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**THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES**  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**SPONSOR TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF HB1411**

**Data Center Planning and Transparency Act**

March 10, 2026

Backed by the rapid evolution of artificial intelligence, there has been a sharp increase in the number of data centers being constructed across the country. Maryland is no exception, with over 40 already built and more possibly on the way - including one that was proposed in District 44B until the Baltimore County Council put a temporary moratorium on data centers. Since this was announced, I have received many messages from constituents concerning not just the centers' impact on their environment and energy costs, but more specifically the lack of planning and transparency surrounding how these data centers get approved and built. HB1411 seeks to address that.

This bill seeks to promote transparency around the entities behind the data centers themselves, as well as the processes at the state and local levels that lead to their approval and construction. It establishes a protocol of disclosure reports that the administrators behind data centers must complete before applying for permits or plans for construction. The disclosure report is not intended to replace any development plan submission or permit application, but rather to provide transparency earlier in the process so that constituents have time to influence the plans before they are set. In the disclosure reports, companies must establish the need for the facility, provide the reasoning behind why a given location was chosen, and cite specific community benefits that they will be providing. They also must disclose the status of their facility's interconnection agreement linking their data center to the local power grid, as well as state if a load study has been completed. There needs to be research behind the amount of electricity being used, both daily and during peak hours, where their power is being sourced and what the projected emissions would be. In the report, they will also need to note what type of cooling system is used, and the projected noise levels being created. The disclosure report including all of this information will be sent to the Maryland Department of Energy and be made publicly available within 30 days of its receipt.

At the county and local jurisdictional level, there must be a zoning plan for these data centers in place when they are proposed, and our constituents must be aware of that plan. Under HB1411, the plan must be consistent with the local jurisdiction's sustainable growth principles and follow specific guidelines for which locations can be chosen. These guidelines must pay specific attention to underserved and overburdened areas, which are currently overrepresented in data center siting and have to bear the brunt of their environmental and social impacts. The community must be allowed adequate time to provide public input on these plans once they are developed, so at least two community meetings will be required to be held. To ensure greater transparency, the Maryland Department of Planning must publish the local jurisdiction's zoning plan within 30 days of it being submitted.

HB1411 stipulates there must be oversight at the state level as well. When looking for state assistance, including any grants or tax breaks, any application or permit submitted to the state must be compliant with the environment article for land use, and any company must have also submitted the disclosure report and have a location in mind for a local jurisdiction that has already developed the zoning plan. In addition, the Maryland Department of Planning may also develop model policies for local jurisdictions to follow, though this bill does not compel them to do so.

HB1411 is not about banning data centers or preventing Maryland from being able to invest in AI and other advancing and emergent technologies, but simply about increasing transparency and community trust. Over the past year, increasing power demands by data centers have caused PJM's capacity market auction prices to rise, increasing energy costs for our constituents. On top of this, according to the Maryland Office of the People's Counsel, Maryland consumers have been forced to pay hundreds of millions of dollars for data center transmission projects for load growth due to their expansion in Northern Virginia. Our constituents deserve not just answers after the fact, but greater transparency in the process altogether, so that they know why these data centers are being built, which parts of their community infrastructure can support them, and specific reasons why they would benefit from them. That is what HB1411 seeks to achieve.

Due to all the above, I ask this committee to issue a favorable report for HB1411.