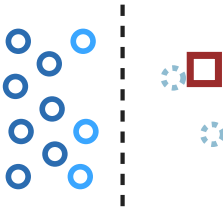


Principal Brief // two-minute read

- INFLUENCE MAPPING
- THREAT DOCTRINE
- MONITORING & ALERTING



You May Be Watching the Wrong Room

The loudest side of a public fight is not necessarily the best organized. Different constituencies operate in different rooms, and an intelligence picture built from only one of them can be confidently wrong.

WHAT HAPPENED

In Prince George's County, resident opposition dominated the visible public conversation about data center development. The other side was organizing too, through council testimony, the chamber of commerce and lobbying relationships into county decision-making. The council passed a two-year moratorium anyway. Within two weeks, legislation appeared that could unwind it.

WHY IT REACHES YOU

Public visibility is not a reliable measure of influence. A team monitoring the channels where opposition is loudest can produce an accurate picture of those channels and an inaccurate picture of the contest. The question is not who is making the most noise. It is where each constituency actually exercises it.

THREE THINGS TO TAKE FROM THIS

1

Loud is not large

A dominant presence in forums, hearings or social media tells you who dominates that venue. It does not tell you who dominates the decision.

2

Missing is not hidden

Organizing you cannot see may simply be happening somewhere else. Absence from one collection channel is not evidence of concealment.

3

Blind spots are findings

If your collection cannot see lobbying, coalition-building, donor networks or industry associations, say so. The gap is part of the intelligence.

DO THIS

- ☐ YOU, WITH YOUR ANALYSTS
Map each constituency to the channels where it actually participates before judging relative influence.
- ☐ YOU, WITH INVESTMENT OR PUBLIC AFFAIRS
Separate public sentiment, organized participation, institutional influence and decision-maker access. Do not collapse them into one measure.
- ☐ YOU, WITH COUNSEL
Keep your own funding, disclosure and coalition relationships easy to document. Provenance is easier to defend when it is already organized.

NOT THE STORY YOU MAY HAVE HEARD

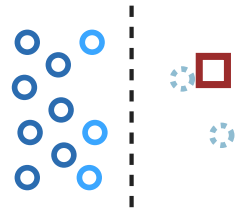
This is not evidence that resident opposition was manufactured, or that industry support was covert. It is evidence that a visible information environment can systematically under-represent actors who work through other channels.

HOW SURE WE ARE

High on the documented activity and on the measurement problem. We cannot establish that every relevant channel was visible to the collection, and that limitation is itself part of the finding.

CB-143

The Loud Side Is Not the Only Organized Side



"Local intensity gets read as proof of outside direction. In this fight that accusation ran in both directions, by named parties, and neither side's evidence supported it."

When a local fight gets loud, the other side reliably explains the noise as somebody else's doing. Opposition becomes foreign dark money or a national activist network; support becomes a corporate front group. In Prince George's County, Maryland, resident opposition filled the local forums while the industry side left almost no trace there and worked the hearing room instead. That asymmetry is what makes both accusations feel obvious, and it is why both are so often under-evidenced. Map the channels before you judge the movement, because the channel profile that looks like proof of direction is usually just proof of where each side does its business.

BLUF. On the local online forums where county residents talk, opposition to data centers was loud and near-unanimous, and the reviewed activity was consistent with genuine local participation. The trap is to assume a conversation that one-sided must be manufactured. The pro-development side simply worked where those forums do not reach: more than two dozen supporters in matching neon-green shirts attended a council hearing, the county chamber of commerce chief executive testified on the record against a long moratorium, and a lobbying relationship connected the industry position to county decision-making. That evidences coordinated attendance and institutional access. It does not establish sponsorship, funding, or operational capacity.

And note what actually happened. The council passed the two-year moratorium anyway, over the industry cohort's stated objection. The less visible side did not carry the decision here. This brief therefore does not claim that unobserved organizing determines outcomes; it claims that a single collection surface will systematically under-describe one constituency, which is a measurement problem rather than a power finding.

The operational consequence is the accusation. That asymmetry is now the raw material for a national attribution fight. Through 2026 the claim that local data center opposition is externally directed moved from anonymous commentary to named sources: a sitting cabinet secretary describing the opposition as "not organic and local, some of this is foreign-sourced dark money"; a television investor calling two Utah nonprofits Chinese "cells"; trade associations asking congressional intelligence committees to investigate. Running the other way, residents and reporters have documented undisclosed industry front groups advertising for projects without naming their backers. Both accusations rest on the same inference this brief rejects, and a principal on either side of a sitting fight should expect to be on the receiving end of one of them.

