

Headline

[Resident near Open AI, Oracle data center still fighting to intervene](#)

By Jennifer Eberbach

Highlighter Guidelines

Red – Quotes and Personal Statements

Yellow – Claims/Verifiable Information that aren't quotes or personal statements

Blue – Repeated verifiable information

Green – Information that needs to be clarified

SALINE TWP., MI — A rural resident is not done fighting to halt construction of the “Stargate” hyperscale data center project that is already underway in Saline Township.

In February, a Washtenaw County judge denied Kathryn Haushalter’s request to intervene in a lawsuit that had already been settled. That lawsuit allowed the OpenAI- and Oracle-backed data center to move forward off W. Michigan Avenue. Now, Haushalter is asking the judge to reconsider.

Data center developer Related Digital and property owners had sued the township after officials denied rezoning about 575 acres for the data center. Following the suit, township officials reversed course and decided to settle.

Haushalter filed a legal motion in December to defend the township board’s initial September vote denying rezoning. That motion came after the board had already reversed course and agreed to settle in October.

In her ruling on Feb. 20, Washtenaw County Circuit Court Judge Julia Owdziej said Haushalter’s effort to intervene was “futile” and “untimely.” A final order was issued on March 7.

Haushalter and her attorney are now arguing the court erred in denying her motion to intervene.

On Feb. 20, the judge found Haushalter’s claim that the township violated the Open Meetings Act by not voting properly to settle the suit would be “futile.”

Haushalter’s legal team argued that township meeting minutes show the vote to settle the suit was done in closed session, which would have been a violation of the Open Meetings Act.

However, the minutes were inaccurate. The township board was in open session when they voted.

“To say that was done in hiding or in secret is inaccurate. It’s very unfortunate that the meeting minutes were inaccurate,” Judge Owdziej said on Feb. 20. “But to my end, to make a ruling and to ignore what actually happened, I don’t think I can do that.”

Commented [Ca1]: The term "Stargate" needs more clarification... Should verify if the term is related to the data center project

Commented [Ca2R1]: Findings: The title of the OpenAI article/press release promoting the project uses 'Starlink.' Furthermore, in the first sentence of they refer to the data center as a "Stargate campus."

Article: <https://openai.com/index/expanding-stargate-to-michigan/>

Conclusion: The term "Stargate" seems to be appropriate given the use of the term to describe the data center by the company.

Commented [Ca3]: The data center project needs to be verified as legitimate; in addition to its stated location in Saline Township

Commented [Ca4R3]: Findings: An article written by Peter Maxwell at WXYZ - Channel 7 Detroit confirms the construction of the data center taking place in Saline Township.

Commented [Ca5]: Should check that the judge did

Commented [Ca6R5]: Findings: An article published

Commented [Ca7]: Two things to check here... Major

Commented [Ca8R7]: Findings: In the same WXYZ -

Commented [Ca9]: Is Related Digital primarily a data

Commented [Ca10R9]: Findings: Related Digital is a

Commented [Ca11]: This statement needs a bit more

Commented [Ca12R11]: Finding: The surrounding

Commented [Ca13]: Did these two parties sue the

Commented [Ca14R13]: Findings: The parties did in

Commented [Ca15]: Verify the accuracy of the date M

Commented [Ca16R15]: Findings: A article published

Commented [Ca17]: Verify the month of October to b

Commented [Ca18R17]: Findings: A document holdi

Commented [Ca19]: You can never be too sure of

Commented [Ca20R19]: Findings: Using the same

Commented [Ca21]: Verify that Judge Julia Owdziej d

Commented [Ca22R21]: Findings: According to an

Commented [Ca23]: Verify that the date of the final

Commented [Ca24R23]: Findings: According to the

Commented [Ca25]: Attempt to verify that this was a

Commented [Ca26R25]: Findings: A previously used

Commented [Ca27]: Who said this? Was this a court

Commented [Ca28R27]: Findings: According to the

Commented [Ca29]: Direct quote! Attempt to find

Commented [Ca30R29]: Findings: Using ALEA as a a

Haushalter and her legal team are now arguing that she was not required to prove that claim in order to intervene as a defendant in the case. They say the court failed to consider Haushalter's request to intervene as a defendant separately from her attempt to be a cross-claimant with claims against the township.

They also argue she has a 'viable' claim that the township violated the Open Meetings Act. Specifically, they claim the township Board of Trustees never took a final, proper vote to authorize the final version of the consent judgment. They argue additional work was done to finalize the consent judgment after the township board voted on Oct. 1 to approve the consent judgment under terms outlined by township attorneys.

Township attorney Fred Lucas said that claim is "false."

