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Consulting & Strategic Solutions

TPI Aspen Forum 2026

Event Summary & Strategic Briefing

August 16–18, 2026 · St. Regis Aspen Resort · Technology Policy Institute

Compiled from on-site session recordings, cross-checked against the official forum agenda and augmented with public-record research.

METHOD & COVERAGE

What this briefing covers

- Source material: six substantive session recordings captured on-site across the three forum days (7+ hours), with AI-generated recaps reviewed in full.
- Verification: session titles, speakers, and affiliations corrected against the official TPI Aspen Forum 2026 agenda.
- Augmentation: sessions not captured on-site are covered from the public record, with sources cited in the companion document.
- Reconciliation: key figures are checked against canonical public sources throughout, from Supreme Court filings to grid-operator data.

DAY	RECORDED SESSIONS
Sun 8/16	Welcome Reception — no formal program; coverage begins Monday
Mon 8/17	AI & Energy morning block — GPUs to GDP; Economist's View; Meeting AI's Power Demand (2h17m)
Mon 8/17	Video Competition & Vertical Integration dinner (1h40m)
Tue 8/18	Who Gets the Computing Power? (Anjney Midha)
Tue 8/18	A View from the Hill (committee counsel panel)
Tue 8/18	Humphrey's Executor & antitrust; FCC fireside (Gomez); AI & telecom economics (1h39m)
Tue 8/18	Cybersecurity's Hardest Problems (partial — first 26 min)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The takeaways that matter

Six of eight takeaways shown — post-Chevron drafting discipline and the agriculture/water crossover are developed in the companion summary.

Energy is AI's binding constraint

Transmission takes 7–10 years; AI buildout moves in months. Grid capacity, not capital, now gates diffusion.

Ratepayer politics went bipartisan

Data center backlash is now a pocketbook issue on left and right — elections and state audits are turning on it.

Compute is becoming a market

Grid anchors, spot markets, and “seasoned” GPU clusters (~3x rate premium) reframe compute as a tradable, appreciating asset.

The FTC as we know it is ending

Post–Humphrey's Executor, panelists expect a single-administrator agency and competition authority drifting to DOJ.

AI has re-priced telecom

Fiber must ~double by 2029; permitting — not construction — is the bottleneck; USF reform is now urgent.

AI beat quantum to the punch

Per the cyber panel's framing, the “Mythos moment” forced security practice to absorb frontier AI ahead of the long-anticipated quantum threat.

THE FORUM

Three days at the St. Regis Aspen

DAY 1 · SUN AUG 16

Arrival & Welcome Reception

Opening evening reception (6:00–7:30 PM). No formal program — per the official agenda, the substantive sessions began Monday morning, so briefing coverage begins with Day 2.

DAY 2 · MON AUG 17

AI, Energy & Markets

Morning block on data center economics and the grid (Greenstein, Borenstein, Google/PowerBridge/Georgia Senate). Evening breakout dinners — the Video Competition & Vertical Integration session was recorded in full.

DAY 3 · TUE AUG 18

Compute, Institutions & Security

Compute allocation (Midha), Hill counsel panel, Humphrey's Executor & the FTC, FCC firesides, AI & telecom economics, and cybersecurity — the densest recorded day.

AI & ENERGY — MORNING SESSIONS

AI's power demand is outrunning the grid

- Transmission mismatch: 7–10 years from regional plan to energization vs. AI buildout measured in months. Advanced reconductoring can ~2x existing lines cheaply — but rate-of-return regulation rewards the $1B new build over the $100M upgrade.
- Phantom loads: developers file duplicate requests across utilities, inflating queue totals. AEP Ohio saw 30 GW of requests on a 4 GW system; its take-or-pay tariff collapsed the queue to ~13 GW. ERCOT now requires $50k/MW deposits under Batch Zero — ~438 GW sat queued (≈89% data centers) before the screen took effect.
- Flexibility gap: data centers run ~60% capacity factor but refuse curtailment in the 60–100 truly critical hours/year; compute migration between regions remains negligible in practice.
- Bridge power: behind-the-meter gas engines buy speed-to-power but can't deliver five-nines alone; Texas PUNs formalize the bridge. Solar modules at ~$0.20/W and grid batteries change the map — California went from 2020 blackouts to best-in-class headroom on 21+ GW of storage (CEC, Aug 2026).

