

**DRAFT RESOLUTION: Recommendations to Manage Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Data Centers in Prince William County**

**WHEREAS**, the Prince William Board of County Supervisors has adopted Climate Mitigation and Climate Resilience (CM/CR) goals, including reducing the county's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, by 2030, to half of 2005 levels; and

**WHEREAS**, the Sustainability Commission has been tasked with monitoring progress and updating recommendations for the Community Energy and Sustainability Master Plan (CESMP), which is designed to meet those CM/CR goals; and

**WHEREAS**, the Prince William Sustainability Office, with contractor support, created an inventory and forecast of GHG emissions by applying a set of standard methods based on guidelines provided by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG); and

**WHEREAS**, the Commission determined that those standard methods do not accurately estimate and forecast greenhouse gas emissions from data centers; and

**WHEREAS**, the Commission has coordinated with members of the Planning Commission, the community, and others to independently develop a more accurate forecasting methodology along with more comprehensive data on the current and future GHG emissions situation; and

**WHEREAS**, the County's climate mitigation goal for 2030 is total GHG emissions of 2.1 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MMTCO<sub>2e</sub>); and

**WHEREAS**, the CESMP's forecast of the County's 2030 GHG emissions, in the absence of policies and actions to be implemented by the County, had data centers contributing only about 5% of the total forecast of 4.6 MMTCO<sub>2e</sub>, but the Commission's independent determination is that, in a business as usual scenario, a more accurate forecast is that data centers would contribute about 84% of a total forecast of 22 MMTCO<sub>2e</sub> (bounded by lower and upper end values of 8 and 42 MMTCO<sub>2e</sub>, respectively); and

**WHEREAS**, the potentially enormous growth of emissions from data centers would thus make it infeasible to achieve the County’s climate mitigation goals; and

**WHEREAS**, a solution to the large carbon footprint of data centers already exists – purchasing zero-carbon electricity – and is already being employed by many leading data center companies (this is accounted for in the Sustainability Commission’s methodology);

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Commission recommends that the Board of County Supervisors (BOCS) examine ways to pause approvals on new data centers, including eliminating the opportunity zone and targeted industry status, until the county can (a) adequately analyze and manage cumulative impacts of data center development, including effects of additional data centers on the climate mitigation goal, and (b) the County can devise a method to condition approval of any additional data centers on binding commitments by the applicants to use at least 90% zero-carbon electricity by 2030.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Commission recommends that the BOCS and Office of Sustainability immediately prioritize *CESMP Action E.3: Encourage Renewable Energy Use in Energy-Intensive Commercial Buildings*, including developing a program to encourage, and if possible, require all existing and fully permitted data centers to commit to use at least 90% zero-carbon electricity by 2030.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Commission recommends that the BOCS immediately prioritize the CESMP foundational initiative on “*assessments for climate mitigation and resiliency impacts*,” to be performed by the County to provide data on a project’s impact on GHG emissions, renewable and fossil energy mix, and climate resiliency metrics. These assessments should apply not only to new data centers, but also to road projects, residential/commercial development, and other projects that could materially affect accomplishment of the CM/CR goals to insure that the goals are not further at risk.