



TESTIMONY FOR SB0116 Data Center Impact Analysis and Report

Bill Sponsor: Senator Lewis-Young

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in strong support of SB0116 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Data centers are sprouting up all over the country to support the processing required for AI and bitcoin as well as to support our growing need for data. Our neighbors in Virginia have embraced the building and operating of data centers as a revenue and job creation effort. They have paid dearly. Data centers are overwhelming their electric grid (which we share) and consuming vast tracts of land and water. It's too late for Virginia to turn back the clock, but Maryland seems poised to make the same mistakes that Virginia did.

Yes, data centers will provide revenue, but is it enough to offset the changes that we need to make to the grid so that our electric rates don't become unaffordable? We are already a net importer of power. What happens to our environmental goals if we are forced to buy more power from other states? Will they have it to share? Are the jobs that data centers provide enough to offset the loss of land and water use?

Until we know the answers to those questions and more, we are starting down a path that could lead to excessive prices for electricity, more fossil fuel infrastructure, the need to get resources from other states, and problems that we don't even see coming.

This bill will require 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, to conduct an analysis of the likely environmental, energy, and economic impacts of data center development in the State and to submit to the Governor and the General Assembly by September 1, 2026. We need this!

We strongly support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.