

Julia Coombs Fine  
she/her/hers

*Testimony:*

*Hello, my name is Julia, and I am a Montgomery County resident. I moved here four years ago from California, where I experienced a wildfire so severe that ash rained down from the sky. You couldn't go outside and take a deep breath without your lungs burning. Those fires are getting more frequent and more devastating every year; we've smelled the smoke drifting all the way from Canada.*

*I am proud to live in a place where we have taken meaningful steps to address climate change and protect the health of our communities, such as declaring a Climate Emergency. Our community, and our progress towards our climate goals, is too important to jeopardize for the sake of hastily building data centers. We should learn from the painful lessons that communities around America have learned about what happens when fossil fuel infrastructure is built without protections for community members, promising jobs, but delivering pollution that harms the most vulnerable among us. I see a clear parallel between the actions of those fossil fuel companies and how data center companies are currently conducting their business. Data centers are not inevitable, just as fossil fuels are not inevitable; to say so is to silence our valid concerns, and it is also a failure of imagination.*

*We must have a transparent task force that includes impacted community members. We must have a moratorium on data centers unless they can, as a bare minimum, run on 100% clean energy, without using up our water, without generating dangerous pollution of all the kinds that have been mentioned, and without driving up energy costs for residents. And we must not lose sight of what is truly important: a healthy future for ourselves, our loved ones, and our children.*