



VINT HILL'S UNDERGROUND DIESEL STORAGE AND DRINKING WATER

What the Public Records Show — and What Fauquier Residents Still Deserve to Know

Dr. Steve Pleickhardt 9.12.2026

The discovery of a **20,000-gallon underground diesel storage tank** at the existing **Vint Hill data center** raises an important environmental question: how is this large petroleum storage system being managed in an area where the community's drinking water is obtained from groundwater wells in fractured bedrock?

The evidence does **not** establish that the tank is leaking or has contaminated Vint Hill's drinking water. I have found no evidence supporting such a claim. But the combination of underground petroleum storage and a groundwater-dependent community warrants scrutiny, particularly because Virginia's own Source Water Assessment classified the Vint Hill production wells as having **high susceptibility to contamination**.

The Vint Hill water supply

According to the Fauquier County Water and Sanitation Authority's Vint Hill water-quality report, the system historically obtains its drinking water from four groundwater production wells:

Production well	Depth
Vint Hill Well #1	450 feet
Vint Hill Well #1A	480 feet
Vint Hill Well #3	450 feet
Vint Hill Well #4	624 feet

All four wells are located in **fractured bedrock**. The Virginia Department of Health conducted a Source Water Assessment of the system and determined that these wells have “**high susceptibility to contamination**.” The assessment includes maps of the source-water area, an inventory of land-use activities of concern, and documentation of known contamination during the study period.

This does not mean the drinking water is contaminated. “High susceptibility” describes the vulnerability of the water source, not the current quality of the finished drinking water.

FCWSA also explains more generally that its Fauquier water systems rely on groundwater collected through fractures in the underlying bedrock.

The Vint Hill data center

Virginia DEQ currently identifies **Data Center Vint Hill LLC** as a permitted data-center facility in Fauquier County. Its current air permit is **Registration No. 74127-3**, issued January 20, 2026.

Earlier DEQ permitting documentation for the facility identifies substantial onsite diesel storage associated with emergency generation, including the **20,000-gallon underground diesel storage tank** that prompted this investigation.

This distinction is important: this is the **existing Data Center Vint Hill/OVH operation**, not the proposed CyrusOne campus or every future data-center project at Vint Hill.

Why an underground diesel tank matters

A properly constructed and maintained modern UST is not inherently evidence of an environmental problem. Virginia has extensive regulations governing these tanks.

For most USTs and piping installed after September 15, 2010, Virginia requires **secondary containment**, and most double-walled tanks and piping installed after that date require **interstitial monitoring for leak detection**.

DEQ inspections examine matters including release detection, spill and overfill prevention, corrosion protection and monitoring records.

Those safeguards matter because underground petroleum releases can be serious.

EPA states that leaking underground storage tanks are a common source of groundwater contamination and identifies groundwater contamination as the **greatest potential hazard** associated with a leaking UST. Petroleum can also contain contaminants such as benzene.

Virginia DEQ itself acknowledges that petroleum tanks can leak even when designed and equipped to prevent releases.

That does **not** mean this Vint Hill tank is leaking. It explains why its condition, monitoring and proximity to drinking-water sources deserve verification.

The critical question: Where exactly is the tank?

This is where the investigation is not finished.

We know the data-center property. We know there is documented underground diesel storage. We know Vint Hill relies upon groundwater production wells.

What we still need is an authoritative **tank-to-well map**.

Before publishing a graphic purporting to show the exact tank and wells, we should obtain:

1. The DEQ petroleum-storage facility record for **6872 Watson Court**.
2. The tank's installation and registration documents.
3. The precise location/site plan for the 20,000-gallon UST.
4. The tank's installation date and construction specifications.
5. Confirmation of whether it is double-walled.
6. Its current leak-detection system.
7. Piping configuration and secondary containment.
8. Spill and overfill protection records.
9. DEQ inspection and compliance history.
10. Any suspected or confirmed petroleum-release records.
11. Official coordinates for Vint Hill Wells #1, #1A, #3 and #4.
12. The Virginia Source Water Assessment/wellhead-protection map.

Virginia DEQ maintains an Underground Storage Tank Program specifically to prevent, detect and clean up petroleum releases.

Another groundwater issue already exists at Vint Hill

There is an important but **separate** groundwater issue that should not be confused with diesel.

