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Howard County Association of REALTORS®

To: Council Chair Jones and Honorable Members of the County Council

Date: May 18, 2026

RE: CB31-2026 - S.M.A.R.T. Siting Act.

Good Morning Chair Jones and Members of the Howard County Council,

On behalf of the Howard County Association of REALTORS®, we support CB31-2026 - S.M.A.R.T. (Strategic Moratorium for Assessing Responsible Technology) Siting Act. CB31-2026 establishes a necessary temporary moratorium on new data center approvals, including prohibiting the Department of Planning and Zoning from accepting plan submissions or any actions to permit or regulate them by the Council during the study period.

We support CB31-2026 because this proposed moratorium will give the County the necessary time to implement strong policies that will protect overall land-use. This bill reflects a thoughtful and responsible approach to protecting land-use and guiding future development in Howard County. This proposed moratorium also gives the opportunity for additional land to be used for affordable housing, a need that is prevalent in Howard County.

We appreciate that the County understands the significant impact these facilities have on public infrastructure and the communities. Data centers use large amounts of electricity, water, and land, which will put a strain on the local economy and infrastructure. Howard County cannot afford to have such a strain. We applaud the County for proposing to study these potential impacts further and how to negate these impacts, prior to new data center developments in the County.

REALTORS® are ready to help the County on this issue, including recommending best practices for these data centers. We look forward to participating with you on this item in the future.

We ask that the council votes yes on CB31-2026.

Respectfully,

Tony Zowd

Chair, HCAR Legislative Committee

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