

January 21, 2025

The Honorable Delegate C.T. Wilson
Chair, Economic Matters Committee
House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Support for House Bill 270 – Data Center Impact Analysis and Report

Dear Chair Wilson and Members of the Economic Matters Committee,

On behalf of Maryland Latinos Unidos (MLU), I am writing to express our strong support for House Bill 270 (HB0270), titled "Data Center Impact Analysis and Report." This legislation mandates a comprehensive analysis of the environmental, energy, and economic impacts of data center development within the state, to be conducted by the Department of the Environment, the Maryland Energy Administration, and the University of Maryland School of Business, in coordination with the Department of Legislative Services. The final report is to be submitted to the Governor and the General Assembly by September 1, 2026.

As data centers become increasingly integral to our digital infrastructure, it is crucial to understand their multifaceted impacts, especially on under-resourced communities, including Maryland's Latino and immigrant populations. These communities often reside in areas susceptible to environmental changes and may be disproportionately affected by large-scale developments.

By conducting a thorough impact analysis, HB0270 ensures that data center development proceeds with a clear understanding of potential environmental consequences, such as energy consumption and emissions. This proactive approach aligns with Maryland's commitment to environmental justice and sustainability, safeguarding the health and well-being of all residents.

Economically, the bill's analysis will shed light on how data center growth can create job opportunities and stimulate local economies. For Latino and immigrant communities, this could mean increased employment prospects and economic empowerment. However, it is essential that such developments do not inadvertently lead to displacement or exacerbate existing inequalities. The comprehensive report mandated by HB0270 will provide the necessary insights to balance economic growth with social equity.

MLU has consistently advocated for policies that promote equitable development and environmental stewardship. We believe that HB0270 is a vital step toward ensuring that data center expansion in Maryland is both sustainable and inclusive, taking into account the needs and concerns of all communities.

We respectfully urge the members of the Economic Matters Committee to issue a favorable report on HB0270 and advance this critical legislation. By doing so, Maryland can set a precedent for responsible and equitable technological advancement.

Sincerely,

Carlos Orbe, Jr.
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