7–10 yrs

New transmission, plan → power on. The core timeline mismatch with AI demand.

30→13 GW

AEP Ohio's queue once its take-or-pay tariff took effect (PUCO, 2025) — most was speculative.

21+ GW

California grid batteries (CEC, Aug 2026; ~0.4 GW in 2020) — from blackouts to best-in-class headroom.

AI & ENERGY — WHO PAYS AND WHO BUILDS

The ratepayer reckoning

+2–3¢/kWh

Wholesale cost increase in PJM attributed to data center demand growth.

10–20%

Retail rate increases across parts of the Mid-Atlantic and New Jersey.

>$1.1B

Projected net benefits to other grid customers from Google's Arkansas contract.

- An unresolvable pledge: the White House Ratepayer Protection Pledge promises maximal data center growth and held-harmless ratepayers — but in constrained wholesale markets, new demand transfers rents from buyers to generators regardless of who pays for wires.
- Bipartisan backlash: environmental objections on the left, rate increases on the right. Panelists tied Georgia PSC incumbents' losses to the backlash and described Texas shifting from recruitment to audits.
- Contract reform: take-or-pay large-load tariffs re-align risk the way ordinary industrial contracting always has; longer term, pricing must move off volumetric recovery (as telecom did) toward real-time and subscription models.
- Engagement playbook: early community dialogue, full property taxes, transparent contracts, closed-loop cooling, structured net benefits (Google Michigan: $9M to other customers).

BREAKOUT DINNER — VIDEO COMPETITION & VERTICAL INTEGRATION

Attention vs. antitrust in the video market

- Market definition is the whole game: leisure time is contested by streaming, FAST, short-form, and gaming — but the SSNIP test asks only about short-run switching under a 5–10% price rise. A Netflix hike sends users to Hulu or ad tiers, not TikTok.
- Short-form as complement: viral clips revive legacy shows; vertical video is arriving on Disney+; a first-of-its-kind TikTok–Disney licensing deal formalizes fan-driven discovery. WWE's tolerated fan uploads earned ~$14M and lifted tickets and PPV.
- The 12-state challenge to the Paramount Skydance–Warner Bros. Discovery merger (filed July 2026) defines three markets that exclude Apple, Amazon, and YouTube — the very firms that most threaten legacy studios.
- AI cuts both ways: creation tools lower entry barriers while data-rich aggregators (search + viewing + shopping) concentrate the rewards. Music is the leading indicator — real audiences for AI artists, platform labeling, and a verified-human premium.
- Performance CTV: Amazon's closed-loop purchase attribution — now copied by Walmart/Vizio and Roku — is restructuring TV ad economics; early CTV fraud (~30% of “Roku” programmatic inventory) is being remediated with watermarking.

~75%

Of Disney's profits now come from theme parks — content is IP feedstock, insulating it from studio economics.

>50%

Of YouTube's billions of daily watch-hours now land on television screens; it sells in the TV upfronts.

15–20%

Merger cost takeout Wall Street sees as the survival threshold for standalone studios.

BREAKOUT DINNER — VIDEO COMPETITION & VERTICAL INTEGRATION

Piracy: the competitor antitrust forgets

~55

Countries already operate site-blocking regimes (court or administrative orders served on ISPs).

+ legal use

UK blocking of ~50 pirate sites at once measurably increased legal consumption — friction works on casual pirates.

$0.99

iTunes pricing — the classic proof that legal services price against piracy, not just each other.

- Unmeasured but real: piracy disciplines legal pricing yet is excluded from every HHI calculation. If U.S. site blocking passes and works, legal services gain pricing power — today's merger math assumes competitive pressure that may disappear.
- Proposed U.S. framework: rights holders obtain no-fault injunctions in federal court against foreign sites trafficking “virtually exclusively” in pirated content; ISPs implement; public-interest parties may contest.
- Live sports is the flashpoint: time-sensitive events cannot be consumed late, and pirate streams double as malware, identity-theft, and ad-fraud infrastructure. UFC and the Premier League are the loudest advocates; stream-level (not just domain) blocking is the ask.
- The AI arms race: piracy-as-a-service platforms now automate domain hopping at machine speed, while blocking orders move at court speed — the effectiveness gap will widen without faster process.

