



## Maryland Farm Bureau

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March 10, 2026

**To:** House Environment and Transportation Committee

**From:** Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

**RE:** **Support of HB1534 Data Centers - Standards for Operation and Siting**

On behalf of the over 7,000 member families of the Maryland Farm Bureau, we write to express our support for HB1534 Data Centers - Standards for Operation and Siting. This bill legislation that establishes important standards for the operation and siting of data centers in Maryland. This bill provides a balanced and responsible framework that protects the State's agricultural land, school environments, and rural communities from the impacts of large-scale data center development. HB 1534 appropriately prohibits the construction of data centers on Class I and Class II agricultural soils, land encumbered by agricultural easements, and areas designated as Rural Legacy Areas, except in narrow circumstances when no alternative industrially zoned land exists in the jurisdiction. These provisions ensure that Maryland's most productive farmland and permanently preserved agricultural landscapes are protected from irreversible conversion to industrial use.

The bill also incorporates essential environmental and public health protections by requiring data center operators to comply with sound, vibration, and air quality standards established by the Maryland Department of the Environment. These standards include limits on audible and low-frequency noise, restrictions on particulate emissions, and the requirement that backup generators near schools or residential properties meet Tier 4 emission standards. Additionally, HB 1534 authorizes the Department and local health departments to issue stop-work orders when sound or air pollutants exceed regulated thresholds, ensuring swift enforcement when community health may be at risk.

Maryland Farm Bureau further supports the bill's requirement that applicants proposing new data centers on previously undeveloped land must demonstrate that they have first evaluated decommissioned industrial or power plant sites. This provision helps direct data center development toward already-disturbed areas and away from productive farmland, reducing development pressure and preserving agricultural land for long-term use. The deliberate and thoughtful siting requirements included in HB 1534 reflect a commitment to smart land-use planning and align with the State's broader agricultural preservation goals.

For these reasons, the Maryland Farm Bureau respectfully urges a favorable report on HB 1534. This bill provides balanced and commonsense protections that safeguard Maryland's agricultural resources while allowing for appropriate and well-regulated data center development.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tyler Hough', written over a horizontal line.

Tyler Hough  
Director of Government Relations

*Please reach out to Tyler Hough, [though@marylandfb.org](mailto:though@marylandfb.org), with any questions*



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