

Zoning Text Amendment ZTA 26-01  
Commercial Uses – Data Center  
Public Hearing  
2/24/26

Written Testimony of Robert Wilbur

The proposed ZTA 26-01 concerning the establishment of zoning definitions and regulations pertaining to data centers is a start, but it neglects to address certain critical conditions that a proposed data center must meet before it can be approved. These conditions are as follows:

1. **Power Consumption.** Data centers require power equivalent to a city. ZTA 26-01 needs to include a requirement that a proposed data center show that its power needs will not increase rates for existing power customers, that renewable and environmentally friendly power is available to meet the data center's needs, and its use of this renewable and environmentally friendly power will not diminish Montgomery County's ability to meet its established goals in other areas such as climate, housing, and economic growth.
2. **Water Consumption.** Data centers require millions of gallons of water a day for cooling. ZTA 26-01 needs to include a requirement that a proposed data center show that its water usage will not diminish water quality, cause environmental harm, or decrease water resources below those needed to meet current and future County requirements including residents, business, industry, agriculture, and planned growth. It is particularly important that the aquifer underlying much of the County and the Potomac River be protected and that sufficient margins to protect against seasonal, periodic, and climate variability be included in the determination the County's water needs.
3. **Back-up Power.** Data centers require a continuous supply of electrical power. Back-up power is provided most commonly by banks of large diesel generators that automatically come online in the event that a data center's normal power source is interrupted. ZTA 26-01 needs to include a requirement that this method of providing back-up power does not cause damage to the environment or the adjacent community.
4. **Evidence.** Claims by supporters of a proposed data center ostensibly demonstrating satisfaction of requirements (1), (2) and (3) above must be supported by independently-developed evidence that meets established scientific, engineering, or proven experience standards.

Thank you for giving consideration to my written testimony.  
Robert Wilbur