



# Fast, Flexible Solutions for Data Centers

Yuki Numata  
Senior Associate, RMI

# Data center electricity demand is manageable.

- Data centers may account for less energy than you think:
  - 2% of **global** electricity demand
  - 4% of total **U.S.** electricity demand
- Data center load growth is expected to be similar to other sources of load growth
- However, they are set apart by their **tendency to concentrate** in specific regions
  - 25% of **Virginia**'s total electricity demand

## But there is still a significant range of uncertainty

- There are many **unknown variables** that will shape future data center energy demand, such as:
  - **Hardware** improvements
  - **Cooling** technology improvements
  - **Software** and product design
- US data center electricity consumption could increase to **anywhere from 200 to over 1,000 TWh** by 2030—that's a huge range

# Building for an uncertain future comes with risks

- Over-forecasting and overbuilding is an existing issue with material **ratepayer impacts**
- The uncertainty around data center load growth only exacerbates this problem
  - Not all proposed data centers may get built
  - But utilities are starting to build new natural gas plants
- **If data center demand fails to materialize, ratepayers may be left to shoulder the cost of the new plant**
- So how do we prevent this?

# Fast, flexible solutions can help minimize risk

- Fast, flexible solutions that can be **deployed modularly, right-sized to confirmed loads**, can help us manage load growth responsibly.

Energy  
Efficiency

Demand  
Flexibility

Virtual Power  
Plants

Alternative  
Transmission  
Technologies

Renewable  
Energy



**Visit the RMI website for more:**

**<https://rmi.org/>**

**Recent RMI publications on AI & data centers:**

*How Virtual Power Plants Can Help the United States Win the AI Race*

*Fast, Flexible Solutions for Data Centers*

*How “Power Couples” Can Help the United States Win the Global AI Race*

*How Data Centers Can Set the Stage for Larger Loads to Come*