

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 4, 2026

Mark Zuckerberg
Meta Platforms, Inc.
Chief Executive Officer
1 Meta Way
Menlo Park, CA 94025

Dear Mr. Zuckerberg:

We write to follow up on Ranking Member Whitehouse and Senator Van Hollen’s March 13, 2026, letter seeking information about Meta’s plans to power a hyperscale data center in El Paso, Texas, with modular small-bore gas generators.¹ Meta owes transparency to Congress and the American people about emissions from that facility given unprecedented pollution estimates contained in a never-before-seen document reviewed by the undersigned.

The attached document, first obtained by the Office of Congresswoman Veronica Escobar and shared with Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works (EPW) Democrats, calls into question Meta’s responses to our inquiries. The document suggests that Meta hid information about harmful data center emissions and made the decision to power its El Paso data center using hundreds (or even thousands) of “small bore” gas generators despite knowing that they would be significantly more polluting than a single combined-cycle turbine facility with the same energy output. Congress and the American people deserve honest answers.

In May 2026, Congresswoman Escobar received a mailing containing a copy of a document titled “NOx Emissions Analysis: Meta ‘Seafox’ Data Center – El Paso, Texas” (the “analysis” or the “document”). Affixed to it was a copy of the Senators’ March 13 letter. The analysis, which purports to “quantif[y] the estimated nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions profile” from the El Paso facility, contains troubling detail. With Seafox “powered by a distributed fleet of small-bore natural gas reciprocating engines . . . originally marketed for commercial backup applications,” the analysis estimated that, “even under conservative and internally favorable assumptions, . . . the Seafox facility [could] generate[] NOx emissions equivalent to 475,000 to over one million passenger cars annually” (to put that into perspective, approximately 1.8 to 2 million new internal combustion vehicles entered the U.S. market in 2025²).

¹ Alexis Dufresne, “Meta’s El Paso AI Campus to Run on 813 On-Site Gas Generators,” *AI Weekly* (Aug. 6, 2026), <https://aiweekly.co/alerts/metasp-el-paso-ai-campus-to-run-on-813-on-site-gas-generators>; Martha Pskowski, “El Paso’s plan to build natural gas power plant for massive data center kicks up opposition,” *The Texas Tribune* (Jan. 26, 2026), <https://www.texastribune.org/2026/01/26/texas-el-paso-meta-data-center-natural-gas-power-plant/>.

² See U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Critical Minerals and Energy Innovation, Vehicle Registration Counts by State (2025) (visited August 26, 2026), <https://afdc.energy.gov/vehicle-registration>; Energy Information Administration, *Electric vehicle sales fell as hybrid vehicle sales continued to rise in 2025*, InBrief Analysis (Feb. 9, 2026), <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=67144>; National Automobile Dealers Association, *Annual Financial Profile of America’s Franchised New-Car Dealerships* (2025), <https://www.nada.org/media/4695/download?inline>; S&P Global, *U.S. Vehicle Age Rises Again to 12.8 Years in 2025, According to S&P Global Mobility*, Press Release (May 21, 2025), <https://press.spglobal.com/2025-05-21-U-S-Vehicle-Age-Rises-Again-to-12-8-Years-in-2025,-According-to-S-P-Global-Mobility>.

The estimates assumed that Meta would be powering the entire 1 GW facility using a fleet of 2,222 small bore generators; we understand that, to date, Meta has plans to operationalize 813 small-bore generators.³ NOx emissions from these small-bore generators would pollute far more than a single combined-cycle gas facility of equivalent power output: “between 2.7x and 6.1x the output of a modern combined-cycle gas turbine plant with Selective Catalytic Reduction (SCR) technology.” The analysis equates that to only about 173,000 new cars annually.

