

Saturday, February 28, 2026

## **Data Centers - Take the Time to Get the Answers! ZTA 26-01**

While this project (and others like it) may be objectionable from an economic standpoint, I am most concerned about the health (air pollution) and quality of life impacts (availability of drinking water) as well as environmental impacts in general (warming the Potomac and global warming from CO<sub>2</sub>). Data centers need lots of electricity and produce lots of heat, and because of the heat, consume lots of precious water. All of those things have the potential to harm the environment and jeopardize the safety and wellbeing of Montgomery County residents (and the world at large). If that isn't enough to stop this from happening, let's at least slow things down and have more time to discuss and plan this with a moratorium for a period of time. That will allow everyone to have time to do the necessary investigations, come up with better solutions, and put together a governing framework that keeps Montgomery County residents (and our environment) safe. If we can find a way to do that and still have a datacenter, that can be an option. My preference would be not to have one at all. I think the best thing we can do with shuttered coal plants is to put geothermal power plants and/or solar farms in their place.

The proposed datacenter is a huge mistake as proposed. It draws huge amounts of precious water (and possibly wildlife) from the Potomac, potentially damages wildlife in the Potomac by reintroducing water at higher temperatures and potentially with pollution (which also needs regulation), draws energy not only from our grid, but also from generators. Those generators pollute our air, massively increase CO<sub>2</sub> and particulates in our atmosphere, and produce unwanted noise pollution. They also require fuel which means additional heavy traffic hauling fuel and/or additional pipelines increasing the use of natural gas or other fuel. I see no reason why (at a bare minimum) the project doesn't require solar panels be installed on all roofing and also on the ground around the buildings, where feasible. This is a huge missed opportunity.

The county is being reckless in allowing this without proper impact analysis (especially if some information is being kept secret with NDAs) and without the proper regulation in place to protect the citizens, the environment, and the planet. If the reasons I have listed are not enough (and they should be) to have a moratorium, we should include the fact that the project will end up increasing the energy costs of Montgomery County citizens. Let's do this right. Take the time to think before you act. We will not forget the decisions made about this.

Thank you for reading my letter. I care deeply about this issue.