

More and more concerning health risks have been linked to data centers, including a GMU study just released. The authors, one of which spoke at the ZTA public hearing, 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. 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 seems more concerned about fencing colors than 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.

As a resident of the Agricultural Reserve for 52 years, I have noticed that once again (think incinerator) our elected officials seem to be representing corporations rather than those who put you in office. I hear you say that you don't want to 'disappoint' the proposed Dickerson data center developer by taking a pause to 'get it right,' ie to construct regulations that protect neighbors. Atmosphere is a corporation that has existed for ONE YEAR, and yet you rather risk the health and quality of life of your constituents than 'disappoint the developer.

Please include my comments in the hearing record.

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

February 26, 2026

Bev Thoms
Dickerson, MD

Like many residents last month I was complying with WSSC guidelines to reduce water use during the storm. It made me wonder - in times of drought or extreme heat or cold when residents are asked to reduce water or power use - would the much higher use of data centers in the county also be restricted? We've just found out that the proposed project in Dickerson will use 2 million gallons of the Potomac per day. What does that mean in our increasingly drought filled summers?

The drought stricken Potomac River which serves most of lower Montgomery County and DC with its water has additionally been compromised with spill of 240 million gallons of raw sewage due to a sewer pipe collapse.

In the event of a water shortage, will the hyper scale data center complex drain water out of the Piedmont Soul Source Aquifer leaving the farming community of the Agricultural Reserve dry and out of business. These are not small issues.

These are the kinds of questions that we don't have answers to yet. Until we do, a moratorium needs to be in place - and quickly. We can't go back and add regulations to the project in Dickerson speeding toward approval. The ZTA 26-01 isn't speaking to the water and power issues - along with the pocketbook issues residents are feeling now. It's time to pause, get the real facts and then get serious about regulations.

Please include my comments in the hearing record.

We deserve to be protected from the potentially deviating impact of this hyper scale data center proposal.

Thank You,

Bev Thoms