Meta’s April 17 response and subsequent meetings with Senate EPW Democratic staff failed to explain: Meta’s decision to power its El Paso data center with gas rather than renewable sources; which types of gas-fired turbines Meta would use; how Meta would honor its commitment to “match 100% of our electricity use with clean and renewable energy and support the addition of new clean and renewable energy to the grid across the U.S.”; how Meta could “reach net zero emissions across the entirety of [its] value chain in 2030” given the proliferation of its polluting data centers; and whether Meta had emissions-related analyses for its new data centers.⁴ Meta instead offered platitudes about its commitment to be a “good neighbor in the communities where we have data centers”—a claim belied by reporting about Meta improperly disposing of contaminated water,⁵ sucking up water resources from local rural communities,⁶ and straining local electric grids resulting in power outages, internet unavailability, and even an increase in traffic accidents.⁷

As part of our comprehensive due diligence process, Senate EPW Democratic staff invited Meta to inspect the document and to raise any objections to authenticity or accuracy.⁸ After initially declining to meet and review the document on the basis that “[e]missions projections are confidential, non-public, and proprietary information” and that Meta would be in no “position to confirm the authenticity of the document” or “attest to [its] accuracy,”⁹ Meta conducted an in-person review on August 4, 2026¹⁰ and raised no such objections. Even now, nearly one month later, Meta still has not raised any objections to the authenticity or accuracy of the document. Meta staff did confirm that the “Seafox” project name was primarily used internally and before the project was announced publicly.¹¹

³ Dufresne, *supra* note 1.

⁴ See Letter from Meta to Ranking Member Sheldon Whitehouse, Senator Chris Van Hollen, and Senator Martin Heinrich (Apr. 17, 2026).

⁵ Richard Luschome, “Wyoming tightens wastewater rules after Meta datacenter contractor flushed contaminated water,” *The Guardian* (July 8, 2026), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2026/jul/08/meta-datacenter-ai-wyoming-water>.

⁶ Eli Tan, “Their Water Taps Ran Dry When Meta Built Next Door,” *New York Times* (July 14, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/07/14/technology/meta-data-center-water.html>.

⁷ Drew Hawkins, “Construction on Meta’s largest data center brings 600% crash spike, chaos to rural Louisiana,” *WWNO – New Orleans Public Radio* Nov. 19, 2025), <https://www.wwno.org/local-regional-news/2025-11-19/construction-on-metas-largest-data-center-brings-600-crash-spike-chaos-to-rural-louisiana>.

⁸ Email from Democratic Staff of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works to Meta (July 16, 2026); see also Email from Democratic Staff of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works to Meta (July 27, 2026).

⁹ Email from Meta to Democratic Staff of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works (July 17, 2026).

¹⁰ Email Thread between Meta and Democratic Staff of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works (August 3, 2026).

¹¹ Meeting between Meta and Democratic Staff of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works (August 4, 2026).

Assuming the document accurately reflects potential NOx emissions from Meta's El Paso data center, it paints a damning picture of the environmental and health impacts that could arise from Meta's operations at the facility. If Meta authored, commissioned, or was otherwise aware of the document, it demonstrates a lack of candor to our inquiries about the pollution load of small-bore generators versus combined-cycle gas or other power sources. Our concerns are echoed by recent *New York Times* reporting quantifying pollution from Meta data centers compared to passenger cars. According to the *Times*, based on documents obtained by the Environmental Integrity Project, "[w]hen the El Paso facility's power plant is complete, it could emit as much planet-warming carbon dioxide in a year as 360,000 gasoline-powered passenger vehicles, each driven for the average distance logged by American drivers in a year."¹²

In light of these developments, please respond to the following requests for information and documents by no later than September 18, 2026:

