



## House Bill 1534

**Position: Unfavorable**

Committee: Environment & Transportation

Date: March 10, 2026

---

Founded in 1968, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce (the Chamber) is the leading voice for business in Maryland. We are a statewide coalition of more than 7,000 members and federated partners, and we work to develop and promote strong public policy that ensures sustained economic growth for Maryland businesses, employees, and families.

House Bill 1534 (HB 1534) establishes prescriptive operational mandates and siting restrictions that would create significant regulatory uncertainty and impose substantial compliance burdens on businesses operating in Maryland.

HB 1534 directs the Department of the Environment to establish sweeping operational standards governing sound levels, vibration limits, generator emissions, mechanical equipment foundations, and battery energy storage requirements. These one-size-fits-all mandates do not account for differences in facility design, geography, or evolving technologies and will significantly increase the capital and operational costs associated with data center development and operation.

Additionally, the bill establishes technically aggressive sound and vibration thresholds that may be difficult or impossible to achieve for large-scale facilities without extraordinary engineering interventions. At the same time, the legislation authorizes emergency stop-work orders if monitoring thresholds are exceeded, without providing a clear appeal process or reasonable cure period. Combined with civil penalties of up to \$10,000 per violation and the possibility of permit suspension or revocation, these provisions create significant operational risk for facilities attempting to comply with complex regulatory requirements.

HB 1534 also introduces extensive siting restrictions, including limitations on development on prime agricultural soils and requirements to evaluate brownfield sites before constructing on previously undeveloped land. While these goals are understandable, the restrictions would significantly constrain the availability of viable sites for data center development in Maryland.

Finally, the bill imposes costly additional requirements for facilities located near schools, including funding HVAC filtration upgrades and air quality monitoring infrastructure, as well as mandating battery energy storage for larger facilities regardless of grid conditions or technical feasibility.

Taken together, these provisions would establish one of the most restrictive regulatory environments for data centers in the country. At a time when states across the nation are competing to attract investment in digital infrastructure, HB 1534 risks discouraging hyperscale investment and redirecting jobs, tax revenue, and economic development opportunities to neighboring states with more predictable regulatory frameworks.

For these reasons, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce respectfully requests an **unfavorable report on HB 1534**.