

Testimony on ZTA 26-01 Data Center Commercial Uses - Data Center

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I am a resident of Montgomery County and regularly visit the agricultural reserve for cycling and other recreation. I am deeply concerned about the lack of transparency and information on the potential impacts of the proposed Dickerson data center development, in particular high water usage and air pollution. I also am astounded by recent electricity bills, and see them keep rising month over month - all the while tech companies are pushing AI on users unrequested and unneeded. We should all be pausing to ask questions.

We need a moratorium to consider the need, impacts and best regulations to mitigate any harm to county residents. Concerning health risks have been linked to data centers, including in a GMU study just released. The authors of that study urge strong regulations to keep these impacts in check. Montgomery County needs to make sure we have these regulations in place before allowing 5 hyperscale data centers to draw up to 2 Million gallons from the Potomac per day. I'm a scientist myself, and these numbers make me concerned for the future of our county to provide basic services to tax paying residents, while further enriching the tech elite.

Please enact a moratorium as soon as possible and set about a transparent process to understand and regulate data centers here. The current ZTA 26-01 does not seem concerned with protecting ratepayers and water drinkers by setting hard standards on water and energy use and emissions. We rely on you to protect us from over-consumptive industries - the ZTA must be stronger to do so. Please include my comments in the hearing record.

Thank You,

Allison Thomson