



SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT ON DATA CENTER DEVELOPMENT IN MARYLAND

DATA CENTERS ARE KEY TO AMERICA’S GLOBAL LEADERSHIP—AND TO EVERYDAY LIFE IN MARYLAND.

- Data centers are the core infrastructure powering the next American industrial revolution. The advances they enable in artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and information technology are reshaping how the world works, learns, communicates, and innovates.
- But data centers are not just about the technologies of the future. Marylanders rely on the digital infrastructure they provide every day—when families use online banking, stream entertainment, store photos and documents in the cloud, participate in a video call, access schoolwork online, receive medical care through telehealth, use GPS and navigation services, or communicate with businesses and government agencies.
- By storing, processing, and facilitating the exchange of vast amounts of information, data centers are also enabling technological advances that improve lives. For example:
 - Improving healthcare, by helping medical professionals analyze imaging and other clinical information, detect diseases earlier, expand access to telehealth, and enabling researchers to develop new medicines and treatments more quickly.
 - Supporting schools and learning, by powering the online educational tools, digital classrooms, research resources, and cloud-based services used by students, teachers, colleges, and universities throughout Maryland.
 - Helping keep communities safe, by supporting the communications, mapping, data-storage, cybersecurity, and other digital systems relied upon by first responders, hospitals, utilities, and emergency-management agencies.
- In short, much of modern life already depends on data centers. As demand for cloud computing and other digital services continues to grow, building this infrastructure responsibly will be increasingly important to Maryland families and communities.

TODAY’S DATA CENTERS ARE BEING BUILT RESPONSIBLY IN MARYLAND.

- **Protecting Ratepayers.** Data centers across the country are increasingly using a variety of approaches to cover the energy and infrastructure costs associated with their operations rather than shifting those costs to other utility customers. These approaches include long-term power purchase agreements, special rates and cost-recovery arrangements designed to make large-load customers pay the costs attributable to serving them, and on-site or “behind-the-meter” generation. In some cases, data centers are developing generation capacity that exceeds their own needs, allowing excess electricity to be *added* to the grid.ⁱ

- In Maryland, data centers developed and operated by companies like Rowan Digital Infrastructure and Aligned are covering their own energy and interconnection costs to avoid downstream cost and other impacts to Maryland families.ⁱⁱ
- Both companies have signed the federal Ratepayer Protection Pledge, which commits signatories to build, bring, or buy the new generation needed to meet their data centers' energy demands, pay for required power-delivery infrastructure upgrades, and use separate rate structures designed to prevent those costs from being passed on to ordinary households.ⁱⁱⁱ
- **Conserving Water.** Data centers typically use no more water than a comparable office building and by increasingly relying on air cooling, closed-loop systems, and recycled water, their overall water use continues to decline.^{iv} In Virginia—the data center capital of the world—data centers account for less than 0.5 percent of all water withdrawals!^v
- In many cases, data centers don't use any water at all. For example, 90 percent of the time, Amazon's data centers use "free air cooling," pulling in outside air, running it past servers to absorb the heat, then pumping it back outside—*without any water involved*.^{vi}
- Maryland's new data centers are being designed to dramatically reduce water use. For example, Rowan's data centers will recirculate cooling water multiple times before discharge, while Aligned's data centers use a closed-loop chilled-water system that continuously recycles cooling water and is designed for near-zero water utilization.^{vii}
- **Soundproofing.** New data centers are increasingly designed with noise controls from the outset—including sound-dampening building materials, acoustic barriers and enclosures, quieter cooling-system layouts, and mufflers for backup generators—to keep operational noise low and minimize impacts on nearby homes and communities.^{viii}
- With modern noise mitigation, data centers can keep sound at the property line in the 50–60 dBA range—comparable to a household refrigerator or ambient park noise.^{ix}
- In Maryland, Rowan and Aligned are building noise protection directly into their facilities—from sound barriers, berms, landscaping, and large setbacks at Rowan to critical-grade silencers and acoustically enclosed equipment at Aligned.^x

WHAT'S IN IT FOR MARYLAND? MASSIVE BENEFITS.

- From 2017-2023, the data center industry's contribution to national employment—including direct, indirect, and induced effects—increased by 60 percent, from 2.9 million jobs to 4.7 million jobs. During this same period, direct employment in the data center industry grew by 50 percent, compared to 10 percent in U.S. employment overall.^{xi}
- By 2030, total investments in data centers and related AI infrastructure in the U.S. are projected to reach some \$3 trillion—the largest build-out in America's peacetime history.^{xii}
- Jurisdictions offering tax subsidies to attract data centers are doubling their money on tax revenue alone—receiving over \$2 in tax revenue for every \$1 in incentives provided.^{xiii}
- In neighboring Virginia, data centers contribute an estimated 74,000 jobs, \$5.5 billion in labor income, and \$9.1 billion in GDP to Virginia's economy *each year*.^{xiv}
- In FY 2026, data centers generated \$1.2 billion in real and personal property tax revenue for Loudoun County alone, accounting for 39 percent of the County's budget.^{xv} That revenue has enabled Loudoun County to lower its real-property tax rate generally every year over the past decade, and the County now has the lowest rate in Northern Virginia.^{xvi}

