



House Environment and Transportation Committee

March 10, 2026

House Bill 1534 – *Data Centers – Standards for Operation and Siting*

**POSITION: OPPOSE**

The Maryland Tech Council (MTC), with over 800 members, is the State's largest association of technology companies. Our vision is to propel Maryland to be the country's number one innovation economy for life sciences and technology. MTC brings the State's life sciences and technology communities into a single, united organization that empowers members to achieve their goals through advocacy, networking, and education. On behalf of MTC, we submit this letter of **opposition** for House Bill 1534.

While we appreciate the sponsor's interest in addressing community concerns related to large infrastructure projects, House Bill 1534 would impose significant new regulatory constraints that risk discouraging investment in Maryland's rapidly growing digital infrastructure sector.

First, the bill would require the Maryland Department of the Environment to establish new operational standards for data centers, including sound and vibration controls and requirements related to backup power generation. While environmental protection is an important priority, the bill mandates a new regulatory framework specific to data centers that may duplicate or conflict with existing environmental permitting processes. This approach risks creating uncertainty and additional compliance burdens for companies seeking to develop or expand facilities in the state.

Second, House Bill 1534 would prohibit local approving authorities from authorizing the construction of data centers on certain agricultural land. Although land-use protections are important, a categorical prohibition at the state level removes flexibility from local jurisdictions best positioned to evaluate appropriate siting decisions within their communities. Maryland counties already maintain comprehensive zoning and land-use planning processes that are designed to balance economic development with environmental and agricultural priorities.

Third, the bill would require applicants for data center projects to submit additional reports to local approving authorities. While transparency is valuable, layering additional reporting mandates onto already complex permitting processes may slow project timelines and increase administrative costs without delivering meaningful new public benefits.

Taken together, these provisions risk making Maryland a less attractive destination for large-scale digital infrastructure investments. Data centers represent billions of dollars in capital investment, support construction and long-term technology jobs, and provide critical infrastructure that enables the broader innovation economy.

Neighboring states have actively pursued policies designed to attract data center investment and related technology development. If Maryland adopts additional regulatory restrictions without clear benefits or alignment with existing permitting frameworks, companies may choose to site these facilities in other jurisdictions.

The MTC strongly supports responsible growth and engagement with local communities regarding infrastructure development. However, we believe House Bill 1534 would create unnecessary barriers to investment in Maryland's digital economy. For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to give House Bill 1534 an **unfavorable** report.

**For more information call:**

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