

AI in Energy: Efficiency vs. Emissions

Why smart systems aren't reducing net emissions yet

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THE DATA

53%

Mature AI users reporting lower GHG emissions

Among organizations using advanced agentic AI in sustainability, less than half report actual reductions in net greenhouse gas emissions.

Despite widespread adoption of AI for sustainability, only 53% of mature users report a decline in total emissions. This reveals a critical gap: operational efficiency does not automatically translate to environmental impact reduction. The data shows AI is optimizing processes but not yet decarbonizing outcomes.

Source: MIT Sustainable Supply Chain Lab • Published October 15, 2026
<https://news.mit.edu/2026/state-of-supply-chain-sustainability-report-1015>



01

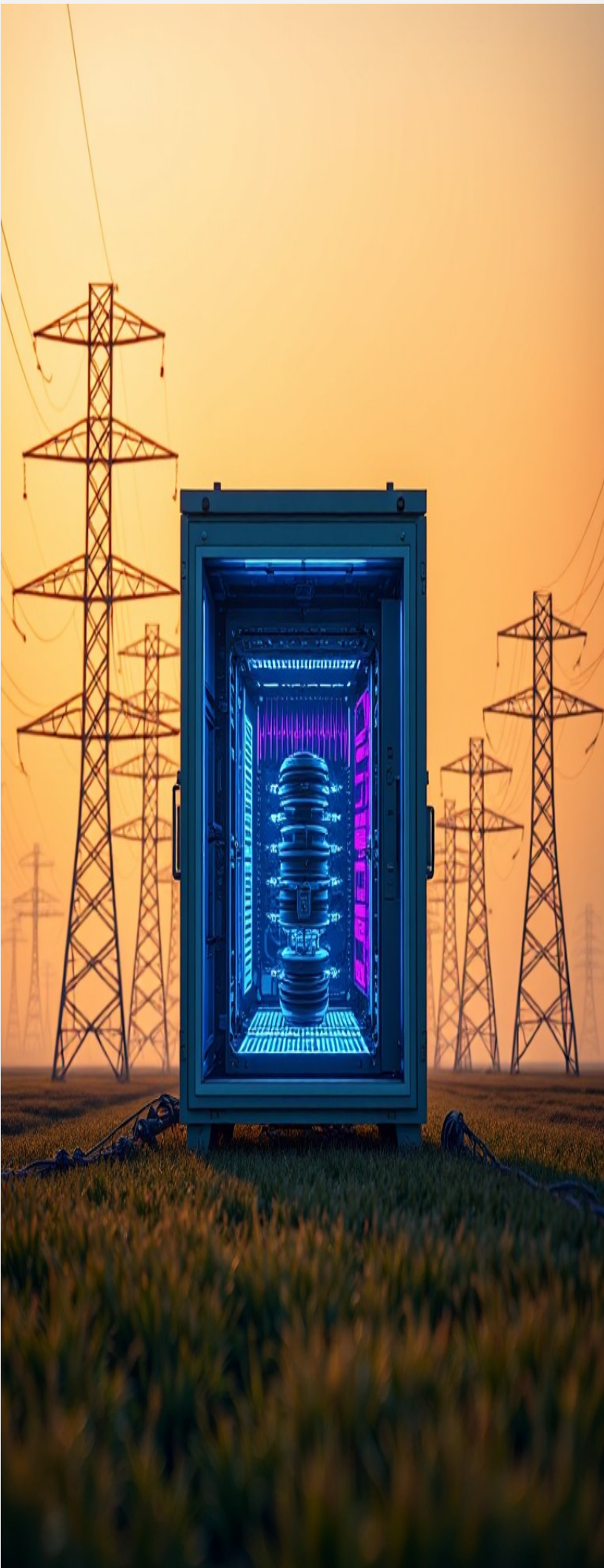
AI Can't Fix Broken Governance

The report finds that only 33% of companies place sustainability oversight at the board level, and just 51% have formal cross-functional teams. Where responsibility is siloed, sustainability is only embedded in decisions 13% of the time. AI-driven tools amplify this flaw—when accountability is weak, AI optimizes for cost and speed, not net-zero outcomes. The real bottleneck isn't technology, it's structure.

02

Energy Use Rises in AI-Optimized Warehouses

In fully automated warehouses using AI, 78% report higher energy consumption post-implementation. Even as AI reduces waste and improves logistics, the energy footprint climbs due to real-time monitoring, data processing, and cooling demands. This suggests AI's environmental cost is not always visible in standard metrics. For energy systems, this means AI must be paired with real-time emissions tracking—not just efficiency metrics—to avoid unintended increases in grid load.



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george@alex.realestate · +1 713.918.9951



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