



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

January 23rd, 2025

HB 270

Data Center Impact Analysis and Report

Economic Matters

Position: FAVORABLE

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in support of House Bill 270. The Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

House Bill 270 would mandate a collaborative analysis involving the Department of the Environment, the Maryland Energy Administration and the University of Maryland School of Business. The analysis will assess the potential environmental, energy, and economic impacts of data centers development in Maryland.

This legislation recognizes the complexities that Data centers bring. Particularly regarding energy consumption, environmental impacts, and economic consequences for surrounding communities. They demand significant amounts of energy and water, often placing strain on local resources and contributing to carbon emissions. Without a thorough understanding of these impacts, we risk compromising the health of our environment, overburdening our infrastructure, and exacerbating inequalities in communities most affected by this development.

Pope Francis, in *Laudato Si'*, emphasizes that "everything is interconnected," urging us to protect the earth as our common home. This bill aligns with that call, ensuring that we assess the environmental toll of data centers and work to minimize harm to our ecosystems. Analyzing the economic effects ensures that communities benefit equitably from development and are not disproportionately burdened by their costs.

The MCC appreciates your consideration and, for these reasons, respectfully requests a favorable report on **House Bill 270**.