1. Did Meta author or commission the document in question?
 - a. If yes, please describe in detail its genesis and origin, including its author (internal or external), the context in which it was produced, the date it was produced, the Meta teams that contributed to its production, and whether any partners or affiliates contributed to its production.
 - b. If no, does Meta know who did author the document in question? To the extent Meta possesses such information, please describe in detail the document's author, genesis and origin, the context in which it was produced, the date it was produced, and whether any Meta partners or affiliates contributed to its production.
2. Although Meta has not objected to the accuracy or authenticity of the document despite ample time to do so, does Meta now dispute either the accuracy or authenticity of the document or any of the information discussed therein?
 - a. If yes, please describe those objections in detail.
 - b. If yes, please provide your own estimates about NOx emissions at Meta's El Paso data center.
3. Concerning the "Seafox" project name:
 - a. When was the "Seafox" project name first coined?
 - b. Who at Meta used the project name "Seafox" to describe the El Paso data center? Please provide a detailed explanation of all Meta divisions and teams who would have used that name.
 - c. Was the "Seafox" project name used by any external Meta partners? If so, who?

¹² Hiroko Tabuchi, "Trump's Vision for A.I. Dominance Comes With Major Air Pollution," *New York Times* (Aug. 5, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/08/05/climate/data-centers-pollution-trump-ai-energy.html>.

- d. Was the “Seafox” project name ever officially retired? If so, when?
4. The analysis confirms that small-bore gas generators are more polluting than combined-cycle units. Why did Meta or its partners, including but not limited to El Paso Electric, choose to proceed with small-bore generators for power, knowing that they were more polluting?
5. The analysis notes that the El Paso area is currently on a “trajectory toward federal ozone [smog] non-attainment designation” and that the small-bore generators powering the El Paso facility, due to their massive NOx output, may be classified as a major source and thus subject to Clean Air Act requirements to adopt “best available control technology” (BACT).
 - a. Does Meta have plans to meet BACT?
 - b. Is Meta in conversation with local and state governments regarding the possibility that increased NOx emissions from the El Paso facility could tip the region into ozone nonattainment, thus triggering stricter control requirements for other sources in the area?
6. Selective catalytic reduction (SCR) is generally considered the best pollution control for NOx emissions. Will Meta or any of its partners, including but not limited to El Paso Electric, adopt SCR for any of the generators currently powering Meta’s El Paso facility?
 - a. If yes, how many of the generators will be equipped with SCR?
 - b. If yes, has Meta, El Paso Electric, or any other partner already adopted SCR for these generators?
 - c. If no, will Meta, El Paso Electric, or any other partner implement any pollution controls?
 - d. If any pollution control is to be adopted, how much will these controls reduce NOx pollution compared to an uncontrolled state?
7. Please produce all documents in Meta’s possession, custody, or control, whether authored by Meta or any other party, that purport to estimate, approximate, or otherwise quantify emissions of any kind from all existing or planned data centers throughout the United States.
8. Since November 5, 2024, has Meta engaged in communications with representatives of the Trump 2024 campaign, the Trump-Vance Transition Team, or the Trump Administration (including but not limited to the Environmental Protection Agency) concerning exemptions to any Clean Air Act regulatory programs? If so, please describe those conversations and produce all communications dated from November 5, 2024, between and among representatives of Meta, the Trump 2024 campaign, the Trump-Vance Transition Team, and/or the Trump Administration (including but not limited to the Environmental Protection Agency) concerning such exemptions.

9. Please respond to all requests for information and documents in the Senators' March 13 letter.

Due to fossil fuel emissions, significant climate upheaval is already underway, so much so that it is already disrupting home insurance markets, mortgage markets, and real estate markets. Many Americans are already being harmed by these disruptions. Warnings of this "systemic" danger cascading into the general economy are legion. In this moment, it is particularly vital that America's corporate citizens conduct themselves honorably regarding the dangers of fossil fuel emissions. Honest answers to our questions would be a good place to start.

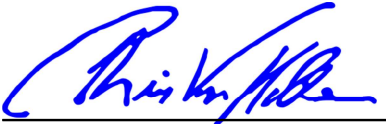
Sincerely,



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator
Ranking Member
Committee on Environment
and Public Works



Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator