

Council Bill 31-2026 Fiscal Analysis

Introduced: May 4, 2026

Fiscal Manager: Melinda Massey

Legislative Intent: This legislation establishes a temporary moratorium on the acceptance, review, approval, and advancement of development plans associated with data center projects in Howard County during a defined “Effective Period.”

The Act also creates a temporary task force to study data center development impacts and recommend future zoning, infrastructure, environmental, and fiscal policies.

ANALYSIS

Fiscal Impact:

Revenue Impacts:

The temporary moratorium may defer County’s revenues associated with any potential data center projects. Potentially affected revenues include building permit fees, development review fees, recordation and transfer taxes, property tax growth, and other tax revenues. The Administration has provided three-year revenue collection for ‘Data Processing Centers’. The Data Center is located at 9800 Eternal Rings Dr.—Emerson Sec 3 AR 7.

| Tax Year | Revenue Collected for Data Processing Centers |
|-----------------|--|
| 2023 | \$507,619.0 |
| 2024 | \$536,870.0 |
| 2025 | \$552,176.0 |
| Total | \$1,596,665.0 |

The legislation also directs the task force to consider future policy recommendations regarding the removal of data center tax credits, implementation of impact fees or excise taxes, and infrastructure cost recovery.

Expense Impacts:

The Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) would incur additional administrative and operational responsibilities as a result of this legislation. These responsibilities include reviewing and identifying applications subject to the moratorium, issuing notices to applicants and petitioners, coordinating the temporary task force, conducting research and policy analysis, preparing reports and recommendations, and providing technical assistance to the County Council and County Executive.

The legislation does not require the creation of new permanent County positions. However, existing staff workloads across multiple departments are expected to increase, and interdepartmental coordination will be necessary throughout the implementation period. Depending on the extent of technical analysis and stakeholder engagement required, temporary contractual or consultant assistance may become necessary.

Local Jurisdiction

Local jurisdiction such as Baltimore County, Prince Geogre's County, and Hartford Counties have placed temporary moratorium for data centers projects.

Baltimore County

- Baltimore County has a one-year moratorium on data center development with the passage of Bill No. 3-26¹. Bill No.3-26 requires the Planning Board to conduct a study on the environmental, economic, public health, and public utility impacts of data centers, including:
 - Average electricity and public water usage
 - Comparisons to other permitted uses of similar size
 - Tax revenue, property value, employment density, and economic benefits
 - Recommendations on regulations, siting, zoning changes, permitting requirements, community notice, grants/loans/tax credits, and labor agreement requirements [Baltimore County Government](#).

Prince George's County

- Prince George's County does have a moratorium on new data center approvals with the passage of Council Resolution CR-98-2025². The resolution establishes a 180-day moratorium on permits and subdivision plans for data centers. The moratorium follows earlier county executive orders and reflects a broader policy review prompted by public opposition to a proposed hyperscale data center near the former Landover Mall site.
- The Qualified Data Center Task Force, composed of elected officials, environmental advocates, labor unions, and industry representatives, is tasked with evaluating the impacts of data centers on communities and recommending a framework for responsible development [Prince George's County Legislative Branch](#).

¹ [Microsoft Word - b00326](#)

² <https://princegeorgescountymd.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=14925133&GUID=6D4FEAAB-5D56-42EA-95D3-B0EA302297C3>

Harford County

Harford County introduced a moratorium on data centers, which was introduced on April 21, 2026 and the legislation is Bill No. 26-005³.

Key details of the moratorium:

- Emergency Act establishing a temporary moratorium on the approval of site plans and the issuance of building permits and certificates of occupancy for data center uses.
- The bill does not specify an exact end date, but it is intended as a short-term pause to allow the County Council time to study the environmental, infrastructure, and quality-of-life impacts of data centers.
- The moratorium was prompted by multiple proposals for new data centers in the county, growing concerns about their high energy and water demands, and the absence of specific zoning regulations for such facilities.

As of May 12, 2026, Harford County introduced legislation that is considering a permanent ban on data centers. Both the ban and potential moratorium are response to concerns over resource impacts and development pressure. No official data center proposals are pending. A public hearing on the permanent ban is scheduled for June 9th.

³ [Bill-26-005-Moratorium-Data-Centers-As-Introduced](#)