Cosette Ralowicz, resident of Gaithersburg, MD

First off, I wanted to throw my voice in the pool that I am another resident all in favor of putting a moratorium on the construction of new data centers, including Dickerson, until we have standards and regulations that our communities feel adequately protect us.

ZTA 26-01: Updating zoning regulations of what data centers are and being very strict with where they can and cannot go is a good idea. I honestly would like to see some restrictions tightened. I know the ZTA mentions avoiding or minimizing negative impacts on sensitive ecological areas including wetlands "to the maximum extent practical", but we need to **not allow any negative impact on our wetlands and sensitive ecosystems,** not just when practical. Wetlands are key ecosystems for environmental health and resilience in the face of climate disaster. Especially considering the current federal regime's goals of rolling back all sorts of ecological protections in favor of financial gains, we need to seriously commit to protecting and prioritizing our lands and waters, our flora and fauna here. This should not be compromised on, especially not for data centers. Last I read, we still do not know how much time it takes for groundwater to replenish, and considering global droughts and rates of groundwater disappearance, this current data center boom will only accelerate climate change and therefore costly natural disasters.
There has been talk about the definitions of data centers and how not all data centers are the same, so should they all be held to the same zoning regulations? At this point in this day, age, and climate, **they should all be defined as the same** for the time being, just to make sure we truly know the full impact any type of new data center would have on our communities and environment in Montgomery County. And approval for any new center should be voted on by the community.

Bill 4-26: I am in favor of creating a diverse taskforce to conduct comprehensive investigations into the impacts data centers would have on our communities, especially our most vulnerable peoples, and our local ecosystems. I support all of the amendments proposed for RESJ, but **it should be required at a very minimum 3, if not more, representatives that have expertise in RESJ be a part of the taskforce.**
The taskforce should also **look into amounts of e-waste produced by data centers**, considering technology and hardware are constantly being updated and replaced and, therefore, discarded, at ever increasing rates. What impact will all of this e-waste have on our communities, the capacities our trash and recycling facilities (or others we may send our trash to outside of the county and/or state), and our environment and climate?
Secondly, the taskforce should **look into political influence that data centers and their parent companies have been having on local politics and government officials nationwide**. I would like to see some sort of regulation and legislation in regards to the political sway these centers and companies could have locally. If residents need to bring up any violation of regulations they see or experience, I want a practical guarantee that our political leaders will not be able to be influenced by the interests and finances of these large tech companies and swayed to be lax with

enforcing standards and regulations.

Lastly, I recommend that the taskforce **determine what are most new data centers that want to come to this area being built for and intended to be used for**. AI is dangerously unregulated in this country and I do not want our county to house data centers for generative or identity recognition AI, thus contributing to the ethical and social concerns we are seeing that continue to go unchecked, be abused, and do real permanent harm to people.

Ultimately, I think that all of these considerations of resources would be so much better used for the beings that live here, not massive amount of computers. I do not see tech companies having anyone but their own interests at heart: they have been firing mass amount of employees in the last few months, they make billions of dollars off of our own personal data, and they are not to be trusted. That being said, it is still very important to have strong and comprehensive regulations regarding data centers in place either way.

Thank you for your time.