WHO GETS THE COMPUTING POWER? — ANJNEY MIDHA

America wastes most of the compute it has

- Midha's waste stack: node occupancy at AI startups runs ~50–55% (scheduling is hard and deprioritized); within active chips, true utilization is ~10–15%. His net estimate: ~15–20% of paid-for compute does real work (his figures; not independently verified).
- Why: compute contracts aren't bankable collateral; take-or-pay terms bill 24/7 regardless of use; infrastructure ops distract small research teams — the very teams that are AI's most productive unit.
- The Google precedent: replace quarterly VP horse-trading with an abstraction API over heterogeneous chips, pooling, composite “GXU” units (compute + storage + memory + networking), and an internal auction — occupancy rose toward ~95%.
- National Compute: deploy that stack across under-utilized U.S. data centers to create a national spot market (nationalcompute.com, public access expected within months), with a self-regulatory standard being shaped with Washington regulators.
- The grid analogy — with a catch: like factories abandoning private coal generators for the shared grid, but compute is not fungible; the abstraction layer is the missing AC/DC standard.

80–85¢

Of every startup compute dollar wasted under standard single-tenant contracts — Midha's estimate.

~95%

Node occupancy Google reached with its internal marketplace, up from ~50–55%.

~10–15%

True in-chip utilization even on active nodes, per Midha — the deepest layer of the waste stack.

WHO GETS THE COMPUTING POWER? — MARKET MECHANICS

Compute as an appreciating asset class

Grid anchors

AI labs commit 4–5-year base loads; ~7–8 labs with mixed workloads empirically flatten demand peaks and enable a spot market for the rest.

GPU “seasoning”

Clusters proven by frontier teams command ~3x bare-metal hourly rates — an asset-backed infrastructure fund has been raised on the thesis (speaker-reported; not independently verified).

Fleet management

Reselling idle, already-sold hyperscaler capacity for a revenue share. CEOs approve; sales teams comped on new capacity resist — align incentives below the C-suite.

Energy tie-in

Modular data centers dropped onto under-utilized generation raise revenue per megawatt in communities that pay for capacity whether used or not.

Cross-compilation

Jobs can't span chip types, so the “grid” is 5–6 sub-grids — and in the last ~6 months AI models now write most of the porting code themselves.

Industrial proof point

Midha's showcase — an incubated materials lab (ChatGPT co-creator + DeepMind physics lead): AI-predict → robot-synthesize → X-ray-verify loop yielded 13 new materials in 6 months, incl. a ballistic heat-shield crystal previously made only in China.

Figures and examples on this slide are Midha's own, as stated in session.

A VIEW FROM THE HILL — COMMITTEE COUNSEL PANEL

What Congress can actually pass

BEAD oversight

Three goals intact (buildout, affordability, digital equity); fights are over tech neutrality (satellite vs. fiber), roughly $20B in claimed program savings awaiting NTIA guidance, and timelines.

FirstNet & spectrum

FirstNet reauthorization passed the House unanimously — Senate by year-end. Spectrum substance is bipartisan; reconciliation revenue politics is the friction.

CSAM accountability

Rare near-universal agreement: raise platform report quality to NCMEC, add liability levers, incentivize proactive detection. NO FAKES Act moved out of committee.

Permitting is the meta-issue

“Whether broadband or AI data centers or spectrum — it's the permitting.” Railroad rights-of-way fees/delays and Loudoun County's multi-year interconnect waits are the case studies; fix = predictable timelines, standard applications, known fees.

Post-Chevron drafting

With deference gone and the major questions doctrine active, statutes must say precisely what agencies may and may not do — “don't use ambiguity to conceal lack of agreement.”

