

3/07/2024

Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON SB#0861 - FAVORABLE

Public Utilities - High-Energy-Use Facilities - Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions

TO: Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#0861, Public Utilities - High-Energy-Use Facilities - Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions

My Jewish faith teaches me a "...halakhah (Jewish law) prohibits wasteful consumption. When we waste resources we are violating the mitzvah (commandment) of *Bal Tashhit* ("Do not destroy"). It is based on Deuteronomy 20:19-20:

"When in your war against a city you have to besiege it a long time in order to capture it, you must not destroy its trees, wielding the ax against them. You may eat of them, but you must not cut them down. Are trees of the field human to withdraw before you into the besieged city? Only trees that you know do not yield food may be destroyed; you may cut them down for constructing siegeworks against the city that is waging war on you, until it has been reduced."

This law was expanded in later Jewish legal sources to include the prohibition of the wanton destruction of household goods, clothes, buildings, springs, food, or the wasteful consumption of anything ... The underlying idea of this law is the recognition that everything we own belongs to God. When we consume in a wasteful manner, we damage Creation and violate our mandate to use Creation only for our legitimate benefit.”

I am proud to support this bill sponsored by my Senator Karen Lewis Young. As Maryland moves to include Data Centers in our industrial mix, it must be acknowledged that mitigation of the harm Data Centers bring to the environment must be controlled and managed.

“Data centers are responsible for 2% of overall U.S. greenhouse gas emissions.² Three factors influence the carbon footprint of data centers”¹ MIT, in it’s study of the problems from Data Centers, notes :

¹ <https://8billiontrees.com/carbon-offsets-credits/carbon-ecological-footprint-calculators/carbon-footprint-of-data-centers/>

“...the Cloud now has [a greater carbon footprint](#) than the airline industry. A single data center can consume the equivalent electricity of 50,000 homes. At 200 terawatt hours (TWh) annually, data centers collectively devour more energy than some nation-states. Today, the electricity utilized by data centers [accounts for](#) 0.3 percent of overall carbon emissions, and if we extend our accounting to include networked devices like laptops, smartphones, and tablets, the total shifts to 2 percent of global carbon emissions.”²

This bill will state that emissions reduction targets must occur when electricity is generated. It will mandate the Public Service Commission review and verify the reports submitted by persons that own, operate, or control a high energy use facility show this greenhouse gas emissions control will be present for their facility. It will protect the health and safety of residents near or adjacent to the site of these facilities. Environmental justice demands that we undertake strict controls so that the burden of these emissions do not fall onto minority and lower-income populations.

SB0861 makes a moral statement that Maryland stands for climate justice and environmental justice and is forward looking in its approach to energy generation.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB#0861.

² <https://thereader.mitpress.mit.edu/the-staggering-ecological-impacts-of-computation-and-the-cloud/>