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

February 26, 2026

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At the community forum on data centers the other night I was struck that it seems like no one has done a cost-benefit analysis of whether the county will really reap any rewards from hosting data centers. All residents are left with are the stories from other cities where data centers have caused havoc with water, noise and more. The cluster of data centers in Dickerson got pre-approval without a site plan - we now know they have applied to use 2 Million gallons of the Potomac each day. Without hard numbers on both sides of the ledger, how do we know if data centers are good for the county? ZTA 26-01 does nothing to better understand the water and power needs of this new use and does not protect residents from the impacts on the grid and at the tap. Take a moratorium to get some answers and build strong policies that make data centers work for all of us. Please include my comments in the hearing record.

There is no reason to rush permitting for the Atmosphere LLC data center campus, which will initially have 5 data centers on it. This is a major change to land use. While it is true that it is better than a coal plant, it is a mute point since that coal plant is no longer in operation!

By the way, it also sets precedent for even more data centers on the remaining 170-acre parcel at Dickerson.

Atmosphere LLC has not provided the public with the details of their plans, and it is NOT yet through the full conditional use process at the Planning Board. Their application is still in play.

We have no idea how the five data centers are going to be designed - we just have their verbal assurances on our concerns which does not fly. You and the planning board promised transparency. This new development has yet to be transparent to us.

Some Council members may say they want to be fair to industry so they know the rules - well,

you also need to be fair to the citizens and residents of the county. We need to know what this is, how it will affect us, and how it will affect generations to come - especially with regards to the psychological effects of a sustained increase in noise, greenhouse gases, ever-escalating energy prices, our water supply (by withdrawing up to 2 Million gallons from the Potomac per day), our health, the impact of heated water on aquatic life and all with questionable benefits.

 By the way, did you know that Atmosphere's vision is to power all their data centers, throughout the U.S., using small modular nuclear reactors? What provisions does Montgomery County and the State have for those?

 Please, slow this down. We are in a time of AI frenzy. Slow. This. Down.

Thank You,

John Krause