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U.S. Energy Secretary Highlights Nuclear Option for Climate Action

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E nergy Secretary Jennifer Granholm told *Newsweek* that her department is helping big tech and electric utility companies bring more nuclear power to the nation's grid to meet the rapidly increasing energy demand for data centers.

"That is absolutely one of the pieces of the clean power solution that data centers should look at," Granholm said in an interview Thursday during Climate Week NYC.

The boom in AI has triggered a massive expansion of bigger and more powerful data centers that consume enormous amounts of electricity. That growth challenges both big tech and power suppliers who want to meet new demand while reducing greenhouse gas emissions from their data operations and power generation facilities.

Despite ambitious climate objectives at many big tech companies, emissions from Google and Microsoft are rising due to AI's growth.

U.S. Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm said nuclear power is "absolutely one of the pieces of the clean power solution that data centers should look at." The boom in AI data centers is driving up demand...   More **PHOTO-ILLUSTRATION BY NEWSWEEK/GETTY**

Granholm cited a recent projection from the North American Electric Reliability Corporation showing a 15 percent increase in demand on the nation's electric grid just from data centers. However, Granholm said the power demand from the tech sector also provides a chance to spur the development of more low-carbon energy sources, including nuclear.

"We don't really view the rise of AI and data centers as a challenge or an anomaly, but really more of an opportunity," she said. "It really is a chance to revitalize communities with data centers."

Granholm said the Inflation Reduction Act includes inc~~~~~~~~ ~~~ ~~~ ~~~~~ ~~ ~~~~~ ~~~~ ~~~~~   CLOSE X
once used for fossil fuel generation, such as coal-fired
Data center developers find those old heavy industry fa
needed electric transmission infrastructure in place.

"We have a golden nuclear regulatory regime in this country, and we know we can do it safely," Granholm said.

Climate Week Panel on AI and Energy

The twin issues of AI and nuclear power were recurring themes this week at gatherings and announcements during Climate Week NYC, including an event *Newsweek* hosted Wednesday evening.

The panel discussion event, sponsored by Kia, "AI: Climate Hero or Climate Villain?", featured experts from big tech, the power industry, philanthropy and academia exploring both AI's promise to help solve energy problems and the challenge of powering data centers.

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