Institutional speed

Congress is slow by design; the executive is fast but volatile; courts just raised the bar. Precision drafting is the only durable path for tech policy.

OVERRULING HUMPHREY'S EXECUTOR — KOVACIC · OHLHAUSEN · WHITE

The end of the FTC as we know it

- What changed: Trump v. Slaughter (decided 6–3, June 29, 2026) holds the FTC Act's for-cause removal protection unconstitutional — the bipartisan multi-member commission model and adjudicatory independence lose their legal foundation. 15+ “brand-name” agencies face structural review (FCC, NLRB, CFTC, STB).
- Likely trajectory: a de facto single-administrator FTC (EPA analog), serious consideration of folding competition authority into DOJ, and — one projection — an FTC surviving by 2031 mainly as a consumer-protection/privacy agency, possibly with an AI portfolio.
- What's most at risk: Section 5 “unfair methods” authority faces the next constitutional fight; the research pipeline (6(b) studies, Bureau of Economics) — “the R&D lab of U.S. competition policy” — may not survive a DOJ merger.
- Bipartisanship was a quality filter: FTC actions approved across party lines fared far better in court than party-line votes; minority commissioners and even the Sunshine Act's dysfunction shaped outcomes.
- Watch Congress: Commerce committees won't cede FTC jurisdiction to Judiciary without compensation — expect horse-trading, not clean consolidation.

How big is it? (panel scores, 10-yr significance)

7–8 / 10 — **Kovacic (fmr. FTC Chair)**

Instability, coordination failures, loss of the innovation function

4–5 / 10 — **Ohlhausen (fmr. Acting Chair)**

DOJ remains capable — if the research function survives

3–4 / 10 — **White (NYU Stern)**

Chiefly mourns lost institutional diversity for good ideas

FCC FIRESIDE (GOMEZ) + DOES AI CHANGE TELECOM ECONOMICS?

Telecom is being rebuilt around AI traffic

2x by 2029

Required fiber capacity growth — or fiber becomes as binding as chips and power.

$13B / 58M

Lumen's company-reported hyperscaler deals and fiber-mile target (up from 17M at end-2023) after reorganizing around AI.

~6x

Permitting (up to ~1 yr) vs. construction (~2 mo) for a fiber hut — the real deployment bottleneck.

- Commissioner Gomez, on the record: using the “nebulous public interest standard” to pressure broadcasters over content “strains the Constitution” (Disney/ABC challenge noted); national security screening shouldn't blur into industrial policy; USF needs a modernized contribution base plus an affordability component — and LEO satellite shouldn't be oversold.
- Architecture shift: traffic is moving from north–south (user↔cloud) to massive east–west (data center↔data center) flows; AT&T sees traffic up ~15%/yr since 2023, with an expected acceleration toward a doubling within three years.
- The BEAD trade-off: in a constrained supply chain, premium-paying hyperscalers pull crews and fiber away from fixed-price public commitments — policymakers must decide who waits.
- Equity throughline (Feld): AI's benefits presume broadband; if investment follows only hyperscaler routes, underserved communities are locked out of the AI economy.
- WRC-27 stakes: direct-to-device, countering LEO obstruction, and IMT harmonization — as rivals use procedure to slow U.S. satellite momentum.

WHAT ARE CYBERSECURITY'S HARDEST PROBLEMS?

The “Mythos moment”: AI arrived before quantum

- The moderator's framing: the security community long assumed quantum computing would be the encryption-breaking event to prepare for. A frontier-AI release — the “Mythos moment” — got there first: “it came early, and it came under AI.”
- Glasswing beta: a pre-release enterprise program spanning companies across sectors was used to observe how the AI system behaved in real environments — the panel's springboard for AI-in-the-enterprise security lessons.
- The bench: Comcast public policy (Chernow), NIST's Cybersecurity for IoT program (Megas), incident response & privacy oversight (Raul — Harvard Law, Future of Privacy Forum, ex-PCLOB/OMB), and former White House NSC cyber leadership (Schwartz, Venable). Moderated by Shane Tews.
- Coverage note: the recording captures the first ~26 minutes (introductions and framing). The balance — NIST frameworks, IoT baselines, incident response practice — requires the full session recording or official materials.

