



*Protecting and restoring the lands and waters of the Virginia Piedmont,
while building stronger, more sustainable communities*

July 30, 2024

Fauquier County Board of Supervisors; Richard Gerhardt, Chair

c/o Fauquier County Community Development Department, 10 Hotel Street, Warrenton, VA
20186

Re: TEXT-24-022297, Zoning Text Amendment, Electrical Substation Distribution Centers
and Transformer Stations

Dear Board of Supervisors,

We are writing in support of the proposed zoning text amendment that would require Special Use approval for Electrical Substation Distribution Centers and Transformer Stations in the Business Park (BP), Industrial Park (I-1) and Industrial General (I-2) zoning districts.

The County is well aware of the rapidly growing demand for electrical infrastructure buildout, as evidenced by the Board of Supervisors' public comments on the Department of Energy's [National Interest Electric Transmission Corridor](#) designation potentially impacting Fauquier County. This text amendment is a precautionary measure that accounts for the full energy and infrastructure needs of data centers and provides more opportunity for staff, the Board and the public to evaluate significant additions of electrical infrastructure to the County.

We believe that allowing County staff, the Planning Commission and Board to exercise their discretion in reviewing potential and anticipated substation applications in the County via the special exception process is in the public interest in light of a data center industry whose growth is out of pace with the energy infrastructure needed to support it.

We believe that it would be prudent to adopt any policy that would allow the County to better evaluate and mitigate the impacts of infrastructure build out within Fauquier as the industry works on [multiple fronts to secure power](#) in the absence of a statewide framework for addressing the data center industry's impacts to the electrical grid, nearby communities and historical/cultural resources.

We've seen line upgrades, as large as 765 kilovolts considered by regional grid operator PJM in Fauquier County and we've learned that substations serving higher voltage transmission line corridors are similarly larger. We believe communities in the vicinity of industrially zoned parcels would benefit from the site-specific considerations around screening, landscaping, and noise impacts that the Special Exception process would enable.

We urge you to approve this Zoning Text Amendment as its protections will allow the County to better maintain the character of its service districts that could be accommodating some of this infrastructure build out.

Sincerely,

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