

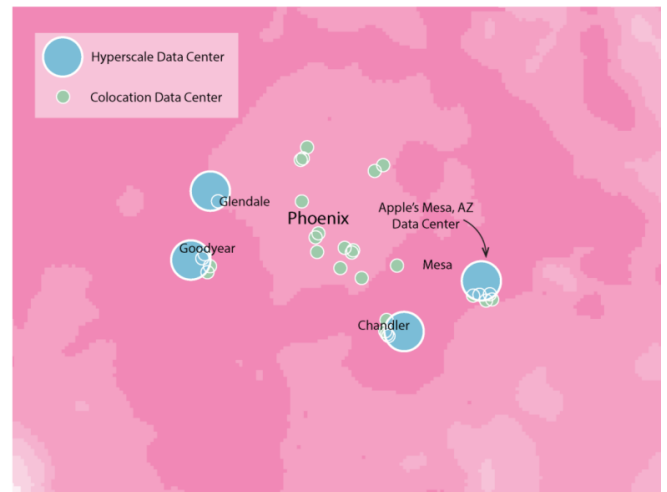
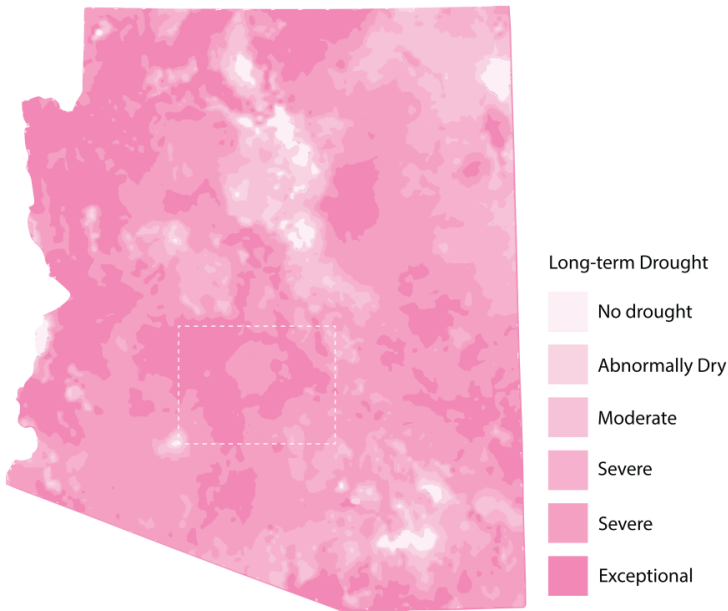
Mesa, Arizona



Image: Apple's data center in Mesa, Arizona

In 2021, the City Council of Mesa, Arizona approved the construction of a new [hyperscale](#) data center that would require 1.25 million gallons of water per day, exacerbating the concerns of Mesa residents growing increasingly frustrated by the exorbitant water use of hyperscale data centers in their already drought-stricken community.

Mesa, and the Phoenix metropolitan area as a whole, has been in a state of long-term drought since the 1990s, and has most of its water supplied from over 200 miles away through a canal pumping system. Because [data centers mostly use potable water](#), they are in direct competition with local communities for drinking water. Despite this, most data centers, including Apple's data center in Mesa, use water-intensive cooling methods like [evaporative cooling](#) because of the higher price of energy relative to water.



Apple's data center in Mesa is just one of many data centers in the drought-stricken Phoenix metropolitan area. Locations for data centers generally depend on factors like proximity to customers and infrastructure, land and electricity prices, and tax incentives, and many data center companies are attracted to [water-scarce regions](#) in the western United States like Arizona due to the availability of solar and wind energy, despite the lack of water. In fact, an estimated one-fifth of data centers, mostly in the West, source their water from moderately to highly stressed watersheds.

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