

Grays Harbor County 2027 Comprehensive Plan

Public Comment Summary Reports

Report 1: All public comments

Report 2: Summary excluding data-center-related comments

Prepared from the combined public/agency/organization comments PDF provided by the County.

Prepared July 7, 2026

Report 1 - Public Comment Summary: All Topics

The combined PDF index lists 132 individual comment IDs and 10 agency/organization comment IDs, for 142 separate comment IDs total. Some people submitted more than once, so repeat submissions were counted by unique comment ID where applicable.

Overall Summary

The comments were overwhelmingly concerned about large-scale data centers, especially the possibility of data center development in or around Satsop. Most commenters opposed data centers outright or wanted a moratorium, ban, strict limits, or detailed local review before any approval.

The main reasons given were high water use, possible impacts to drinking water and rivers, high electricity demand, potential ratepayer costs, few permanent jobs, industrial noise, light, pollution, health concerns, flooding and stormwater impacts, loss of rural character, and harm to forests, wetlands, salmon, wildlife, farms, and the Grays Harbor estuary. Several comments argued that data centers would benefit outside corporations more than local residents. Data-center-related comments also asked for thresholds, reporting, financial assurance, decommissioning plans, and requirements that developers pay the full infrastructure cost.

A second major theme was that the Draft EIS and Comprehensive Plan alternatives were not strong enough or clear enough. Many commenters asked for better cumulative-impact analysis, stronger SEPA review, a true environmentally preferable alternative, more analysis of water, wetlands, stormwater, floodplain impacts, and clearer policy choices rather than alternatives that feel too similar.

There were also comments not focused on data centers. Those included requests for rural property flexibility, ADUs on 5-acre G5 parcels, concerns about over-regulation of rural landowners, property taxes, infrastructure, roads, bridges, sidewalks, farmland preservation, public outreach, and agency comments on best available science, habitat connectivity, critical areas, low-impact development, and wildlife corridors.

Main Issues, Most Mentioned to Least Mentioned

Rank	Main issue raised	Approx. comments mentioning it	Summary
1	Opposition to data centers / mega-scale industrial uses	Approx. 96	Most common issue by far. Many commenters asked the County to prohibit, restrict, cap, or place a moratorium on large data centers.
2	Protection of natural resources, rural character, forests, farms, wildlife, salmon, estuary, and habitat	Approx. 87	Commenters repeatedly said growth should protect Grays Harbor's forests, rivers, wetlands, farms, fisheries, wildlife corridors, beaches, estuary, and rural identity.

Rank	Main issue raised	Approx. comments mentioning it	Summary
3	Water supply, drinking water, wells, rivers, wetlands, hydrology, and flooding	Approx. 77	Major concern that growth, especially data centers, could harm drinking water, aquifers, instream flows, salmon habitat, wetlands, and flood conditions.
4	Jobs, economic benefit, taxes, subsidies, and who pays	Approx. 65	Many argued data centers offer few permanent jobs and may shift infrastructure, utility, or tax costs onto residents. Others raised rural property-tax and tax-base concerns.
5	Pollution, toxics, public health, noise, light, and quality-of-life impacts	Approx. 52	Commenters raised concerns about air and water pollution, PFAS or toxics, diesel backup generators, noise, light pollution, health impacts, and loss of peace and quiet.
6	Infrastructure, roads, traffic, services, emergency response, bridges, and utilities	Approx. 52	Concerns included whether roads, bridges, emergency services, utility infrastructure, and rural systems can support projected growth or industrial projects.
7	Electricity demand, grid capacity, power rates, and utility reliability	Approx. 49	Many specifically worried that data centers would consume large amounts of electricity and cause rate increases or grid reliability issues.
8	Rural land use, housing, zoning, ADUs, property rights, farmland, and G5/A-20 issues	Approx. 43	Some commenters wanted more flexibility for rural landowners, ADUs on 5-acre G5 parcels, protection of farmland, and common-sense rules for rural parcels.
9	DEIS adequacy, alternatives, cumulative impacts, mitigation, and SEPA compliance	Approx. 39	Comments said the DEIS should provide clearer alternatives, better cumulative-impact analysis, stronger mitigation, and more specific review of likely impacts.
10	Public process, notice, transparency, coordination, and consultation	Approx. 29	Commenters wanted better public notice, more outreach, clearer transparency, stronger city/agency/Tribal coordination, and public participation in future review.
11	Tribal treaty obligations, Indigenous communities, and cultural resources	Approx. 16	These comments focused mainly on water, salmon, treaty rights, Tribal consultation, and avoiding impacts to Indigenous communities and cultural resources.

Bottom Line

The public-comment record is dominated by one message: do not let the Comprehensive Plan or EIS become a pathway for large data centers without major restrictions, a moratorium, or a much deeper impact analysis. The broader message is that Grays Harbor residents want growth handled carefully, with stronger protection for water, rural character, farms, forests, salmon, wetlands, wildlife, power rates, local taxpayers, and public participation.

