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Chairman Argall, Senator Brown, and members of the Senate Majority Policy Committee ... thank you for the work you do on behalf of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and thank you for bringing the attention of this Senate Committee to the important issue of Data Center development in Pennsylvania.

I am John Yudichak, President of Luzerne County Community College. Luzerne County Community College, with an enrollment of more than 7,000 students, is the largest, most accessible, and best quality institution of higher education and workforce development programming in northeastern Pennsylvania.

With eight community-based locations in Luzerne, Lackawanna, Northumberland, and Columbia Counties, Luzerne County Community College serves both urban and rural populations throughout northeastern Pennsylvania. Furthermore, the community college serves the workforce development needs of a diversity of business and industry interests ranging from energy giants like Talen Energy, which operates the Susquehanna Nuclear Power Plant in our southern services area to Invenergy, which operates the Lackawanna Energy Center in our northern service area. The college also serves the workforce development needs of industrial development companies, like Northpoint Development and Merical Commercial Real Estate Services, manufacturing companies, like Cheetah Chassis Corporation and Pride Mobility, as well many local family-owned businesses like Medico Construction Equipment.

I repeat it again, and again, at Luzerne County Community College... community is in our name, community is our mission, and we absolutely love being a community partner with the region's government and business leaders in delivering sustainable economic growth throughout northeastern Pennsylvania.

Today, I have the pleasure of representing not only LCCC but also my esteemed colleagues who lead Pennsylvania's fifteen community colleges as members of the Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges.

Pennsylvania's community colleges serve more than 240,000 students, forged more than 2,000 industry workforce partnerships, and fuel statewide economic growth by producing graduates, 90% which stay and work in Pennsylvania, from a diverse academic portfolio ranging from business and health sciences to advance technology and the skilled construction trades.

As a former state senator and chair of the Senate Community, Economic and Recreational Committee, I had the great honor of working with many of the Senators here today who were instrumental in setting the stage for the historic economic growth we are witnessing as Data Center development unfolds across Pennsylvania.

For more than a decade, Pennsylvania lost economic ground to neighboring states like Virginia. Virginia built the largest data center market in the world that currently sustains 74,000 jobs and contributes \$9.1 billion annually to Virginia's economy.

With the passage of Act 25 of 2021, which established the data center sales tax exemption program, a critical economic incentive was put in place that combined with Pennsylvania's dominance as an energy producer and with the workforce development power of Pennsylvania's Community Colleges perfectly positions Pennsylvania to be a world leader in the AI race and the construction of hyperscale data centers.

As the son and grandson of coal miners, it is inspiring for me to think about how northeastern Pennsylvania, which played a central role in the industrial revolution fueled by anthracite coal, now stands to play a prominent role in the world's technological revolution as the epicenter of America's AI Data Center development.

The Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges, under the leadership of its President, Dr. Tuesday Stanley, and its Vice-President, Dr. Nicholas Neupauer, is aggressively responding to the workforce demands of Pennsylvania's 21st century economy. A 2024 workforce report produce by the Pennsylvania Department of Education projects an acute workforce shortage by 2032 of 218,000 Pennsylvania workers who will lack necessary post-secondary credentials and skills to meet the demands of the job market.

The workforce shortage is going to be most acute in northeastern and southeastern Pennsylvania where a great deal of data center development is already underway. Currently, there is a gap of 12,200 workers in the trade and maintenance workforce cluster. The trade and maintenance workforce gaps will grow exponentially if unaddressed as data center development grows in Pennsylvania.

The Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges recognizes that the AI race and the construction of hyperscale data centers will create significant workforce development demands across many disciplines including technology workers, energy workers, and skilled trade construction workers. To meet the demands of data center development in Pennsylvania, community colleges are collaborating and combining resources like never before to build a new and historic Technology and Trades Workforce Consortium.

Building upon decades of investment and experience in advanced technology and skilled trade education programming, Pennsylvania Community Colleges, as the most accessible and affordable institutions of higher education, are best positioned to help Pennsylvania close its workforce credential gap and build a workforce that will lead the AI technological revolution.

The lead partners on the Technology and Trades Workforce Consortium include Luzerne, Lehigh Carbon, Northampton, and Bucks County Community Colleges. The focus of the Technology and Trades Workforce Consortium will be on innovative higher education partnerships built upon what we believe will be the three pillars of workforce development programming for the data center industry:

1. Career & Technology Academy: An innovative partnership between community colleges and career and technical high schools that will create clear early college pathways for career and technical students to earn post-secondary credentials as technicians and skilled trade workers.

2. MicroCredential Academy: A rapid response partnership with local chambers of commerce and PACareer link to develop post-secondary credential programming to upskill workers in the workplace through accessible, cost-effective workforce development programming that embraces a new higher education model of go here, graduate here, work here.

3. Construction & Trade Pre-Apprenticeship Academy: A strategic partnership with the Pennsylvania Building & Construction Trade Unions to build a pre-apprenticeship workforce pipeline of skilled construction trade workers.

The Technology and Trades Workforce Consortium will coordinate resources and foster collaborative partnerships that will streamline a fragmented workforce development system to deliver the highest quality workforce in Pennsylvania history. The Pennsylvania Commission on Community Colleges is working with the newly created State Board of Higher Education to break down the silos of workforce development programming in Pennsylvania by developing working partnerships across multiple federal and state agencies with oversight of workforce development funding.

Collaboration and innovation must drive Pennsylvania's approach to meeting the unprecedented workforce development demands presented by the AI revolution and the construction of hyperscale data centers. I believe Pennsylvania Community Colleges are best equipped to collaborate, innovate, and rapidly respond to the challenging workforce development demands of the technological revolution that is driving billions of dollars in historic economic growth across Pennsylvania.

Again, I want to thank Senator Argall, Senator Brown, and the members of the Senate Policy Committee for the work you are doing to drive economic growth in northeastern Pennsylvania and thank you for your steadfast support of Pennsylvania's Community Colleges.