

CYNDIE ROMER
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
Twenty-fifth District



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE OF DELAWARE
LEGISLATIVE HALL
DOVER, DELAWARE 19901

COMMITTEES
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January 12, 2026

Re: Project Washington Data Center — Status Decision (Project CZA-448SD)

Dear Secretary Patterson,

I am writing as the State Representative for the 25th District to share serious concerns regarding Project Washington (CZA-448SD). I urge DNREC to apply the Coastal Zone Act (CZA) consistent with its plain language and legislative intent: to prevent new heavy industrial expansion in Delaware's sensitive coastal corridor.

Based on the application and public descriptions, Project Washington meets the CZA's definition of a prohibited "heavy industry use" under 7 Del. C. § 7002(d) and § 7003(a). This is not a small accessory use; it is an industrial-scale power and fuel storage complex. The CZA explicitly recognizes facilities with the potential to pollute due to mechanical malfunction or human error. With diesel storage and fuel handling on this scale, DNREC must require a candid, rigorous accounting of risks, including:

- **Air Impacts (Normal & Emergency):** A cumulative emissions analysis reflecting realistic scenarios—including multi-unit startup and testing across the generator fleet—rather than unit-by-unit assumptions that obscure the total footprint.
- **Spill/Leak Risk:** A full assessment of credible scenarios involving the storage and piping of **2.6 million gallons of diesel**, including containment and emergency response capacity.
- **Water Supply & Wastewater:** With wastewater discharge estimated at **2.74 million gallons/year** and cooling technology still "under exploration," DNREC should not accept incomplete drought or competing-demand analyses.
- **Wetlands & Habitat:** Given the coastal footprint, DNREC must evaluate altered hydrology, stormwater sedimentation, and long-term disturbance to sensitive species.
- **Noise & Community Impacts:** Large-scale mechanical cooling creates continuous low-frequency noise. DNREC should require modeling that reflects 24/7 operations across a meaningful geographic scope.

- **Environmental Justice:** A transparent analysis of who bears the burden of these emissions and infrastructure strains to ensure no disproportionate impact on vulnerable populations.

Finally, the Secretary's review should address the project's effect on neighboring land uses and alignment with local comprehensive plans, consistent with prior Coastal Zone Industrial Control Board guidance.

For these reasons, I urge DNREC to determine that Project Washington is incompatible with the Coastal Zone and should be treated as a prohibited heavy industry use. At a minimum, the applicant must be required to proceed through the full statutory pathway with comprehensive cumulative impact analysis before any approval is considered.

Thank you for your commitment to upholding the Coastal Zone Act's purpose: protecting Delaware's environment and quality of life.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cyndie Romer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Cyndie" on the top line and "Romer" on the bottom line.

Cyndie Romer

State Representative, 25th District