

Testimony in SUPPORT of SENATE BILL 116 – Data Center Impact and Analysis Report

Education, Energy, and the Environment

February 11, 2025

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee,

We are writing to express our enthusiastic support for Senate Bill 116, which would require a comprehensive analysis of the likely environmental, energy, and economic impacts of data center development in Maryland. This important legislation will help ensure that the growth of the data center industry aligns with the state's environmental, energy, and economic goals, and provides critical insights for lawmakers, businesses, and communities moving forward.

Data centers are a rapidly growing sector of the economy, with significant implications for Maryland's environment, energy infrastructure, and local economies. As the demand for data storage and processing continues to increase, it is essential that the state take a proactive and informed approach to assess the potential consequences of this development. Senate Bill 116 will provide a thorough, multi-faceted examination of these issues, involving key stakeholders such as the Department of the Environment, the Maryland Energy Administration, and the University of Maryland School of Business.

The analysis called for by Senate Bill 116 will provide valuable information on:

- The energy implications of data centers, including their energy demands and their influence on the state's future energy needs and ability to meet its greenhouse gas reduction and clean energy commitments.
- The electrical infrastructure implications, including what additional transmission and distribution lines we need and how rate payers are going to be affected.
- The economic impacts of the data center industry, including its effects on state and local revenues, expenditures, and job creation, particularly in construction and operations.
- The potential environmental impacts of data centers, including air and water quality concerns, the effect on the state's restoration goals for the Chesapeake Bay, and potential mitigation strategies.
- The availability of technologies that could mitigate the environmental impacts of data centers, and the feasibility of implementing these technologies in the State;

The thorough and coordinated effort outlined in Senate Bill 116 will be invaluable in helping policymakers understand the broader implications of data center development and in crafting future policies that balance economic growth with environmental sustainability and energy efficiency. It will also support Maryland's ongoing efforts to meet its environmental goals while fostering innovation and economic development.

We respectfully request a FAVORABLE REPORT FOR SENATE BILL 116. This bill represents a crucial step toward creating a more sustainable and economically vibrant Maryland as we continue to adapt to a rapidly evolving technological landscape.

Individual Signatures

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Cheralee Von Ancken
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Janet Gingold
Cathie Nelsen
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Tony Hausner, Ph.D.
Vincent Verweij

Endorsing Organizations

Creation Care Ministry of the Delaware-Maryland Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

Sugarloaf Alliance

Chesapeake Earth Holders

Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Environmental Justice Ministry

The Climate Reality Project: Greater Maryland Chapter

Potomac Conservancy

Nature Forward

Elders for Climate Action

Climate Communications Coalition

The Legacy of a Livable Planet

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility

HoCo Climate Action

Climate Reality Greater Maryland

Chesapeake Climate Action Network

Tantallon North Area Civic Association

Fellowship of Scientists and Engineers

Maryland Legislative Coalition

Mizrahi Family Charitable Fund (a DAF)

CASA

South County Environmental Justice Coalition

Baltimore 350

Kids for Saving Earth

Interfaith Power & Light (DC.MD.NoVa)

1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East

The Greenfields Company, Inc.

Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Chesapeake Conservancy

National Aquarium

Envision Frederick County

350 Montgomery County