



TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law & Policy
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Hey New Orleans Readers/Voters! Get Hip to Where Your Next Mayor Stands at the September Coast and Water Mayoral Debate

As we keep telling you (and will repeat whenever we get the chance), water is [the reason New Orleans exists](#). It's also the source of our [greatest existential threats](#). Seems like the city's mayor should know what they're talking about when it comes to water. So, here is your weekly reminder that we are working with a coalition of organizations to put on the Mayoral Forum on Coast and Water for our city's mayoral candidates. Come join us on September 30th at the University of New Orleans. It's free to attend, and [registration is right here!](#)

MMMmmm, Not so Good

When we get sick, few things can make you feel better than a warm bowl of soup, and for many people, that soup is Campbell's Chicken Noodle Soup. So, what do you do for a lake or river that is feeling puny? If that lake is Lake Erie and that river is the Maumee River in Ohio, you might tell the Campbell's Company to stop polluting them. [Which is what Environment Ohio, Lake Erie Waterkeeper, and the U.S. EPA did in March 2024, after alleging that, over a six year period, Campbell's illegally dumped wastewater containing phosphorus, ammonia, E. coli bacteria, oil and grease, and other pollutants into the Maumee and, by extension, Lake Erie. More than 5,400 times.](#) By our math, that's more than two illegal discharges a day! What were once allegations are now admissions, as Campbell's has acknowledged the dumping, which should allow the issues of legal liability, pollution prevention, and civil penalties to be addressed more quickly. However, this could lead to a separate tragedy: fewer lawyers being hired and fewer legal fees being paid. Some sacrifices are worth making, and the lawyers can always soothe their feelings with a warm bowl of, uh, Progreso?

[Negatory](#) on Discussing the Agua

How could a community that has so far missed out on being part of the super cool [information economy](#) get to be part of the "[in crowd](#)"? It might get [Megacorp's](#) attention by having lots of readily available land and water and a pliant government that's open to being wooed by promises of untold wealth, job opportunities, and community investment if they allow—or better yet, encourage—data centers to locate there. But there's a catch. The contracting government [must often sign a non-disclosure agreement](#) (NDA) covering nearly all aspects of the deal, including environmental impacts such as water use. Surely, the investment in the community will outweigh the massive strain on infrastructure, right? Maybe or maybe not; but [finding out is no easy thing](#) thanks to all of those [NDAs being signed in communities](#)

[across the country](#). Which is why [Midwest Environmental Advocates is suing the City of Racine, Wisconsin](#), to get it to disclose how much water the Microsoft data center in Mount Pleasant will likely use to cool its computing infrastructure.

The growing desire to understand the fuller dimensions of these deals is understandable. Given their size and the uncertainty surrounding their impacts, both good and bad. For example, given the [tax breaks offered to some of these data centers, they run the risk of making them loss leaders for local and state governments](#) and [increasing utility costs](#) of other consumers. The truth is, these data centers may be on the verge of transforming, with governmental assistance, entire communities, landscapes, and water resources for years to come. The prevalent “just trust us” attitude, combined with the stark lack of transparency, could easily erode the very public confidence that government and the tech sector so badly need. Indeed, beyond the issue of trust is the still unanswered question of whether NDAs are even enforceable against instrumentalities of the state that are subject to freedom of information and public transparency laws in nearly every state. It’s a fair question.

Coming Up:

[Mayoral Forum on Water & Coast](#); New Orleans, LA;
September 30, 2025

[CRCL Coastal Stewardship Awards](#); Baton Rouge,
LA; November 13, 2025

Water jobs:

[Attorney](#); California Water Resources Control Board; Sacramento, CA

[Editorial Director, Mississippi River Basin Ag & Water Desk](#); Columbia, MO

[Clinical Assistant or Associate Professor](#), Tulane Environmental Law Clinic,
New Orleans, LA



The [Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy](#) is a program of the Tulane University Law School. The Institute is dedicated to fostering a greater appreciation and understanding of the vital role that water plays in our society and of the importance of the legal and policy framework that shapes the uses and legal stewardship of water.

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