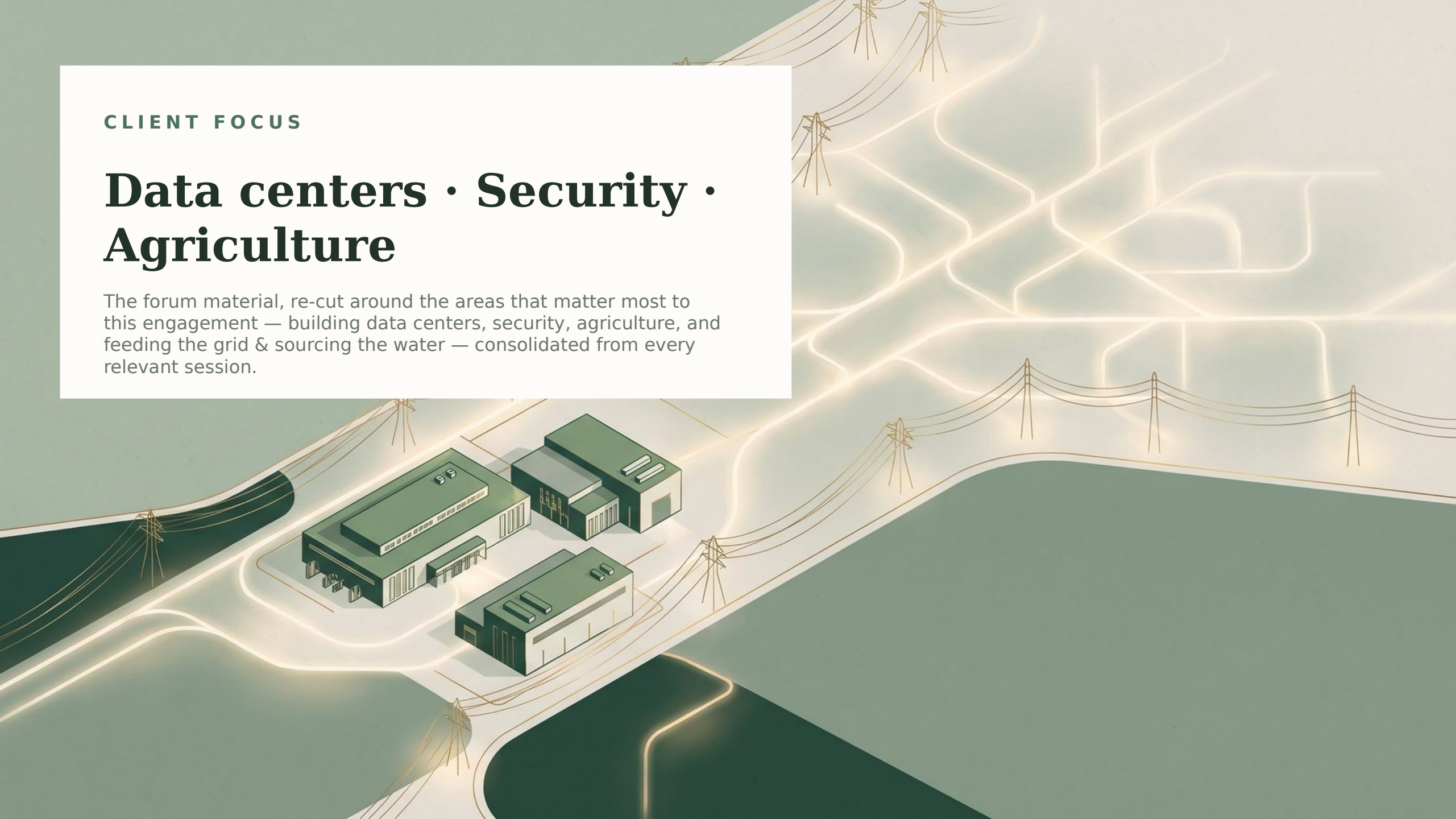
Quantum's “little cousin” showed up first

Threat timelines built around post-quantum cryptography now have to absorb frontier AI on a much shorter clock — recalibrating standards work, enterprise readiness, and incident response assumptions.

