

Testimony in Support of SB 947

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Brenda Myers, and I am writing to you today to strongly support Senate Bill 947 (SB 947), a critical piece of legislation that will protect Maryland's rural landscapes, strengthen our energy infrastructure, and ensure that large corporate data centers do not impose unnecessary burdens on our communities.

Data centers are among the most energy-intensive facilities in modern society, consuming enormous amounts of electricity to support cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and online services. In many states, meeting their power demands has led to the construction of massive new transmission projects—industrial-scale high-voltage lines that cut through farmland, degrade environmental protections, and drive up costs for local ratepayers.

Maryland is at risk of following this dangerous trend. If left unchecked, we could see a surge in transmission line proposals, each justified by the need to supply power to expanding data center operations. These projects not only consume valuable land but also threaten to overload our power grid, raising costs and increasing the likelihood of supply constraints.

SB 947 takes a smarter approach by mandating that data centers generate their own power on-site rather than relying on Maryland's electric grid. This eliminates the need for new transmission infrastructure and ensures that data center growth does not come at the expense of Maryland's communities, farmland, and energy consumers.

Data Centers Must Co-Locate Generation – The bill requires data centers to have on-site power generation instead of depending on external electricity transmission.

Exemptions from Grid Fees & Renewable Energy Mandates – Since these generating stations operate independently, they are not subject to Maryland's utility fees or renewable energy mandates, making them cost-effective and scalable.

Strict Cybersecurity & Reliability Requirements – The bill ensures that data centers implement secure, self-sufficient power solutions, reducing the risk of cyberattacks or grid failures affecting Maryland's electric infrastructure.

Annual Reporting for Accountability – Operators must report energy consumption, environmental impact, and contributions to Maryland's energy goals, ensuring transparency and responsible development.

SB 947 is Essential for Maryland

Without legislation like SB 947, Maryland could follow Virginia's unsustainable path—where data center expansion has driven the construction of massive new transmission lines, displacing communities and farmland while burdening local residents with rising energy costs. We must act now to protect our state's future by:

Protecting Farmland & Open Spaces – Transmission lines require vast rights-of-way, consuming agricultural land and destroying forests. Maryland's rural landscapes should not be sacrificed to accommodate the energy demands of corporate data centers.

Preventing Costly Transmission Upgrades – Large-scale transmission expansion is expensive, and those costs are often passed on to Maryland ratepayers. SB 947 ensures that data centers pay for their own power generation instead of shifting the financial burden onto residents.

Strengthening Energy Reliability – Overloading Maryland's grid with massive new data center demand could lead to rolling blackouts and supply shortages. Keeping data center power off-grid and self-sufficient helps stabilize Maryland's energy infrastructure.

Reducing Environmental Impact – Long-distance transmission lines require deforestation, excavation, and destruction of wildlife habitats. SB 947 encourages more sustainable localized energy solutions that minimize environmental damage.

A Smarter Path Forward

SB 947 offers Maryland a clear alternative to the transmission-heavy approach that has overwhelmed states like Virginia. By requiring on-site power generation, this legislation not only safeguards Maryland's landscapes but also promotes a more resilient, independent energy system.

Rather than allowing big tech corporations to dictate Maryland's energy future, SB 947 ensures that we prioritize community interests, environmental responsibility, and economic sustainability. I strongly urge the committee to pass this bill and protect Maryland from the unchecked expansion of transmission infrastructure driven by corporate data centers.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Brenda Myers

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