MOHAVE electric cooperative
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

MYTH vs. FACT

Large Electric Loads & Data Centers

FACT

1 Megawatt (MW) can power approximately 750 – 1,000 homes.

Yes, one megawatt can power 1,000 homes or power a hospital, a big box store, heavy machinery facility, or a small data center.

ALL OF THESE CAN EQUAL 1 MW EACH



Big Box Store



Heavy Machinery Facility



Small Hospital



750–1,000 Homes



Small Data Center

FACT

MEC has different membership classes.

Yes, MEC members voted in 2024 to amend the Cooperative's Bylaws to create a Class B Membership for larger electric loads. Class B members are served under separate requirements designed to protect existing MEC tariffed - residential, commercial, agricultural, and industrial members under 10 MW.

FACT

Data Centers can use a lot of electricity – well over 1 MW.

Yes, modern data centers are among the largest electric users because they can operate 24 hours a day storing information, processing transactions, supporting cloud computing, healthcare, banking, and countless internet services. Large electric loads are not unique to data centers, and can include mines, manufacturing plants, and industrial facilities that also require significant power.

MYTH

MEC has never served large electric loads before.

FACT

MEC has served large industrial customers for more than 60 years, including loads approaching 100 MW. Serving large commercial, industrial, and Class B members is a normal day of business and a longstanding part of the Cooperative Model.

MYTH

MEC chooses which industries receive electricity.

FACT

The Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC) requires MEC to offer electric service to any qualified member located within its certificated service territory.

MYTH: Data centers—or any large loads—will raise residential electric rates.

FACT

Large load electric customers are served under a Class B Membership, an ACC approved contract, and are responsible for paying the costs to service their facilities. MEC's evaluation process helps ensure existing MEC members are protected from additional expenses.

MYTH: MEC gives special treatment to data centers or other large loads.

FACT

MEC does not discriminate against qualified members based on the type of business. MEC provides electric service under its tariffs, Bylaws, and applicable contracts to homes, farms, schools, hospitals, mines, manufacturers, retailers, data centers, and other qualified members, as regulated by the ACC.

MYTH: Large loads do not pay for their own electric infrastructure or service.

FACT

Large load customers cover the costs of electrical feasibility studies, infrastructure needed to bring them service, self-generation (if used), market purchases, and any post-operation grid costs required for their service.

MYTH: MEC can decide whether a data center or any large load facility is built.

FACT

MEC's role is limited to determining whether electric service can be provided safely and reliably. Decisions about land use, zoning, water, environmental impacts, and development approvals are made by local, county, state, and federal agencies, and other utilities.

MYTH: These large electric load projects are reviewed solely by MEC.

FACT

Electric reliability and system impacts are reviewed by multiple organizations including MEC. MEC's generation and transmission provider, Arizona Electric Power Cooperative (AEPCO), is required through the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC), the Western Electricity Coordinating Council (WECC), and other agencies as required to complete multiple studies on large loads and data centers before they can ever connect to the grid.

MYTH: MEC evaluates whether these large electric load projects are good for the community.

FACT

Large electric load projects are reviewed by numerous agencies that evaluate land use, water availability, environmental impacts, taxation, public safety, transportation, and other community considerations. Many projects have numerous community benefits; however, MEC's responsibility is limited to electric feasibility and service and the benefits to our existing Class A members.

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