

The below information and clarifications were sent to LUWG and USWG members and interested parties via email following the September 23rd joint meeting.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the September 23rd LUWG/USWG Meeting. The CBLCM [web viewer](#) is updated with the most recent results (Run #3.1), along with an [updated FAQ document](#) and [land use crosswalk](#), which has been updated to include the acreage of solar per county that has been approved between 2021/22 and 2025/26.

I have also attached the residential and commercial impervious surface equations per state for those of you interested. This document includes the state specific equations that are used to convert simulated development to land use. Specifically, they calculate the % of simulated development that is impervious based on the lot size, where lot size is derived from the residential and commercial density layers. These are the equations that are referenced in the crosswalk table and were shown in the "[CBLCM Phase 7 Land Use Conversion](#)" presentation.

In addition, I wanted to apologize for some of the back-and-forth during the discussion on data centers and any confusion it may have caused. It was a valuable discussion, and I appreciate the range of perspectives and thoughtful input shared by the group.

Although we reached a different point in the discussion during the September meeting, I would like to move forward with a formal vote from the LUWG on how data centers should be accounted for in the forecasts. This will ensure that the LUWG's decision is clearly documented and transparent, and that all members have an opportunity to formally register their position. If you have additional comments or considerations that you would like included on the record, please feel free to share those as well.

Voting Members: Please use the attached consent continuum to submit your votes via email (jpickford@usgs.gov) on the following decision items by 5pm Friday, October 9th. There is one vote requested from USWG voting members and three votes requested from LUWG voting members.

Decision Requested: The **USWG** is asked to approve the final forecast of utility scale solar for the “Business as Usual” scenario for Phase 7.

Decision Requested: The **LUWG** is asked to approve the final land use forecast for the “Business as Usual” scenario for Phase 7.

Decision Requested: The **LUWG** is asked to approve the “burning in” of existing and proposed data centers in the 2021/22 land use/land cover for the “Business as Usual” scenario for Phase 7. In this approach, data centers would not be mapped as a separate land use class, but rather, each data center would add up to 11 acres of impervious surface to the commercial land use footprint in the simulated forecasts.

- **Default:** If the LUWG does not approve this approach, the data center footprint will be accounted for, as all other impervious surface is, in the next available high-resolution land use/land cover update developed using 2025/26 imagery and available in 2029. Please see the decision item below to indicate your support for the inclusion of this information in a CAST update in 2029.
- **NOTE:** If the data center decision is approved by the LUWG, we will update the 2040 "Business As Usual" land use forecast accordingly, re-post the final results to the web viewer for the LUWG and USWG to review, and ask the workgroups to re-approve the final results.

Decision Requested: As a follow up to the discussion about the land use forecasts and the Clean Water Goal Team discussions about periodic model updates, the **LUWG** is asked to indicate their level of support for incorporating critical, foundational datasets -- such as the high-resolution land use/land cover data, Census of Agriculture, and updated land use forecasts -- in CAST, as they become available, starting in 2029. This will ensure the most up to date information is used in the model to evaluate Watershed Implementation Plans and progress towards the TMDL.

Additionally, one of the decisions above addresses how data centers would be represented in the Phase 7 land use forecasts. It does not preclude the LUWG from pursuing alternative approaches to better understand or address the potential impacts of data centers and their associated energy infrastructure. The LUWG could consider the following options:

- *Endorsing alternative scenarios for partnership use in WIP development:* In Phase 6, the CBLCM was used to create customized local scenarios testing future development pressures, changes in impervious surfaces, and other land conversions. Alternative land use scenarios, such as the Forest Conservation

scenario in Phase 6, allowed states to incorporate certain information into their individual WIPs without directly impacting allocation development. A similar approach could be pursued in Phase 7 if the LUWG chooses to endorse it and the Partnership agrees. For example, an alternative scenario could examine the potential effects of data center and energy infrastructure development under a scenario in which all permitted and proposed data centers are ultimately approved and implemented.

- *Leading or sponsoring a Science Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) workshop to investigate the impact of data centers:* The LUWG could endorse or solicit a STAC workshop proposal to investigate the cumulative impacts of data centers, and potentially associated solar and energy infrastructure, on the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

We will having a small discussion on **October 8th** to discuss opinions about the inclusion of data centers in the CLBCM. If you want to join, please let me know and I will forward you the invite. No official decisions will be made during the call.