



Testimony Supporting HB 1411
House Environment & Transportation Committee
March 6th, 2026
Position: FAVORABLE

Chair Korman and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Maryland congregations of many faiths working together through Interfaith Power & Light (DC.MD.NoVa), **we respectfully urge a favorable report on HB 1411, the Data Center Planning and Transparency Act.**

Across our faith traditions runs a common thread: we are called to be wise stewards of creation and to protect the most vulnerable among us. Economic development cannot come at the expense of our communities. As data centers and large-load customers drive unprecedented electricity demand in Maryland, **we insist that real human wisdom – not artificial intelligence or corporate interests – drive our decisions.** HB 1411 responds to this moment with moral clarity by calling for greater transparency, accountability, and thoughtful planning.

First, the bill **requires comprehensive disclosure** before a large-scale data center seeks permits or public financial incentives. Transparency honors the dignity of communities and reflects our shared belief that truthfulness is foundational to just governance.

Second, HB 1411 **empowers local jurisdictions** to develop and adopt large-scale data center plans that align with sustainable growth and comprehensive planning. These plans must promote environmental protection, safeguard public health, maintain community character, protect ratepayers, and ensure inclusive public processes. The requirement of at least two public input meetings and consideration of cumulative impacts is not merely procedural. It reflects our conviction that **every voice matters** and that those already carrying disproportionate environmental burdens deserve care and protection.

Third, the bill **promotes fiscal responsibility** by prohibiting the use of State appropriations for grants, loans, or incentives unless disclosure requirements are met and local planning and zoning protections are in place. In our traditions, stewardship applies not only to natural resources but also to public resources. Taxpayer dollars should advance the common good, not subsidize projects that have not been transparently evaluated or responsibly planned.

HB 1411 ensures any new data center plans are developed with integrity, transparency, and respect for the communities they affect.

Good governance is a moral act. Policies that shape our land, water, air, and neighborhoods must reflect our real human wisdom about how to care for each other and the common home we share. For these reasons, grounded in our shared commitment to stewardship and justice, we respectfully urge a favorable report on HB 1411.