

# SUPPORT SB94

Topic: Data Centers as Industrial Use

Bill Patron: Senator Danica Roem

## OVERVIEW:

As the data center industry continues to boom across Virginia and suitable industrial sites get built out, data center developers are increasingly attempting to site and build massive facilities on agricultural lands, near communities, and near parks and other sensitive environmental resources. Data centers pose significant risks to the environment and communities, including light and noise pollution, degradation of lands and historic resources, dozens of massive backup diesel generators on site, and more. As highlighted in the 2024 data center report by JLARC, these facilities are industrial in nature and should only be cited in industrial areas where such facilities make sense. This legislation would ensure that future data center rezonings are only approved on land planned for industrial use.

## REASONS TO SUPPORT:

- Data centers are clearly an industrial use. From years of heavy construction with dump trucks and jack hammering, to 24/7 operation with noise, lights, and backup diesel generators, these facilities have intense impacts on communities and environmental resources. This fact was clearly stated in the 2024 JLARC report on data centers.
- Despite this fact, massive data center campuses continue to be planned and built near homes, schools, and parks. Simply put, industrial use is not compatible with communities and natural resources. Localities should be more thoughtful about where data centers are planned and built, seeking to site these facilities with other intense industrial use and away from environmental resources and communities.
- To protect further degradation of parks and other sensitive lands and to protect vulnerable communities, the state should require that future data centers only be built on land planned and zoned for industrial uses.



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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](http://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.