

Testimony in Favor of HB1411 - Data Center Planning and Transparency Act

House Environment and Transportation Committee

Chair Korman, Vice-Chair Guyton, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of **Maryland House Bill 1411 (2026)**.

Maryland has one of the strongest technology economies in the country. Today, our state is home to **more than 228,000 technology workers across over 15,000 tech businesses**, and the tech sector contributes **nearly \$38 billion annually, about 9% of Maryland's economy**. (2025mdmanual.msa.maryland.gov)

As demand for cloud computing and artificial intelligence grows, large-scale data centers are becoming an increasingly important part of that digital infrastructure. A single large data center project can generate **thousands of construction jobs, hundreds of permanent jobs, and hundreds of millions of dollars in economic activity**. ([Business Wire](#))

That growth presents a real opportunity for Maryland, but it also requires thoughtful planning and transparency.

These facilities can place significant demands on **electricity, water resources, transmission infrastructure, public health, and surrounding communities**. HB1411 provides a balanced approach by requiring developers of large-scale data centers to disclose key information about projected energy demand, emissions, water usage, and infrastructure needs before permits or public incentives are approved.

The bill also ensures that local jurisdictions proactively plan for where these facilities belong, aligning data center development with comprehensive plans, environmental protections, and community input.

This need is not theoretical. In **Frederick County, Maryland**, recent decisions expanded the footprint for potential data center development into areas that include agricultural and legacy rural lands, raising concerns about consistency with the county's Livable Frederick comprehensive planning goals and long-term land preservation priorities. These decisions were made against the Frederick County Planning Commission's recommendations and without an independent cost-benefit analysis.

HB1411 helps prevent those kinds of conflicts by ensuring transparency, public engagement, and responsible planning before major infrastructure decisions are made.

Maryland can lead in the digital economy while also protecting our communities, ratepayers, and natural resources.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a **favorable report on HB1411**.

Thank you for your consideration.

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By Authority: Friends of Jamie Shopland, Elizabeth Heaney, Treasurer.