

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

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Joshua Stewart

Public servants must serve the public. At a time when electricity costs skyrocket, which multiple reports and studies indicate is at least in major part due to data center use, the public is best served by governmental decisions that retard that rise - or at least do not worsen it. Arguments about jobs, tax bases, and other diffuse benefits pale in comparison to the direct harm done to your constituents by these installations. That says nothing of the localized and generalized economic damage done by them - costs entirely externalized by the companies operating them. Listen to the voters not the donors, and stop the madness.

Data centers are entirely new, complex and increasingly controversial. This is a land use that we have no zoning code for. This proposed ZTA is silent on the most impactful issues with data centers - namely the impact on our regional water and power supply. The scale of these projects is unlike anything else in the county and the zoning needs to acknowledge that. I've read the data centers will use the same energy as hundreds of thousands of houses and millions of gallons of the Potomac we can't afford to lose. Regulations that take stakeholders into account and balance data centers with climate goals and resource protection will take some time to get right. Please put a moratorium into place quickly to allow the time to craft zoning that takes the real issues into account. We need to pause like several other Maryland jurisdictions have done. Please include my comments in the hearing record.

Thank You,

Joshua Stewart