My name is Ed Maibach. I'm a public health professional, an Emeritus Professor at George Mason University, an elected member of the US National Academy of Medicine—and a long-time resident of Montgomery County.

I offer testimony today in support of Councilman Glass' bill to create a Task Force to study the implications of data centers before our country approves any such development.

I also urge Mr. Glass to consider an amendment to the bill requiring the Task Force to consider the public health implications of data centers.

My testimony is based on a paper that two colleagues and I published earlier this month in Frontiers in Climate, a peer-reviewed scientific journal. I submitted a copy of that paper to Mr. Glass' office so he and others on the Council can consider it.

In brief, our paper is the first-of-its-kind assessment of the potential health implications associated with data centers. Very little original research has been conducted on this topic, but using various sources of data, we concluded that data centers likely do pose a range of potential health risks. These include:

- Air pollution
- Extensive water use and water pollution
- Noise pollution
- Land use practices that can disrupt both natural ecosystems and community well-being.

We also concluded that rising energy costs from data centers can reduce household income. Every health professional knows that household income is an important social determinant of health, and increased utility bills can therefore undermine the health of lower and even middle-income families.

In our paper, we offered several recommendations to reduce these risks:

- Data centers should be powered by renewable energy.
- Strict regulations should be implemented to minimize water consumption and pollution.
- Acoustic treatments plus green zoning should be required to reduce noise pollution.
- Zoning regulations and site selection decisions should be made to curb adverse land use changes.
- Data center operators should bear the full cost of the energy production and transmission required to meet their needs.
- Health professionals from the community should be involved in informing the public of the potential health risks, and policymakers should invite them to advise them on policy decisions.

Thank you for allowing me to share my perspective as a public health professional and community resident on the important decisions we face regarding data centers in our community.