



MARYLAND  
CATHOLIC  
CONFERENCE

February 3<sup>rd</sup> 2026

**HB120**

**Moratorium on Construction of New Data Centers - Co-Location and Generation  
Contingency**

**Environment and Transportation Committee**

**Position: Information only**

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony for information only on **House Bill 120**. The Maryland Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

The Moratorium on Construction of New Data Centers bill would temporarily prohibit the construction of new data centers in Maryland. It also prevents State and local governments from approving any new proposals for data center development. This moratorium remains in effect unless and until the General Assembly enacts specific legislation addressing the co-location of data centers with certain energy sources, including new or existing natural gas facilities, nuclear power generation, or small modular reactors.

**House Bill 120** touches on important issues regarding energy reliability, environmental stewardship, and responsible long-term planning. Data centers require large amounts of energy and can place significant stress on local infrastructure. Data centers can have significant environmental and economic impacts, particularly on our most vulnerable communities. It is essential that, as Maryland continues to pursue growth and technological development, we do so in a way that does not place additional burdens on those already facing hardship. Responsible planning requires us to consider how increased water usage, higher utility costs, and potential environmental damage could harm the very communities we are called to protect.

As stated in *A Pastoral Letter on Artificial Intelligence* from the Catholic Bishops of Maryland, “the development and use of AI must never benefit only the wealthy while extracting data or resources from the poor or violating the rights and dignity of others”. Establishing a pause allows lawmakers and experts time to assess how best to balance technological growth with environmental protection, energy capacity, and community impact.

As data infrastructure continues to expand, it is essential that decisions about future development are made thoughtfully, transparently, and with attention to the needs of the most vulnerable communities. A carefully considered framework for co-location with appropriate power sources can help ensure that economic development does not come at the cost of environmental degradation or inequitable resource distribution.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference has provided information on **House Bill 120**.