burrell Township[100], and a

96. https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/
97. https://www.wsj.com/tech/ai-data-center-job-creation-48038b67?mod=article_inline
98. https://intelligence.uptimeinstitute.com/resource/people-challenge-global-data-center-staffing-forecast-2021-2025
99. https://woodallscm.com/white-township-pa-reviews-rv-parks-for-energy-workers/

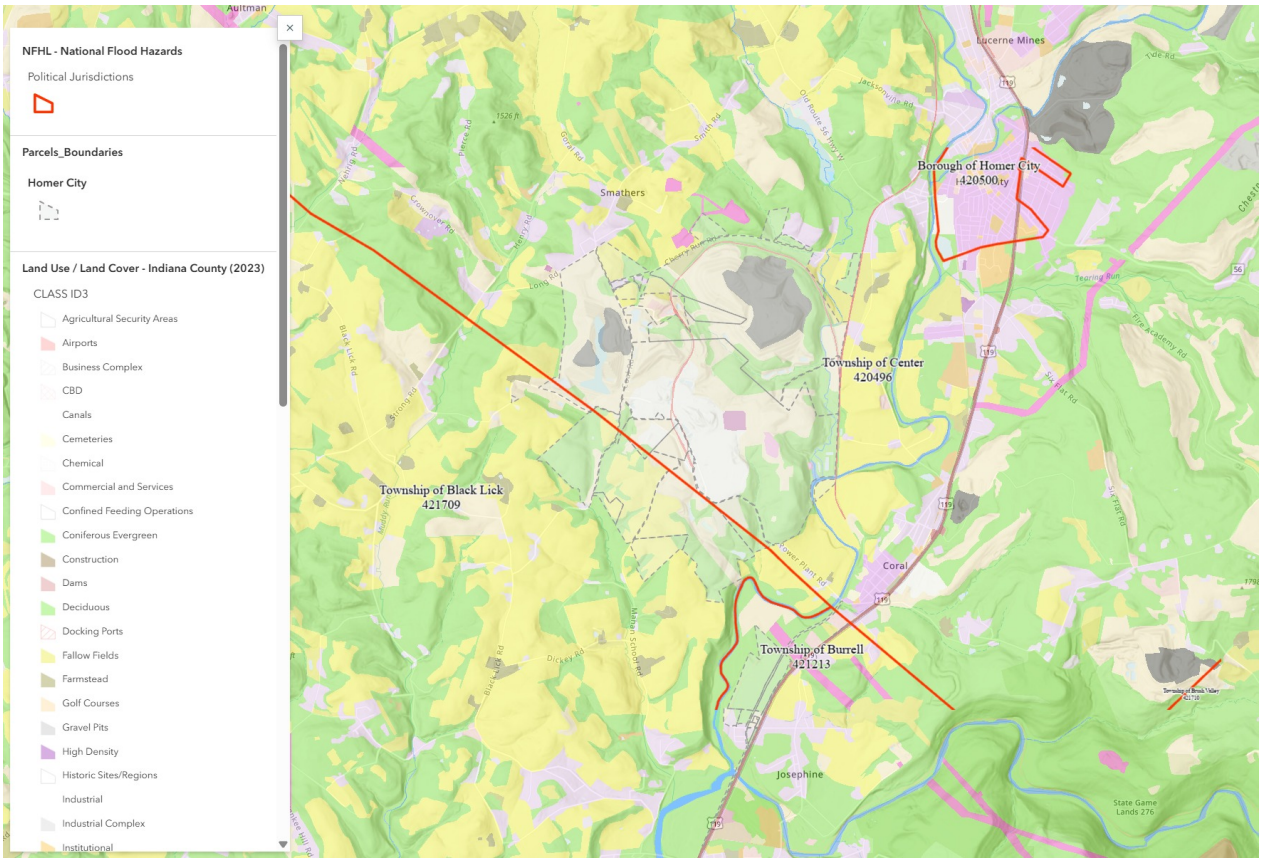
conditionally approved site at the Route 119 Business Park in Center Township[101]. Together, they total roughly 750 units for a construction workforce cited to bring as many as 10,000 people into an area of about 1,700 residents. At a White Township's planning commission review, residents raised various questions such as who will be responsible for removing the RV parks once construction winds down and what strain the added population will place on neighboring water and sewage systems. As much of the affected land is either zoned agriculturally or not at all, it is unclear whether residents can impose any real protections against a development at this scale.

