

SUPPORT SJ240 and HJ522 - Data Centers Study

Bill Patron: Senator Petersen and Delegate Roem

Overview:

Virginia hosts the largest concentration of data centers in the world. We need to understand the impacts. SJ240 and HJ522 direct the Department of Energy to study the effects of the huge and rapidly-growing data center industry on Virginia's environment, economy, energy resources, and ability to meet carbon-reduction goals.

- Virginia's data center industry has grown very large, very fast. Data centers in the service territory of Dominion Energy Virginia now make up 21% of the utility's total load, and many more data centers are in development as demand for cloud services continues to grow.
- Northern Virginia governments have welcomed data centers for the tax revenues they provide, but meanwhile, a state tax exemption for the industry has cost taxpayers across Virginia in excess of a billion dollars over the past decade. The rapid growth in energy demand also means utilities must build more generation and transmission, paid for by all customers.
- The concentration of data centers in Northern Virginia's suburban and rural areas has led to a loss of farmland, impinged on nearby parks and battlefields, degraded water resources, and impacted the quality of life in close-by neighborhoods. Yet other areas of Virginia that need economic development have been unable to attract data centers.
- It's imperative that the General Assembly understand the full picture of the impact of data center development on Virginia's environment, economy, energy resources and climate goals so it can determine how best to manage the growth of this vital, yet impactful industry.



Connor Kish
connor.kish@sierraclub.org
804-895-4730

This position was taken by Virginia Conservation Network (VCN)'s Legislative Committee and Board of Directors and is supported by Virginia's conservation community. For a complete list of VCN positions, visit www.vcnva.org/bill-tracker. VCN is committed to building a powerful, diverse, and highly-coordinated conservation movement focused on protecting our Commonwealth's natural resources today and for tomorrow.