FCWSA reports that the U.S. Army identified **PFOA and PFOS contamination in two future, unused Vint Hill wells**. Those wells are not the four production wells discussed above, and this finding does **not** establish any connection to the data center or diesel storage.

It does, however, reinforce why groundwater protection at the former Vint Hill military installation deserves careful attention.

What we know — and what we don't

The strongest way to present this publicly is to distinguish established facts from unanswered questions.

Established: Vint Hill depends upon groundwater. Its four identified production wells extend approximately 450–624 feet into fractured bedrock, and Virginia's Source Water Assessment classified those wells as highly susceptible to contamination.

Established: Data Center Vint Hill LLC has a DEQ data-center air permit, currently Registration **74127-3**.

Established: Petroleum USTs can contaminate groundwater if a release occurs, which is why federal and Virginia regulations require extensive release-prevention and detection measures.

Not established: We have found **no evidence that the Vint Hill data-center diesel tank is currently leaking or has contaminated drinking water**.

Still unanswered: Exactly how far is the 20,000-gallon underground tank from each production well, does it lie within a source-water assessment/protection area, what containment system does it employ, and what does its inspection history show?

Why Fauquier County should answer these questions

The appropriate response isn't to claim an environmental disaster. It is to demand documentation.

If thousands of gallons of diesel are stored underground near a community dependent upon fractured-bedrock groundwater, residents should be able to see where the tank is, where their wells are, what protections surround the tank, how frequently it is inspected, and whether there has ever been evidence of a release.

EPA's national experience demonstrates why these protections exist. As of March 2026, the national UST program had cleaned up **more than 530,000 petroleum releases**, with approximately 53,000 releases still requiring cleanup.

That statistic shouldn't be used to imply anything has happened at Vint Hill. It demonstrates that UST leakage is a well-established environmental risk that government regulation is specifically designed to manage.

The questions Vint Hill residents should be asking

Where is the 20,000-gallon underground diesel tank?

How far is it from each drinking-water production well?

Is it inside a Source Water Assessment or wellhead-protection area?

Is the tank double-walled, and what continuous leak-detection system protects it?

When was it last inspected by DEQ?

Have there ever been failed leak tests, suspected releases, soil impacts or groundwater impacts associated with the facility?

And as additional data centers are contemplated at Vint Hill, how much additional diesel storage could eventually be placed over this groundwater system?

That last question takes us back to the larger Vint Hill investigation. **The existing facility is only one component of the potential data-center buildout.** Before additional facilities are constructed, Fauquier County, DEQ and the water-system owner should establish what cumulative petroleum-storage infrastructure could ultimately be present and how it relates spatially to Vint Hill's drinking-water sources.

Bottom line

There is presently **no evidence before us that Vint Hill's drinking water has been contaminated by diesel from the data center.**

But there is enough documented information to justify a much more detailed investigation.

A large underground diesel storage system and a public water system dependent upon **high-susceptibility fractured-bedrock wells** are exactly the circumstances in which transparency, mapping, monitoring and preventative environmental protection matter.

The next step should therefore be simple:

Put the tank and every drinking-water well on the same official map.

Then let the facts—and the distances—speak for themselves.

SUMMARY:

The strongest documented facts are:

- Virginia DEQ lists **Data Center Vint Hill LLC** in Fauquier County under air permit **74127-3**, issued January 20, 2026.
- The DEQ permitting records we've examined document the **20,000-gallon underground diesel storage tank** associated with the Vint Hill data-center facility.
- Vint Hill's public drinking water comes from **four groundwater production wells**, 450–624 feet deep.
- Those wells are in **fractured bedrock**.
- Virginia's Source Water Assessment determined the wells have “**high susceptibility to contamination.**”
- The assessment specifically includes maps of the source-water area and an inventory of land-use activities of concern.

Primary references

[Virginia DEQ — Underground Storage Tanks](#)

[Virginia DEQ — UST secondary-containment requirements](#)

[Virginia DEQ — Data Center Air Permits](#)

[FCWSA — Vint Hill Water Quality Report](#)

[FCWSA — Vint Hill PFAS information](#)

[U.S. EPA — Underground Storage Tanks and groundwater](#)

[U.S. EPA — National UST cleanup statistics](#)