CLIENT FOCUS

Data centers · Security · Agriculture

The forum material, re-cut around the areas that matter most to this engagement — building data centers, security, agriculture, and feeding the grid & sourcing the water — consolidated from every relevant session.



BUILDING DATA CENTERS — SITING

Read the grid before the real estate

REGION	READ
California (CAISO)	Panel's pick for best headroom — 21+ GW of batteries (CEC, Aug 2026); strict permitting, high retail rates
Texas (ERCOT)	Fastest to contract; PUN structures; $50k/MW deposits; state now auditing
PJM / N. Virginia	Deep fiber + ecosystem, but 10–20% retail-rate backlash and multi-year interconnects
MISO (Midwest)	Cheapest wholesale power; capacity too tight to accommodate new load — expect pushback
Emerging value	West Texas stranded gas · Tennessee (non-ISO) · plains states (~$0.20/W solar modules)

- Speed-to-power is the design problem: Phase 1 (~10 MW) on behind-the-meter gas → hybrid BTM + early grid (~100–200 MW) → progressive grid integration at scale.
- Texas PUNs formalize the bridge — dedicated generation serves the load; the grid tie exports until import capacity arrives.
- Full off-grid is not an end state: five-nines reliability requires the grid's diversification of sources.
- Workload flexibility in the 60–100 critical hours/year is an under-used negotiating chip with utilities.

BUILDING DATA CENTERS — EXECUTION

Queues, contracts, and the community playbook

- Welcome the queue filters: deposits and take-or-pay tariffs cut AEP Ohio's queue from ~30 GW to ~13 GW (PUCO, 2025) — real projects move up when phantom loads wash out.
- Model both cost layers: tariffs settle who pays for wires; wholesale rent transfer (2–3¢/kWh in PJM) hits every buyer regardless. Hedge with co-location on under-utilized generation and on-site solar + storage.
- Connectivity is the forgotten long pole: fiber must ~double by 2029; hut permitting (up to ~1 yr) runs ~6x construction (~2 mo); railroad rights-of-way and Loudoun-style interconnect waits set the real critical path. Contract fiber early.
- The community playbook that wins: engage before filings; pay full property taxes visibly; no redacted contracts; closed-loop cooling; structure measurable net benefits (Google Michigan $9M; Arkansas >$1B projected); educate in person, not on social media.

$50k/MW

ERCOT Batch Zero deposit — the new table stakes for a serious interconnection request.

2 mo vs 1 yr

Construction vs. permitting for a fiber hut — permitting is the critical path, everywhere.

~20%

Peak-day power reduction from evaporative cooling — evaluated watershed by watershed.

SECURITY — ACROSS EVERY SESSION

The security thread, pulled together

- The “Mythos moment” (the cyber panel moderator's framing): the encryption-relevant disruption long expected from quantum arrived early, as frontier AI — security practice is being forced to absorb it on a short clock.
- Enterprise lessons are flowing from pre-release beta programs (“Glasswing”) that observed AI behavior across real corporate environments.
- Pirate live-streams operate as planned criminal infrastructure — malware, identity theft, payment fraud — timed to major sporting events.
- CTV ad fraud (~30% of “Roku” programmatic inventory at peak) is being remediated with cryptographic inventory watermarking — a pattern portable to other supply chains.
- The FCC fireside drew the line between genuine communications-security screening and industrial policy dressed as national security.
- For builders: security requirements now live inside large-load tariffs, interconnection studies, and state siting reviews — engineer for them from day one.