"There was no more work done," Lucas said. "What was put in the consent judgment was exactly what was discussed. We didn't change anything."

"There were no secret agreements. This was as public and transparent as anything I've been involved in. There was no attempt to hide anything that was done from the public," he said.

Haushalter "has every right to file a motion," he said. "I assume that is a precursor to her appealing the decision. We'll see what the judge says."

Related Digital officials called Haushalter's claims "erroneous," also pointing out the court already heard and rejected her claims, in a statement from spokesperson Natalie Ravitz.

"It is unfortunate that lawyers from outside the State continue to pursue this matter with her, especially when you consider that hundreds of local Michigan workers are on site every day helping build the project and we are working so collaboratively with the Township Board and County to see it through," they said in the statement.

Haushalter also claims the court "erred in concluding that (she) could not intervene because the case was closed, a rule that, if correct, would nullify intervention motions as a matter of law whenever a judgment is entered," according to a statement from the Rural Defense Fund, which is helping with Haushalter's legal fees.

Haushalter is also disputing that her claims were untimely. She is arguing the court erred in finding her claims were not filed in time and that statutory authority allows her at least 60 days to bring her motion to intervene, according to the defense fund.

On Feb. 20, the judge also cited additional factors before making her decision, including potential harm to property owners who had already auctioned off farm equipment and abandoned their residence and buildings.

The judge also considered that Related Digital had already done a substantial amount of work, including entering into contracts and purchase orders, as well as a \$40 million non-refundable deposit for DTE Energy to provide power to the data center, among other commitments.

Commented [Ca31]: Verify this set of claims by Ms. Haushalter's legal team as well

Commented [Ca32R31]: Findings: According to the Rural Michigan Defense Fund, which is supporting Ms. Haushalter's legal challenge, her legal team argues she has a "viable" claim that the township violated the Open Meetings Act. They contend the Board of Trustees never took a final, proper vote to authorize the final version of the consent judgment, and that additional work was done after the board's Oct. 1 vote to approve the consent judgment under terms outlined by township attorneys.

Link: <https://ruralmiddefense.org/press>

Conclusion: That framing, together with the supporting group's posted case summary, gives me confidence that this claim is accurately reported.

Commented [Ca33]: Attempt to verify these quotes and statements that were given by the Saline Township attorney and officials at Related Digital if possible

Commented [Ca34R33]: Findings: According to reporting on the Saline Township data center dispute, township officials said the Oct. 1 vote to advance the settlement happened in public, and they attributed any appearance of secrecy to a clerical error in the meeting minutes. Related Digital publicly defended the project as a major economic investment and said it would bring jobs, tax revenue, and community benefits.

Link: <https://www.planetdetroit.org/2025/12/saline-data-center-settlement-challenge/>

Link: <https://www.related-digital.com/news/data-center-developer-defends-saline-twp-hyperscale-project>

Conclusion: The reported statements from township officials and Related Digital give me confidence to verify this claim in substance, but definitive verification would require the reporter's underlying sources or a direct transcript of the quoted remarks.

Commented [Ca35]: Verify the existence of the Rural Defense Fund and that they are in fact helping Mr. Haushalter with her legal fees

Commented [Ca36R35]: Findings: here is evidence that the Rural Michigan Defense Fund exists, and that it is publicly sourcing donations to cover Ms. Haushalter's legal fees. This is evidenced by a fundraising page says: "Donate today to support Kathryn Haushalter's legal ...

Commented [Ca37]: Verify Ms. Haushalter's argument and dispute about her claims being untimely is possible

Commented [Ca38R37]: Findings: According to reporting and the case-summary materials available, Ms. Haushalter is disputing the finding that her claims were untimely. Her legal team argues the court erred in treating the motion to intervene as late, and they point ...

Commented [Ca39]: Verify the judge did in fact cite the aforementioned additional factors as written out by the author. Proceed to verify her consideration on Related Digital if at all possible

Commented [Ca40R39]: Findings: The reporting I could verify says the judge denied Ms. Haushalter's intervention motion because it was untimely, and it also says the township and developer argued the case was filed past the 30-day deadline. The same reporting says the developer side pointed to the fact that a \$40 million nonrefundable DTE deposit had already been made, and that there was substantial project work already underway, including equipment orders and contracts.

Link: <https://www.planetdetroit.org/2026/02/judge-denies-data-center-intervention/>

<https://www.wemu.org/wemu-news/2026-02-20/lawsuit-aimed-at-stopping-saline-township-data-center-rejected-by-washtenaw-county-jud>

Conclusion: The reporting supports the judge's untimeliness ruling and the developer's claims about substantial work and the DTE deposit, but definitive verification of the exact "additional factors" language would require the underlying court order or transcript.