



March 6, 2026

Support – HB 1411- Data Center Planning and Transparency Act

Environment and Transportation Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to support HB 1411, The Data Center Planning and Transparency Act. This legislation promotes greater transparency and public accountability in the development of large-scale data centers in Maryland. The bill requires data center operators to submit detailed disclosure reports to the Maryland Department of Planning, the Maryland Department of the Environment, and relevant local authorities, with these reports made publicly available online. HB 1411 also requires local governments to establish transparent approval processes for proposed data center projects that include public notice and opportunities for community input. In addition, the bill restricts the ability of local governments to provide financial incentives for data center development, helping ensure that project approvals prioritize transparency, responsible planning, and the interests of Maryland communities.

Data centers are large rooms or buildings used to house IT infrastructure and have presented significant environmental and health concerns as their use has increased. Data centers have been linked to air, water and noise pollution. Data centers have been found to emit harmful air pollutants, including nitrogen oxides, methane, volatile organic compounds, and fine particulate matter. A 2025 article estimated that by 2030, U.S. data centers could contribute to 600,000 asthma symptom cases and 1,300 premature deaths, resulting in over \$20 billion in public health costs.¹ Large data centers have been known to consume large amounts of water, impacting local water infrastructure and access to water for nearby communities. In the state of Virginia, there are over 600 data centers, with 150 of them considered hyperscale centers, exceeding 10,000 square feet.² Larger data centers can consume up to 5 million gallons per day or 1.8 billion gallons annually.³ Data centers pose substantial public health risk both to the environment and to vulnerable populations living nearby. Data centers consume up to 57% of cooling water from potable sources [4], worsening water scarcity in stressed regions. Globally, data centers used 1.5% of electricity use in 2024, continuing to strain local energy infrastructure as well.⁴ However, the demand for AI has steadily increased and data centers are continuing to increase.

¹ Han, Y., Wu, Z., Li, P., Wierman, A., & Ren, S. (2025, October 23). *The unpaid toll: Quantifying and addressing the public health impact of Data Centers*. arXiv.org. <https://arxiv.org/abs/2412.06288>

² Murphy, R. (2025, July 17). Why more residents are saying “No” to AI data centers in their backyard. *NPR*. <https://www.npr.org/2025/07/17/nx-s1-5469933/virginia-data-centers-residents-saying-no>

³ Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI). (n.d.). *Data centers and water consumption | article | EESI*. <https://www.eesi.org/articles/view/data-centers-and-water-consumption>

⁴ Tao, Y., & Gao, P. (2025). Global data center expansion and human health: A call for empirical research. *Eco-Environment & Health*, 4(3), 100157. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eehl.2025.100157>



HB 1411 also aligns with Maryland's broader goals of responsible energy planning, environmental protection, and transparent community decision-making as the demand for data centers continues to grow. By requiring disclosure reports, strengthening local planning processes, and ensuring opportunities for public input, the bill prioritizes the health of Maryland residents and promotes greater transparency in how large infrastructure projects are approved. As data center development expands across the region, legislation like HB 1411 is essential to ensure a path forward that mitigates data centers responsibly and with consideration of community, environmental, and public health impacts. Now more than ever, it is critical that Maryland take proactive steps to ensure that technological development proceeds in a way that protects both residents and the environment.

Thank you for the opportunity to support HB1411- The Data Center Planning and Transparency Act.



The Maryland Public Health Association is one of the oldest and most vibrant state affiliates of the American Public Health Association (APHA) and Maryland's leading professional organization for those working in the field of public health. MdPHA remains dedicated to increasing health equity for Marylanders through advocacy and community collaborations