Homer City Data Center

May 27, 2026	**PA GRID Standards are Introduced** Read the press release[102].
Aug 5, 2026	**AWS Confirms Interest in HCR** A company spokesperson confirms AWS involvement after a Right-to-Know request reveals emails between HCR and AWS.
Aug 18, 2026	**Executive Order 2026-05** Read the press release[103] introducing Executive Order 2026-05 – Protecting Pennsylvania Consumers from Data Center Impacts, which formally enforces the GRID Standards.
Aug 28, 2026	**AWS Submits Proposal for Data Center** Amazon Web Services submits a formal Preliminary Land Development Plan (PLDP)[104] to Indiana County.
Oct 14, 2026	**AWS Application Accepted for Review** A decision is expected in January after a 90-day period during which the Commission will gather more information concerning the proposal.

100. https://www.wccsradio.com/2026/05/22/new-rv-park-approved-by-burrell-township-supervisors/
101. https://www.wccsradio.com/2026/02/01/stauffer-offers-updates-on-several-projects-at-chamber-board-meeting/
102. https://www.pa.gov/governor/newsroom/2026-press-releases/gov-shapiro-releases-full-grid-standards-to-protect-pennsylvania
103. https://www.pa.gov/governor/newsroom/2026-press-releases/governor-shapiro-signs-executive-order-on-data-center-developmen
104. https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/00zjkl8wkx903eeqg6494/AIoNZpJVuO_UyLYeWqmyn70?rlkey=mekflulbgqp5zzocc032a9yhb&st=n9tp5zwm&dl=0

Indiana County's Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO)



Land use, township boundaries, and parcel outlines around the Homer City campus. Sources: Land use - Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC)[105]*; boundaries- FEMA National Flood Hazard Layer (NFHL)*[106]*.*

Static capture of an interactive map; explore the live version in the online StoryMap.

Indiana County's Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) has covered the Homer City site since 2023[107]. This ordinance was enacted before the coal plant was decommissioned, and applies to 32 municipalities including Center and Blacklick Townships, where the plant and pipeline sit. Homer City Borough itself is not covered, but the site sits just outside the borough's boundaries in unincorporated township land governed by the county ordinance instead. Many other municipalities, including Homer City, Indiana, and Blairsville boroughs, maintain their own separate municipal SALDOs. It was under this existing ordinance that HCR's Power Block Phase 1 and 2 applications, covering grading and general construction were unanimously approved by the Indiana County Planning Commission. The land itself is a mix of agricultural, industrial, and wooded areas that bears the legacy of its coal mining history.

105. https://spcgis-spc.hub.arcgis.com/apps/SPC::land-use-land-cover-2023/explore
106. https://www.fema.gov/flood-maps/national-flood-hazard-layer
107. https://www.indianagazette.com/local_news/stauffer-explains-countys-effort-to-get-comments-regarding-data-centers/article_49519932-056f-4cd7-bed9-796dbf8f71b1.html

The county is now working through a process[108] to add data-center specific provisions to its SALDO, reviewing it against best-practice standards for large data center projects. There is a current model for how the county previously handled solar and wind development, whose amendments will be finalized first. Data center specific rules will follow. The county's stated goal is now to have the amendment ready by the end of 2026, after which a 45-day comment period and public hearing will take place.

GRID Standards and Executive Order 2026-05

When Governor Shapiro released the full GRID (Governor's Responsible Infrastructure Development) Standards[109] on May 27, 2026, it marked a shift: the fight over Homer City stopped being purely local, and became a backdrop for a statewide policy response. GRID Standards are the beginning of a statewide response to a growing wave of concerns raised about similar projects. Homer City sits within the tension that the GRID Standards was built to address. GRID's release, timed[110] to the same day as a Homer City commissioners meeting, was itself publicly criticized by PA Treasurer Stacy Garrity as reactive to mounting statewide protest, pointing directly to Amazon's separately announced $20 billion PA investment as evidence the state was responding to pressure rather than leading proactively.

On August 18th, 2026 Governor Shapiro signed an executive order (EO)[111] enforcing the GRID standards, which require local land use approval. The EO directs the DEP to only issue new data center permits once developers have received all required local approvals, though officials have given conflicting descriptions of how far this reaches, with Governor Shapiro citing "local zoning" and DEP's Secretary Jessica Shirley citing "all land-use approval." Center and Blacklick Townships have no zoning ordinances of their own, and the SALDO is the only land-use tool the county has. Whether this order gives the SALDO real power to shape whether a Homer City data center moves forward, or applied only to communities with actual zoning, remains open and consequential.

