Brake & Turn Case Assessment — The Gigawatt Race

Brake & Turn Compact — Public Reference Series

Context: Based on reporting from Distilled Earth's "These Data Centers Are Getting Really, Really Big," this case examines the rise of gigawatt-scale data centers and their implications for energy use, governance, and alignment with the Brake & Turn Compact.

Summary: The Stargate Data Center in Abilene, Texas, represents a 1.2 GW expansion of AI infrastructure, consuming half the peak capacity of a regional utility. While it symbolizes engineering achievement, it also raises urgent questions about proportionality, sustainability, and the moral scope of machine intelligence.

System Purpose & Fit — 1.5 / 5

Infrastructure growth prioritized over necessity or social value.
Observation: Extractive expansion focused on performance, not proportionality.

Data & Dignity — 2 / 5

Opaque data governance; no public consent framework.
Observation: No discussion of dataset ethics or lineage transparency.

Energy & Footprint — 0.5 / 5

1.2 GW draw, no renewable offset or energy disclosure.
Observation: Critical misalignment with stewardship principles.

Model Safety & Governance — 1 / 5

Breakneck pace, concentrated corporate control.
Observation: Minimal oversight; no public accountability mechanisms.

Human Oversight & Labor — 1.5 / 5

6,000 construction workers, but no long-term labor plan.
Observation: Temporary employment; lacks systemic community investment.

Culture & Continuity — 1 / 5

Technological awe replaces ecological continuity.
Observation: Cultural imbalance; no community continuity initiatives.

Brake & Turn Alignment Score: 1.4 / 5 — *Severe misalignment; extractive trajectory.*

To realign, projects of this scale should undergo pre-build ethical review using the Living Checklist, publish energy disclosures, and establish community oversight councils for ongoing governance.

Source: Distilled Earth, "These Data Centers Are Getting Really, Really Big" (2025).

Readers are encouraged to review the original article and apply the Living Checklist themselves to evaluate local or global AI infrastructure.