- At the same time Loudoun County has lowered taxes for families, it has increased funding for schools, provided additional support for first responders, invested in roads, bridges, parks, and libraries, and provided critical child-protection and mental-health services.^{xvii}
- In Maryland, Rowan and Aligned are bringing billions of dollars in private investment, thousands of construction jobs, hundreds of permanent jobs, and tens of millions of dollars in recurring local tax revenue to Frederick County. Rowan projects roughly \$19 million in annual County tax revenue from its initial projects, while Aligned has projected more than \$35 million annually at full build-out.
- To put this revenue into context, the annual tax revenue provided by the Rowan and Aligned data centers alone is more than the County's entire \$44.0 million Public Works budget, nearly three times its \$19.3 million Emergency Planning & Management budget, and nearly three times its roughly \$19.2 million Parks & Recreation budget.^{xviii}

We don't need moratoriums or other draconian measures in Maryland. We need common-sense guardrails on electricity costs, water use, noise, and other concerns, because when we build data centers responsibly in Maryland, Maryland families win big.

ⁱ See David Rosner, Comm'r, Fed. Energy Regul. Comm'n, Remarks on the Large Load Show Cause Orders, E-7 to E-12 (June 18, 2026), Federal Energy Regulatory Commission; U.S. Energy Info. Admin., Data Center Owners Turn to Nuclear as Potential Electricity Source (Oct. 1, 2024), U.S. Energy Information Administration; U.S. Dep't of Energy, Video: \$100B Paducah Investment to Create Energy Infrastructure, 8,600 Jobs (Aug. 25, 2026).

ⁱⁱ See *Frequently Asked Questions*, Rowan in Frederick County, <https://www.rowanfrederick.com/faqs> (last visited Sept. 26, 2026); *Aligned Data Centers*, Aligned Data Ctrs., <https://aligneddc.com/maryland-data-centers/> (last visited Sept. 26, 2026).

ⁱⁱⁱ *Ratepayer Protection Pledge*, White House (Mar. 4, 2026), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/releases/2026/03/ratepayer-protection-pledge/>

^{iv} See Joint Legis. Audit & Rev. Comm'n, Commonwealth of Va., Data Centers in Virginia 62 (Dec. 9, 2024), <https://jlarc.virginia.gov/pdfs/reports/Rpt598-2.pdf>; Tim Walsh, Assistant Sec'y for Env't Mgmt., U.S. Dep't of Energy, The Truth About AI Data Centers (July 27, 2026); U.S. Dep't of Energy, Fed. Energy Mgmt. Program, Technology Changes, but Energy Efficiency Principles Remain Steadfast in Data Center Design (Dec. 11, 2024), <https://www.energy.gov/cmei/femp/articles/technology-changes-energy-efficiency-principles-remain-steadfast-data-center>.

^v Joint Legis. Audit & Rev. Comm'n, Data Centers in Virginia, note 4, at 62.

^{vi} Brandon Oyer, Amazon Data Centers: How Much Water and Electricity Do They Really Use?, About Amazon, <https://www.aboutamazon.com/news/sustainability/amazon-data-centers-electricity-bills-water-use> (last visited Sept. 27, 2026).

^{vii} Rowan in Frederick County and Aligned Data Ctrs., note 2.

^{viii} See, e.g., Matthew Harbison, Good Noise Neighbor: Data Center Design for Community Noise, Building Design + Construction (Jan. 2026), <https://www.bdcnetwork.com/building-sector-reports/data-centers/news/55341118/good-noise-neighbor-data-center-design-for-community-noise>.

^{ix} See, e.g., Cal. Energy Comm'n, Commission Final Decision 5.13-18 to -19 (2021); City of Chesapeake, Data Center Ordinance and Policy, <https://cityofchesapeake.net/3783/Data-Center-Ordinance-and-Policy> (last visited Sept. 27, 2026).

^x Rowan in Frederick County and Aligned Data Ctrs., note 2.

^{xi} PwC, *Economic Contributions of Data Centers in the United States: 2017–2023*, at 5 (Feb. 2025), https://static1.squarespace.com/static/63a4849eab1c756a1d3e97b1/t/67b38f78e9cf125daf756112/1739820925392/Data+Center+Economic+Contribution+Study+2025_Final.pdf

^{xii} American Edge Project, *America's AI Surge: Powering Investment, Jobs and Growth in Every State*, at 5 (Winter 2025), <https://americanedgeproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Americas-AI-Surge-Powering-Growth-in-Every-State.pdf>.

^{xiii} SRC Evalmetrics, *Economic Impact Study of Data Centers in Ohio*, Ohio Chamber of Commerce Research Foundation, at 4, (2025), ohiochamberfoundation.com/wp-content/uploads/Final-Ohio-Data-Center-Economic-Impact-Report-2025-1.pdf.

^{xiv} Joint Legis. Audit & Rev. Comm'n, Data Centers in Virginia, note 4, at i.

^{xv} Loudoun County, Va., Data Centers: The Loudoun Story, <https://www.loudoun.gov/6408/Data-Centers-The-Loudoun-Story> (last visited Sept. 27, 2026).

^{xvi} Loudoun County, Va., Tax Revenues & County Budget, <https://www.loudoun.gov/6409/Tax-Revenues-County-Budget> (last visited Sept. 27, 2026).

^{xvii} *Id.*

^{xviii} Frederick County, Md., Fiscal Year 2026 Annual Budget and Appropriation 1–2, 179–80, 229–30 (2025), <https://frederickcountymd.gov/DocumentCenter/View/356187/Annual-Budget-and-Appropriation-FY-2026---COMPLETE-PACKET>.