Amazon's Announcement

At the state level, Governor Shapiro's GRID standards and the county's ongoing SALDO revision process now shape how data center projects pursued now or in the future will be evaluated going forward. Jared Kushner visited[112] nearby Jimmy Stewart Airport in October 2025, for reasons that have remained undisclosed. An independent source alleged that Affinity Partners[113], Kushner's own investment firm, invested in HCR,

108. https://www.indianagazette.com/local_news/stauffer-explains-countys-effort-to-get-comments-regarding-data-centers/article_49519932-056f-4cd7-bed9-796dbf8f71b1.html
109. https://www.pa.gov/governor/newsroom/2026-press-releases/gov-shapiro-releases-full-grid-standards-to-protect-pennsylvania
110. https://www.indianagazette.com/news/the-data-center-debate-stretches-from-homer-city-to-harrisburg-and-beyond/article_52aba140-45c1-4058-9715-d684db69f96a.html
111. https://www.pa.gov/governor/newsroom/2026-press-releases/governor-shapiro-signs-executive-order-on-data-center-developmen
112. https://capitalandmain.com/will-an-old-pennsylvania-coal-town-get-a-reboot-from-ai
113. https://www.deadlinedisclosures.com/p/kushners-affinity-takes-stake-in

though no mainstream outlet confirmed this connection. Confirmed reporting places ownership with Knighthead Capital Management solely. Amazon Web Services (AWS), meanwhile, has already committed to two confirmed PA data center campuses as part of a broader $20 billion investment[114]: one in Salem Township, Luzerne County and one in Falls Township, Bucks County. As of August 5th, AWS confirmed[115] it was also in discussion with HCR about a possible data center at Homer City, first reported via emails obtained through a Right-to-Know request, later confirmed by AWS[116].

On August 28, 2026, Amazon Web Services submitted a formal Preliminary Land Development Plan (PLDP)[117] for a six-phase data center campus to the Indiana County Planning Commission. The application was submitted before the county's finalization, meaning that application could be evaluated under the ordinance as it exists today: general standards written for grading and construction, not the stricter, data-center-specific rules the county is still in the process of drafting. Whether the eventual amendment would apply retroactively to an application filed in that gap remains unresolved. At the Indiana County Planning Commission Meeting on September 9, 2026 they voted to table[118] the AWS's application. The Planning Commission accepted the application[119] on October 14, 2026, triggering a 90-day period for the Board to seek further information. Public comments on the application can be submitted through the Indiana County Office of Planning & Development office here[120].

Conclusion

Over the last two years, the site of the former Homer City Generating Station coal plant has been moving through the permitting, approval, and construction processes for what will be the largest gas-powered power plant in Pennsylvania. Now, Amazon Web Services has formally proposed a 36-building data center campus, phased over ten years. The County will decide what to do with the application in 2027. Community opposition to both the power plant and data center has been fierce, with a 654-person capacity crowd at the redevelopment's July 2025 open house, 571 public comments opposing the air permit for the power plant, and 100+ people in attendance for the pipeline public hearing. Shapiro's August 18, 2026 executive order and the County's soon to be updated SALDO will test how much control local land-use authority will have over the data center's development.

114. https://www.aboutamazon.com/news/aws/amazon-pennsylvania-investment-cloud-infrastructure-ai-innovation
115. https://triblive.com/local/westmoreland/amazon-eyes-homer-city-site-for-data-center-campus/
116. https://www.wccsradio.com/2026/08/05/amazon-considering-homer-city-redevelopment-site-for-possible-ai-data-center/
117. https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/00zjkl8wkx903eeqg6494/AIoNZpJVuO_UyLYeWqmyn70?rlkey=mekflulbgqp5zzocc032a9yhb&st=n9tp5zwm&dl=0
118. https://www.wccsradio.com/2026/09/09/county-planning-commission-tables-amazon-data-center-project/
119. https://wjactv.com/news/local/indiana-co-officials-discuss-plans-for-proposed-data-center
120. https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/83350b18f40540cab383cb11ce699a88

Take Action

CROW

Follow Concerned Residents of Western PA[121] for the most recent updates!

County-level

- Indiana County Commissioners[122]
- Indiana County Office of Planning and Development[123]
  - Public Comment Form for AWS PLDP Application[124]

Township-level

- Center Township[125]
- Blacklick Township[126]
- Burrell Township[127]
- White Township[128]

State-level

- PA DEP Northwest Regional Office[129]

FracTracker Alliance

Funding for the SWPA Data Center Accountability & Community Power Initiative was provided by The Pittsburgh Foundation.



Written by Leyu Belachew, Data Center Intern Summer 2026

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121. https://linktr.ee/concernedresidentsofwesternpa?utm_source=ig&utm_medium=social&utm_content=link_in_bio&fbclid=PAZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAcGRvZgJzcnRjBmFwcF9pZA85MzY2MTk3NDMzOTI0NTkAAafRj7SY-aT9SCaZIDSETYreqClqXBp5IbUamLGaJ4VIOMp7ead525GSP8jp5g_aem_-T4DPeTjvhjUJrHe_65W4w
122. https://www.indianacountypa.gov/departments/commissioners/
123. https://www.icopd.org/
124. https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/83350b18f40540cab383cb11ce699a88
125. https://center-twp.com/
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127. https://www.icopd.org/municipal-information.html
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