AGRICULTURE — THE LANDSCAPE AI IS LANDING ON

Farm country is where the buildout happens

- Rural land is the siting frontier: cheap-power regions (MISO farm states, Georgia, Tennessee, the plains) are agricultural regions — with solar modules near ~$0.20/W, projects increasingly pencil on Midwest farmland.
- Water is the binding local issue: evaporative cooling cuts peak power ~20%, but agricultural watersheds compete directly with cooling demand — evaluate watershed by watershed; closed-loop is the named best practice.
- Rate impacts drive the backlash: Georgia Power's six increases in two years landed on rural customers, and PSC incumbents lost their seats.
- The winning model pairs industry with agriculture: Qcells solar manufacturing (largest in the Western Hemisphere), SK Battery, and Microsoft paying full property taxes in the same Georgia counties.
- Rural connectivity is agriculture's AI on-ramp: BEAD, USF affordability, and LEO + fiber decide whether precision agriculture participates in the AI economy.
- Committee politics matter: the CFTC survived decades of consolidation because Agriculture Committees would not surrender farm-futures jurisdiction — agriculture holds durable procedural power.

BUILDING DATA CENTERS — FEEDING THE GRID & SOURCING THE WATER

Two-way meters and the oil patch's water

- Feeding the grid: Texas PUNs export surplus power during development; grid-interactive UPS and battery fleets can sell frequency response and short-duration grid services — the redundancy you must buy for five-nines can earn revenue.
- Flexibility is becoming mandatory and monetizable: Texas SB 6 requires demand-response participation for new 75 MW+ loads; FERC directed PJM (Dec 2025) to adopt data-center-tailored transmission services; a Phoenix field demo ran an AI data center as a grid-interactive asset.
- An early, small-scale demonstration of workload-safe response (trade-reported): a March 2026 UK trial had a 96-GPU Blackwell Ultra cluster answer 22 live dispatch events, shedding 30% of power in under 40 seconds without disrupting jobs.
- Produced water: the Permian yields ~25M barrels of water a day (~3.5 barrels per barrel of oil); 50–60% is recycled into fracking. Treating the hypersaline remainder for data center cooling is proven and starting commercially — Texas Pacific Water Resources' Orla plant treats 10,000 bbl/day, and designs using data-center waste heat to drive treatment can recover lithium as a byproduct.
- The legal unlock: Texas HB 49 (eff. Sept 2025) shields beneficial reuse of treated produced water from tort liability; TCEQ is standing up river-discharge and land-application permitting. Land application = irrigation and rangeland restoration — the agriculture crossover, with environmental groups contesting discharge standards.

~1B gal/day

Permian produced water — roughly New York City's daily consumption, surfacing beside the cheapest power in Texas.

30% in 40s

Power shed by a Blackwell Ultra cluster on live grid dispatch — workload-safe flexibility is real.

75 MW

Texas SB 6 threshold above which new loads must participate in demand response.

BUILDING DATA CENTERS — ANATOMY OF A NET-BENEFIT DEAL

The Arkansas framework

- The vehicle: a Special Rate Customer Contract (SRC) — a negotiated agreement with minimum-bill features, filed with the Arkansas PSC under a “consistent with the public interest” standard, rather than a standard tariff rate.
- Dedicated generation is written into the contract: Entergy builds Cypress Solar (600 MW solar + 350 MW storage, $1.6B), recovered through Google's contract charges — not the general rate base. A separate docket anchors baseload with a gas plant near Redfield.
- Google covers its full cost of service, producing >$1.1B in projected net benefits over the contract life that flow to all Entergy Arkansas customers as downward rate pressure.
- Load flexibility is contractual — reduced usage when the grid is constrained. The forum's “curtailment as negotiating chip,” converted into a deal term.
- The friction to manage is transparency: redacted filings drew sustained press criticism and a contentious July 2026 rate hearing. The SRC only lands politically when paired with the community playbook.
- The template generalizes: EEI tracks large-load tariffs nationally; Columbia's Climate Law Blog maps large-load vs. clean-transition tariff design; Google's Michigan deal ($9M net benefit) is the same family.

$4B + $1B

Google's West Memphis campus (1,100 acres, through 2027) plus the Little Rock data center revealed Jan 2026.

950 MW

Cypress Solar: 600 MW solar + 350 MW batteries ($1.6B), utility-built but paid through the customer's contract charges.

>$1.1B

Projected net benefits to all Entergy Arkansas customers over the contract life.

