

May 16, 2025

The Honorable Bill Ferguson
President of the Senate of Maryland
H-107 State House
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Adrienne A. Jones
Speaker of the House of Delegates
H-101 State House
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear President Ferguson and Speaker Jones,

In accordance with Article II, Section 17 of the Maryland Constitution, I hereby veto Senate Bill 149 and House Bill 128 – *Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation – Total Assessed Cost of Greenhouse Gas Emissions – Study and Reports*, Senate Bill 116 and House Bill 270 – *Data Center Impact Analysis and Report*, and House Bill 1316 – *Primary and Secondary Education – Youth-Centric Technology and Social Media Resource Guide*.

As I wrote in my letter regarding HB 350 – *FY 2026 Budget*, I am proud of the work we did this session to place Maryland's state government on a stronger fiscal footing. In partnership, we turned a deficit into a surplus, and ensured that 94% of Marylanders would either receive a tax break or see no change in their income taxes. Together, we reduced spending by over \$2 billion – the single largest cut in a Maryland state budget in sixteen years.

Still, the chaos from Washington, D.C. makes every day more challenging than the last. We face a real and present danger from a White House that continues to attack our economy with reckless abandon. In this time of profound uncertainty, we must evaluate every expenditure with a critical eye towards our future.

Our current budget situation requires us to reconsider bills that create expensive and labor intensive studies. While such bills can be a first step to addressing complex issues and allow the signaling of support for an issue, the practice has become so commonplace that it is now a significant financial and staff burden on the state government. In addition, such reporting requirements have at times delayed prompt action on important issues, and in the face of the onslaught from the current administration in Washington, D.C., the State needs to respond to important issues more quickly. Studies can serve a purpose, but their overuse is a drag on the State government.

Prior to the 2025 legislative session, the Department of Legislative Services (DLS)

was tracking a total of 3,901 mandated reports, a number which excludes the reports required annually by the Joint Chairmen's Report. Many of these reports are never read and simply collect dust on shelves, but nonetheless, executive branch agencies are required to dedicate funding and staff time to each, in many cases, with restrictions on their budget appropriations if they fail to comply. While it is impossible to calculate the total amount of staff time and state funding necessary to complete and file these reports, it is a reasonable assumption that the cost runs to the tens of millions of dollars.

Collectively, these three bills would have required significant coordination across multiple agencies and institutions: the Comptroller's Office, Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), and Commerce to study the cost of greenhouse gas emissions; the University of Maryland's School of Business, MDE, Maryland Energy Administration and the Department of Legislative Services to conduct a resource-intensive analysis of the environmental, energy, and economic impacts of data center development; and the University of Maryland Baltimore's School of Mental Health's National Center for School Mental Health and the Maryland State Department of Education to develop a social media resource guide and conduct a needs assessment. In total, these efforts would cost at least \$1.28 million – an unsustainable commitment given the state's current fiscal constraints and the growing uncertainty posed by the federal Administration in Washington, D.C.

While I look forward to collaborating with the General Assembly to continue to make progress on these important issues, for the reasons provided in this letter, I have vetoed Senate Bill 149, House Bill 128, Senate Bill 116, House Bill 270, and House Bill 1316.

Sincerely,

Wes Moore
Governor