Source: *Quiet Communities*

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Quiet Communities and Science for Georgia Release First-of-its-Kind Study on the Impacts of Data Center and Cryptomining Noise

New national survey documents widespread reports of persistent noise and disrupted quality of life as AI data centers and cryptomines rapidly expand across the United States

LINCOLN, Mass. and ATLANTA, Sept. 14, 2026 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Today, researchers from Quiet Communities, the premier nonprofit advancing scientific evidence to reduce the harmful effects of noise on public health and the environment, and Science for Georgia, a science advocacy nonprofit, released the findings from a first-of-its-kind national survey on the impacts of data center and cryptomining noise pollution on public health. The survey of people who live near these facilities revealed that the vast majority report hearing data center-related noise inside their homes and that it impacts their physical and mental health. Approved by the University of Georgia Institutional Review Board* (IRB), the study provides critical, quantitative insights into how persistent operational noise from data centers and cryptomines affects daily life and offers new evidence to inform policymakers, regulators and communities weighing future development.

The survey received 103 responses from residents across 11 states. Participants answered questions about the facilities near their homes, their proximity to those facilities, and how the noise has affected their health, quality of life and the broader community. Among the findings:

- 83% of respondents reported hearing data center or cryptomining noise inside their homes.

- Respondents who could hear the noise inside their homes reported that it interfered with their ability to rest and relax (71%), sleep undisturbed (65%) or concentrate (54%).
- A vast majority of respondents expressed concerns about impacts on their mental health (95%), physical health (87%) and property values (90%).
- 67% of respondents have considered moving or leaving their homes due to the noise.
- Many described avoiding outdoor spaces, experiencing chronic sleep disruption and feeling unable to escape the constant noise.
- Pets and wildlife are also impacted by noise. Many respondents noticed a negative change in a pet's behavior (68%), a pet's feeding habits (62%) and nearby wildlife (87%).

The fact that over 76% of respondents who lived more than a half mile (2,640 feet) away could still hear noise inside their homes has direct policy implications. Zoning and ordinance laws set minimum buffers between facilities and neighboring land. Many buffers are about 500 feet, or about 1/10 of a mile, which is most likely inadequate for both humans and livestock.

What Causes the Noise and Why Does It Matter?

Both data centers and cryptomining facilities rely on industrial cooling systems, HVAC equipment and backup generators that can produce sustained noise, with recorded sound levels exceeding 80 dBA—comparable to a vacuum cleaner or factory floor sounds. Because these facilities typically operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week, nearby residents become exposed to continuous low-frequency noise for months or years at a time. Many respondents compared the constant hum to a large engine idling outside their residence. As previous research shows, noise can directly result in high blood pressure, and in 2020, long-term exposure to environmental noise was linked to over 45,000 new cases of heart disease and 12,000 premature deaths.

"Noise pollution is a proven public health hazard, linked to cardiovascular disease, sleep disruption, stress and cognitive impairment," said Jamie Banks, Ph.D., M.Sc., founder and president of Quiet Communities. "As data centers and cryptomines expand into more communities, we've seen surprisingly little data documenting actual resident experiences. This survey begins to fill that gap, and the results suggest these impacts are widespread enough that they deserve serious attention from policymakers and the broader industry."

Data Center Expansion Emerges as Bipartisan Issue

As AI adoption and demand accelerate, data centers and cryptomining facilities are rapidly expanding into communities across the U.S. As of April 2026, 42% of Americans live within five miles of an existing or planned data center, with more than 3,000 facilities currently operating nationwide and roughly 1,500 additional projects proposed. Increasingly, the two industries are converging, with many companies that once focused primarily on cryptomining now building or operating AI data center infrastructure.

Despite growing community opposition, new plans for both AI and cryptomining data centers, and the continuous restructuring by cryptomine developers to incorporate AI infrastructure, have left residents to advocate for themselves. Yet despite their rapid expansion, policymakers and local officials have had limited independent research to guide decisions about how these facilities should be regulated to protect nearby residents. Since noise ordinances often do not go so far as to address this category of noise, many who live within miles of the facility are left living alongside a constant hum.

"The pace of these developments has far outrun our critical understanding of their impacts on our health and communities," said Dr. Amy Sharma, executive director of Science for Georgia**.** "Communities are being asked to host facilities without the benefit of robust, independent research on what living next to them actually means over the long term. Our goal is to ensure that decisions about data center and cryptomining development are grounded in evidence, with public health treated as a core consideration rather than an afterthought."

The survey was open from March 18 through late April 2026 and was distributed through community networks, partner organizations and public social media outreach. Although there was no minimum or maximum distance requirement, more than half of respondents reported living within one-half mile of a facility.

*The University of Georgia IRB is the oversight committee charged with ensuring that human subjects research is conducted in compliance with the applicable federal, state, and institutional policies and procedures.

About Quiet Communities

Quiet Communities, Inc. is a nonprofit organization dedicated to addressing noise pollution as a public health and environmental issue, and promoting quiet as a valuable natural resource. Founded in 2013 by health and environmental scientist Jamie Banks, Ph.D., M.Sc., the organization draws on scientific, medical, public policy, and legal expertise from the United States and abroad. Quiet Communities collaborates with researchers, clinicians, communities, and policymakers to build public understanding and advance evidence-informed noise policy. Learn more at quietcommunities.org

About Science For Georgia

Science for Georgia is a nonprofit organization working to ensure that Georgians understand, value and engage with science. Founded in 2018, the organization bridges the gap between scientists and the public through training, outreach and advocacy for the responsible use of science in public policy. Science for Georgia fosters dialogue between scientists and communities to advance equitable, evidence-based solutions to challenges including climate change, food security and health—issues that disproportionately affect communities of color. Learn more at scienceforgeorgia.org.

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