



TESTIMONY OF SEBASTIAN FECULAK

POLITICAL DIRECTOR, IRONWORKERS DISTRICT COUNCIL OF THE MID-ATLANTIC STATES

BEFORE THE HOUSE ECONOMIC MATTERS COMMITTEE IN OPPOSITION TO HB 900

Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sebastian Feculak, and I am the Political Director for the Ironworkers District Council of the Mid-Atlantic States. I represent the hardworking men and women who have dedicated their lives to building Maryland—its bridges, power plants, office towers, and industrial facilities. Our members don't just construct buildings; they construct opportunities, ensuring that skilled tradespeople have access to good wages, strong benefits, and the kind of stable careers that allow families to thrive.

That's why I'm here today in strong opposition to HB 900. This bill does more than regulate a single industry—it threatens the very foundation of job growth and economic development in Maryland. By imposing unnecessary restrictions on data centers, it risks driving away the kinds of large-scale projects that provide steady work for ironworkers and other skilled trades. These aren't just tech investments—they're construction projects that generate millions of work hours and support thousands of union jobs.

When people think of data centers, they often picture rows of servers inside a warehouse. What they don't see is the sheer amount of skilled labor that goes into building those facilities. Data centers are massive, steel-framed structures with complex foundations, extensive electrical systems, and sophisticated climate control requirements. They require cranes hoisting thousands of tons of steel, workers securing beams hundreds of feet in the air, and welders ensuring the structural integrity of the entire operation.

These projects don't just create jobs, they create careers. In Virginia, where data center development has taken off, we've seen consistent, high-paying construction work that supports union labor and strengthens local economies. These jobs provide opportunities for apprentices to enter the trades, learn from experienced mentors, and eventually earn the wages and benefits that allow them to buy homes and support their families.

Maryland has the chance to be a leader in this space, but HB 900 threatens to push those opportunities elsewhere. Maryland's neighbors, particularly Virginia and Pennsylvania, have recognized the economic potential of data centers. They have created stable policies that encourage investment while ensuring that infrastructure is built responsibly. As a result, they are attracting billions of dollars in private-sector funding and keeping their tradespeople working year-round.

But HB 900 would send the opposite message. It signals to developers that Maryland is not a predictable or welcoming place for investment. Companies that are considering long-term commitments to build here will take their projects—and their jobs—elsewhere. And once those opportunities leave, they rarely come back. What's more, data centers are helping drive much-needed investments in energy infrastructure. In Pennsylvania, we've seen how major companies have signed agreements that led to the reopening of clean energy facilities,



ensuring a stable and reliable power supply while creating more work for union trades. Maryland could benefit from similar partnerships, boosting energy reliability while ensuring that construction workers remain in demand for decades to come.

At the end of the day, Maryland has a choice. It can position itself as a state that embraces growth, encourages investment, and ensures that its skilled workforce has access to the jobs of the future. Or it can allow legislation like HB 900 to chase away opportunities, leaving our tradespeople with fewer projects, fewer work hours, and fewer reasons to stay in the state.

Ironworkers don't ask for handouts—we ask for work. We ask for policies that allow industries to grow, because when businesses invest in Maryland, our members build the foundation that makes that investment possible. That's why I urge this committee to reject HB 900. Let's keep Maryland open for business. Let's keep our skilled tradespeople working. Let's make sure that the next generation of ironworkers has the same opportunities that built this state.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sebastian Feculak
Political Coordinator Mid-Atlantic States District Council