



## FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

### OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Jessica Fitzwater  
County Executive

# News Release

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## County Executive Puts Forward Legislation Based on Data Center Workgroup Recommendations

FREDERICK, Md. – Frederick County Executive Jessica Fitzwater today unveiled draft legislation that would put restrictions on where data centers can be built. The two bills are the direct result of recommendations made in the Frederick County Data Centers Workgroup's [final report](#). The legislation would update design requirements and create an additional approval process for data centers.

"I want to thank the members of the Data Center Workgroup, who invested a substantial amount of time and effort as they developed their recommendations," County Executive Fitzwater said. "They worked diligently to find common ground, despite diverse and sometimes competing viewpoints. In the end, our goal is the same: to ensure data center development occurs responsibly."

The first piece of legislation updates Frederick County's existing Critical Digital Infrastructure zoning law to consider visual impacts, noise, and sustainability practices. It would increase the size of a lot needed for a data center. Developers would be required to conduct a viewshed analysis to ensure preservation and heritage areas are not affected. Site plans would need to include sound and vibration studies. Generators would be required to meet Tier 4 emission standards, and the amount of fuel stored on site would be limited.

The second bill creates a floating zone for Critical Digital Infrastructure. The zone could only be applied to land zoned as general industrial or limited industrial and is within a community growth area. Data centers also would need to be within two miles of existing high voltage electrical transmission lines. Each floating zone would need to be approved by the Planning Commission and the County Council.

"I support the workgroup's goals, but I have deep concerns about the floating zone because it could pit communities against each other," County Executive Fitzwater said. "Those who can afford attorneys would have an unfair advantage over those who do not have the same resources. That said, I respect the public process and the workgroup's final report, and I believe this discussion about data centers should continue in a public forum."

The draft proposals address those workgroup recommendations that are under the legal authority of the County. Once the legislative process is complete and new regulations are in effect, the Executive Order suspending piecemeal rezonings will be lifted.

County Executive Fitzwater has asked the County Council to hold a workshop on the legislation during its October 8 work session.

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