SESSIONS NOT RECORDED — RECONSTRUCTED FROM PRESS & PRIMARY SOURCES

The rest of the forum

FTC Chairman Ferguson (fireside)

Via Broadband Breakfast: LLM competition looks healthy; the real antitrust risk is upstream — chips, energy, construction — where incumbents could squeeze AI developers. FTC AI enforcement targets false claims specifically.

Who Should Regulate the Space Economy?

Via Light Reading: a space startup can answer to seven federal agencies “and none of them is in charge” (McDowell); “don't regulate first and ask questions later”; China's interest is slowing U.S. progress (Swope).

Does America Lead in Quantum?

No press coverage — RAND's assessment (Parker, a panelist) is the best available proxy: the U.S. leads quantum computing, China leads quantum communications, sensing is contested.

Digital Crossroads · Supreme Court panels

Built on the 3rd edition of Nuechterlein & Shelanski's Digital Crossroads (MIT Press, 2026) — TPI's podcast with both authors is the closest substitute; TPI's preview essays frame the Court panel.

Breakout dinners (WRC-27 · USF · States)

WRC-27: U.S. delegation leadership ~20 months out; CITEL diplomacy is the strongest predictor of success. USF: Gomez's warning stands in. States: 300+ data center bills across 30+ states in 2026.

Commissioner Trusty + session video

Trusty's record: aggressive 5G/6G timeline (Upper C-Band order) and the D2D/unlicensed NPRM. TPI historically posts full session video within 2–6 weeks — worth monitoring.

VERIFIED AGAINST THE PUBLIC RECORD

Sources & further reading

More than forty verified sources are cited in full, with links and annotations, in the companion document. Highlights by focus area:

Institutions & energy

- Trump v. Slaughter, No. 25-332 (U.S. 2026) + CRS explainer
- NERC 2025 Long-Term Reliability Assessment (+224 GW 10-yr peak)
- PJM capacity auctions: $28.92 → $333.44/MW-day cap; monitor: 40% of costs from data centers
- PUCT ERCOT “Batch Zero” framework; AEP Ohio tariff (PUCO 2025)
- White House Ratepayer Protection Pledge (Mar 2026) + H.R. 9340
- FERC July 2026 order: NERC reliability standards for computational loads

Agriculture

- AFBF, “Balancing Data Center Growth with American Agriculture”
- American Farmland Trust, Farms Under Threat (+ county dashboard)
- UGA Extension on data centers & watersheds; ITIF water-solutions report
- NRECA large-load rate design for co-ops
- FCC Precision Ag Task Force; NREL InSPIRE agrivoltaics
- Virginia HB 153/SB 94: ag-impact assessments for 100 MW+ facilities

Security & compute

- NISTIR 8259 series (IoT baselines, Rev. 1 2026) — Megas's program
- NIST PQC: FIPS 203/204/205 + IR 8547 migration (2030/2035)
- MITRE ATT&CK C0062 — first documented AI-orchestrated espionage campaign
- UK AISI Frontier AI Trends; CISA “CI Fortify” (2026)
- ANSI/TIA-942 Rev. C facility standard; Uptime Tiers
- Google compute-market paper (Stokely et al.); AMP PBC's $1.3B fund (Bloomberg)

SYNTHESIS

Five threads that ran through every room

Permitting over capital

In energy, fiber, and data centers alike, the constraint is permission — queues, rights-of-way, approvals — not money or technology.

Speed asymmetry

AI-era actors move at machine speed; courts, ISOs, and Congress move at hearing speed. Every panel touched this gap.

Who bears the cost

Ratepayers vs. hyperscalers, BEAD towns vs. premium bidders, startups vs. idle capacity — cost allocation is the policy question of the moment.

Institutional redesign

FTC restructuring, post-Chevron drafting, USF modernization, compute self-regulation — 20th-century institutions being retrofitted for AI throughput.

Markets born from waste

The forum's most investable ideas monetize stranded capacity: idle GPUs, under-used gas plants, unsold cloud inventory, dark fiber.

DAHLING CONSULTING

Complex revenue. Controlled transformation.

A companion document — the full-detail session-by-session summary with sources and footnotes — accompanies this briefing.

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