



WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 900

COMMITTEE: Economic Matters Committee

HEARING DATE: February 20, 2025

BILL NO.: House Bill 900 – Electricity – Data Centers – Rate Schedule and Requirements

POSITION: Favorable

I respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of House Bill 900, which will establish critical regulations for data center energy consumption in Maryland. This legislation is necessary to curb the speculative and harmful proliferation of data centers, which pose an imminent threat to Maryland’s energy infrastructure, environmental health, and economic vitality.

The Unchecked Expansion of Data Centers Threatens Maryland’s Energy Future

The rapid, unregulated expansion of data centers across Maryland presents a significant challenge to our energy grid. These facilities are massive consumers of electricity, with each requiring an aggregate monthly maximum demand of over 2,500 kilowatts. Without stringent regulations, data centers will overburden Maryland’s electric infrastructure, leading to increased ratepayer costs, potential blackouts, and the justification for projects like the Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project (MPRP)—a destructive transmission expansion that will permanently scar Maryland’s landscapes and communities.

The only viable and sustainable solution is to require data centers to bring their own power. Instead of further straining the grid and driving up demand for new high-voltage transmission lines, data centers should be mandated to co-locate with their own generation sources. House Bill 900 takes a necessary first step toward ensuring that Maryland’s energy future is not dictated by the unchecked, speculative growth of an industry that prioritizes corporate profit over community welfare.

The Devastation of the Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project (MPRP)

The MPRP, a 67.2-mile-long, 500-kV transmission project proposed by PSEG Renewable Transmission LLC, is a direct consequence of the growing energy demands of data centers. If constructed, this project will:

- Destroy **over 900 acres of natural land and agriculture**, including **394 acres of forested land** and **522 acres of cultivated farmland**.
- Cross **101 streams and water bodies**, threatening Maryland’s already impaired waterways.



- Impact **245 acres of conservation easement lands**, undermining decades of land preservation efforts.
- Degrade **wetlands, drinking water sources, and Chesapeake Bay tributaries**, accelerating runoff pollution and sedimentation.

Moreover, the construction of **303 access roads**, each between 16 to 25 feet wide, will result in the permanent destruction of **140 acres** of forests, wetlands, and farmland. These roads will fragment ecosystems, disrupt wildlife corridors, and introduce increased erosion and pollution into Maryland's waterways. The damage to the Chesapeake Bay from sediment and runoff will have lasting negative consequences, further threatening the state's fishing and tourism industries.

Turning Rural Maryland into an Energy Wasteland

The unchecked development of energy-intensive data centers, coupled with massive transmission projects like the MPRP, risks transforming rural Maryland into an industrial energy wasteland. Instead of preserving the state's agricultural heritage, natural beauty, and vibrant communities, we will be left with a landscape dominated by steel towers, noisy substations, and environmental degradation. This will:

- **Deter new residents and businesses** from moving to Maryland due to the loss of its scenic and environmental appeal.
- **Devalue property** in affected counties, particularly in Baltimore, Carroll, and Frederick counties.
- **Undermine the Chesapeake Bay cleanup efforts**, reversing decades of conservation progress.



A Favorable Report on HB 900 is Essential

House Bill 900 represents a responsible and forward-thinking approach to managing the explosive growth of data centers. By requiring these facilities to bring their own power and ensuring that ratepayer interests are protected, this legislation will prevent the further destruction of Maryland's environment and energy infrastructure. It is imperative that we do not allow speculative energy development to dictate the future of our communities.

For these reasons, I urge the committee to issue a **favorable report** on HB 900.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

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