

## **HB1532- FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS**

Mariah Davis  
Nature Forward  
davisstrategies1@gmail.com  
757-291-8785



HB1532- Utility RELIEF (Reducing Energy Load Inflation for Everyday Families) Act

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
March 25, 2026

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

On behalf of Marylanders for Data Center Reform, I urge a favorable report with amendments on HB1532, Utility RELIEF Act. Marylanders for Data Center Reform, created by Nature Forward, represents 50 Maryland social and environmental organizations, who are deeply concerned about the impacts of hyperscale data center development on ratepayers, water and air quality, and land use decisions. While data centers serve the needs of modern society, the current pace and scale of unchecked data center development is placing an unprecedented strain on the state's energy grid. We thank Speaker Peña-Melnik and the bill Sponsors for introducing this emergency legislation. It includes needed requirements to create a pathway and regulatory framework toward reforming the data center industry. We support the improved definition for large load customers, requirements for data centers to pay their fair share for transmission costs and distribution build out, and new transparency requirements to register large load customers. All of these provisions are priorities supported by our coalition.

With an amendment, we believe HB1532 can better protect ratepayers and communities from the impacts of hyperscale data centers being built in the State. We urge the General Assembly to strengthen the “intent” language for data centers to codify new requirements under Article- Public Utilities 24 2-124 (A) and (G)(2). We request this language be updated from “It is the intent of the General Assembly that a data center that locates in the State on or after July 1, 2026” to “The General Assembly requires that a data center that locates in the State on or after July 1, 2026”. This amended language assures that firm requirements needed to better regulate hyperscale data centers are codified into law. This amendment supports codifying the coalition’s top bill priority, HB940/SB596 Large Load Customers - Electric System Interconnection and Demand Response Program. We strongly support HB940/SB596, to establish a demand response program that would increase our grid’s carbon-free capacity. This amendment would also support codifying requirements that data centers provide significant interconnection capacity for the data centers load through new, carbon free assets and newly connected energy storage. Utility scale solar<sup>1</sup> and battery storage<sup>2</sup> are not only underutilized, they are the cheapest and fastest way to supply reliable generation to the grid. We strongly support requirements for data centers to use battery storage and

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=67005>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=63025>

carbon-free energy sources to interconnect to the grid. If data centers bring their own power, it should include carbon-free generation.

An amendment to strengthen the “intent” language for data centers in HB1532 ensures to ratepayers and communities that the State is taking action to proactively address challenges from the data center community by developing a meaningful, regulatory framework, and not just through nonbinding intentions in the bill. This amendment would better enhance the intentionality of the data center provisions in the bill that advances protections from ratepayers and communities. With this amendment, we urge a favorable report for this bill.

Respectfully,

Center for Progressive Reform

National Parks Conservation Association

Nature Forward