Report 2 - Public Comment Summary: Data-Center Topic Excluded

This summary removes all data-center-related comments and themes and focuses only on other issues raised in the public-comment record.

Overall Summary

Once the rumor-driven comments are set aside, the remaining public comments focus mainly on how Grays Harbor County should manage growth without damaging rural character, natural resources, water resources, fisheries, wildlife habitat, roads, infrastructure, and private property rights.

The strongest non-rumor theme is that the Comprehensive Plan should protect rivers, wetlands, forests, farms, shellfish areas, salmon habitat, wildlife corridors, the Grays Harbor estuary, and rural working lands. Several agency and organization comments asked for stronger use of best available science, better critical-area protections, stronger wetland and buffer protections, habitat connectivity planning, and more complete analysis of cumulative impacts.

Another major theme is rural land-use balance. Some commenters want stronger preservation of rural and agricultural areas and less dispersed commercial or industrial growth. Others want more flexibility for rural landowners, including reasonable use of G-5 land, protection from rising property-tax pressure, practical forestry rules, A-20 parcel flexibility where land is physically divided by a river, and permission for one ADU on 5-acre G5 parcels.

The agency and organization comments were more technical. They focused on whether the Draft EIS adequately analyzes wetlands, impaired water bodies, stormwater, sea-level rise, tsunami and flood hazards, shellfish resource lands, Tribal treaty resources, transportation, senior-service needs, and whether the Final EIS should include a stronger environmentally preferable or lower-growth alternative.

Main Issues, Most Mentioned to Least Mentioned

Rank	Main issue raised	Relative frequency	Summary
1	Protection of natural resources and rural environment	Highest	Comments repeatedly emphasized protecting forests, rivers, wetlands, farms, estuary resources, open space, rural landscapes, and the overall natural character of Grays Harbor County.
2	Water resources, wetlands, stormwater, flooding, and coastal hazards	Very high	Many comments raised concerns about drinking water, wells, impaired water bodies, wetlands, floodplain development, stormwater runoff, sea-level rise, coastal erosion, tsunami evacuation, and the Chehalis Basin.
3	Fish, wildlife, shellfish, habitat, and connectivity	High	Agency and organization comments focused heavily on salmonids, shellfish habitat, wildlife corridors, estuary protection, habitat fragmentation, Olympic mudminnow, birds, and the need to use best available science.
4	Rural character, agriculture, forestry, and working lands	High	Commenters wanted the County to preserve rural identity, working farms, timberlands, pastures, river valleys, tourism values, and the quiet character of rural communities.
5	Draft EIS adequacy, alternatives, and cumulative-impact analysis	High	Comments questioned whether the Draft EIS fully analyzed cumulative impacts, realistic lower-growth choices, hazard mapping, impaired waters, wetland impacts, transportation impacts, and long-term environmental consequences.
6	Rural property rights and landowner flexibility	Moderate	Some commenters said the plan should avoid over-regulating G-5 and resource lands, protect rural landowners from tax pressure, allow reasonable structures and forestry management, and provide practical rules for unusual parcels.

Rank	Main issue raised	Relative frequency	Summary
7	Housing flexibility and ADUs	Moderate	A repeated request asked the County to allow one ADU on 5-acre G5 Rural Lands parcels to support family housing, aging in place, and rural economic stability without changing rural density.
8	Roads, bridges, transportation, and infrastructure	Moderate	Commenters raised concerns about rural road safety, one-lane bridges, lack of shoulders, emergency access, coastal evacuation routes, pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure, ADA access, and whether infrastructure is adequate before growth is approved.
9	Public process, transparency, and document clarity	Lower but important	Some comments asked for clearer maps, better definitions, better acronym lists, clearer explanation of growth areas, more public participation, and better responses in the Final EIS.
10	Senior, disabled, and fixed-income population impacts	Lower but specific	Some organization comments said the EIS should better analyze senior-service demands, paratransit, ADA pedestrian needs, evacuation vulnerability, and displacement risks for fixed-income residents.
11	Tribal treaty resources and cultural-resource concerns	Lower but substantive	Comments asked for better analysis of impacts to treaty-protected hunting, fishing, gathering, salmon, water quality, nearshore resources, and Tribal consultation.
12	Miscellaneous individual requests	Lowest	A few comments were narrow or administrative, including individual parcel/survey questions, media inquiries, or general requests for careful planning.

Bottom Line

With the rumor-driven issue removed, the public-comment record becomes much more focused on growth management, environmental protection, rural land use, and infrastructure readiness. The main message is that residents and organizations want Grays Harbor County to grow carefully, protect its rural and natural character, use stronger science in the Final EIS, avoid pushing incompatible growth into rural areas, protect water and habitat, and make sure roads, bridges, utilities, emergency access, and public services are addressed before approving additional development.