



March 6, 2024

Maryland General Assembly
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Street
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

The Eastern Shore Land Conservancy (ESLC) is Maryland's leading regional land trust operating in Cecil, Kent, Queen Anne's, Caroline, Talbot, and Dorchester counties. ESLC advocates for more research, better planning, greater oversight, and appropriate incentives and mitigation measures for new high-energy industries such as data centers which have potentially significant land-use implications for rural areas.

ESLC **supports** the passage of **Senate Bill 861: Public Utilities – High-Energy-Use Facilities – Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions** advanced by Senator Karen Lewis-Young and Senator Ron Watson. The bill establishes a timeline for greenhouse gas reduction targets and reporting requirements for certain high-energy use facilities, such as data centers.

By some accounts, the "Cloud" now has a greater carbon footprint than the airline industry with explosive growth forecast in the near future. A single data center can consume the equivalent electricity of 50,000 homes and require uninterrupted power sources which usually means, at this point in time, massive banks of diesel-powered generators.

While Maryland seeks ways to take advantage of the potential economic benefits from these new industries, it must be cognizant of the environmental impacts of these high-energy users and find ways these projects do not undermine the state's climate goals.

SB 861 begins to do just that and we recommend passage of this legislation. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "S.K. Kline".

Steven K. Kline
President

