Testimony for SB0992 - Public Utilities - Large Load Customers - Registration and Demand Response Program

To: Education, Energy, and the Environment

I am submitting **favorable testimony with amendments** on SB0992- Public Utilities - Large Load Customers - Registration and Demand Response Program
The bill is sponsored by: Senators Hester, Feldman, Lewis Young, Sydnor, Love, Hettleman, Ready, and Folden

I am in favor of large load customers registering with the Public Service Commission.

I am **NOT** in favor of allowing "qualified data centers" or any tax exemptions.

"Qualified data Centers" typically are above 5 megawatts and within this bill would be 25 megawatts or more, and have been determined to not benefit communities, to increase air pollution, increase greenhouse gases and negatively impact water supplies and water quality; and in large part are used only for AI and Human Surveillance.

Tax exemptions have been backfiring in jurisdictions that have offered them.

> *Data-center exemptions have produced **unsustainable revenue losses** in other states, with very large and rapidly increasing annual losses in Georgia, Virginia, and Texas*.

The curtailments may be helpful in reducing the economic concerns of Maryland residents however, it does not help to assure that these large projects:

1. Will not increase air pollution and

2.Will not increase greenhouse gases and

3. Will protect our water supplies.

My full set of amendments are:

1. No hyperscale Data Centers over 5 megawatts
2. No streamlining of any data center
3. No NDAs (non-disclosure agreements): Please keep dealings fully transparent.
4. Data centers may not be allowed to increase greenhouse gases or air pollution

- Note: A 2025 model indicates that U.S. data centers in 2030 could cause approximately 600,000 asthma symptom cases and 1,300 premature deaths,

exceeding 1/3 of asthma deaths in the U.S. each year, resulting in a public health burden of more than $20 billion.

5. No tax exemptions for large load data centers.
6. Water supply must be maintained for residential use and water quality must be maintained for human and wildlife consumption. The quality of aquatic and other wildlife habitats must be maintained within the watershed and downstream. A March 2026 Report indicates that what needs to be considered at application are the following:

    a. ***Peak water capacity request*** *(MGD and gallons per minute), not only annual gallons*

    b. ***Cooling design*** *and what triggers evaporative operation on hot days*

    c. ***Water source*** *(potable, reclaimed, surface, groundwater), plus wastewater discharge plan*

    d. ***Drought and heat emergency protocol*** *(what happens on the top 10 hottest days)*

    e. *A* ***Pipe Neutral commitment****: the project funds upgrades or offsets capacity so existing customers keep their safety margin and future growth headroom*

    f. *An explicit explanation of the* ***power-water tradeoff****: if water is constrained, what additional electric load is created by switching cooling modes*

    Essentially, Land use approvals must be tied to water-system deliverability.

More concerns that I have with Data Centers from Move Past Plastics:

- A **one-gigawatt** data center can use up to **5 million gallons** of potable public water **per day**
- Can use up to **several hundred** polluting generators.
- Can use enough **energy** to power **a million homes**
- Increased **electric** and **water rates** for residents
- Emits significant **noise, light,** and **air pollution**
- Creates **just a few permanent jobs**
- A one-gigawatt data center can use as much as **5 million gallons of water per day.** These huge amounts of water, laced with dangerous chemicals, wash over servers to keep them cool. 80% of the water used for cooling evaporates, so some **chemicals migrate into the air,** and the remaining contaminated water is released into the watershed.

- Refrigerants - PFAS
- **Fluorinated gases (F-gases)**, specifically **hydrofluoroolefins (HFOs)** and **hydrochlorofluoroolefins (HCFOs)**

- Cooling loop chemicals:
- **Ethylene Glycol** is used to lower the freezing point of water. A clear, odorless, flammable, and toxic liquid that is used in antifreeze and other products and is **carcinogenic to humans.** Half-life in air is 69-149 days, in water 12-14 days.

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I encourage a favorable report on having large load systems/data centers register with the Maryland Public Service Commission with attention to my list of amendments to the bill listed above.

Sincerely,

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