One side organized where you could watch it.
The platform decided which organizing you saw.

THE PROJECT, AND IT IS NOT ANONYMOUS · MAR 2024

On 14 March 2024 the Prince George's County Planning Board unanimously approved Brightseat Tech Park on the former Landover Mall site: roughly 4.1 million square feet across about 87 acres, up to 820 megawatts across five data centers, a project valued near \$5 billion, with county staff citing tax-base diversification and projected revenue approaching \$54 million a year. The developer is Brightseat Associates, an affiliate of Lerner Enterprises and The Tower Companies. Note this, because it bears on the brief's own exposure thesis: the money here was never concealed. It sat in a public planning-board record eighteen months before the fight became visible.

COUNTY RECORD · SEP 2025 TO JUL 2026

On 16 September 2025 County Executive Aisha Braveboy froze data center applications and permits by executive order pending a task force review. The pause was extended repeatedly and lapsed on 30 June 2026. On 7 July the County Council passed a two-year moratorium on new hyperscale development, the longest in Maryland, carrying an explicit off-ramp: it can be lifted early if the county adopts a zoning framework establishing where data centers may be built and under what conditions.

THE HEARING, AND THE OUTCOME · CORROBORATED 1 TO 8 JUL 2026

The vote followed roughly an hour of public testimony. More than two dozen data center supporters attended in matching neon-green shirts and hats to urge a shorter pause or none at all. The president and chief executive of the county chamber of commerce testified on the record that two years was too long. The council passed the two-year moratorium regardless. Corroborated against WTOP, WJLA, Maryland Matters and The Baltimore Banner. What the shirts and the testimony evidence is coordinated attendance and institutional access. They do not establish that the cohort was funded, paid or concealed, and reading matching apparel as proof of a manufactured campaign would repeat, in the other direction, the exact overreading this brief warns against.

COLLECTION · 6 JUN TO 10 JUL 2026

Over the same window ObscureIQ studied the local online forums where county residents talk, on one search term and one geography. Opposition there was near-total: shared talking points, meeting call-outs, and one message reposted across at least four accounts. The pro-development cohort that filled the hearing room left effectively no trace on those forums. Absent from the reviewed feed means absent from this collection, not absent from the campaign. No second comparable collection has been run since, which limits what this brief can say about how that surface has changed.

THE TEMPTING MISREAD // VOLUME PROVES NEITHER CASE

A weaker read sees many similar posts, near-total opposition, repeated language and tight timing around a vote, and concludes the visible crowd is manufactured. Every one of those signs is also what ordinary civic mobilization produces. Neighbors do share talking points. Opposition to a local project does dominate a local forum. Activity does spike before a vote. But the symmetric error is just as available, and this brief has to avoid it too: message repetition and references to real meetings are consistent with ordinary advocacy and do not rule out consultants, externally supplied materials, paid support or coordinated amplification. **Volume and repetition alone establish neither manipulation nor authenticity.** They describe a surface, and the surface is one layer of four.

FIGURE 1 // THE FOUR LAYERS IN THIS CASE (MODEL: CB-145)

Layer	What it consists of	Observability in this case	What it can support
1 // NARRATIVE SURFACE	What people publicly post, share and repeat.	Directly sampled on the reviewed platform, one query, one geography, one window.	Who is participating in that venue, and in what language.
2 // MOBILIZATION	Toolkits, local leaders, meetings, the distribution that makes participation happen.	Partly inferred. Visible for residents, not collected for the hearing-room cohort.	Little, unless collected directly and separately for each side.
3 // INSTITUTIONAL ENGAGEMENT	Lobbying, campaign ties, professional recruitment, testimony preparation, official access.	Partly observed, through the hearing record rather than the platform: the chamber chief executive testifying, the supporter cohort in the room, a lobbying relationship on file.	That the engagement happened, and by whom. Not what it achieved.
4 // DEMONSTRATED DECISION INFLUENCE	Engagement that actually moved the outcome.	The decision record was public: the vote, the testimony, the bill text, the zoning legislation that followed.	Here, the council passed the moratorium over the industry cohort's stated objection. One decision, in one county, carrying no rate.

Analysts collect layer 1 and infer the rest from it. That is the methodological error this case exposes, and it runs both ways: it can manufacture a conspiracy out of ordinary civic anger, and it can hide a well-resourced advocacy operation that simply never posts. This case also shows the layers are reachable by other means. Layer 3 sat in the hearing record and the lobbying file, and layer 4 sat in the vote. Neither was on the platform, and neither was hidden.

WHERE THE ORGANIZED SIDE ACTUALLY WAS

The pro-development side was not concealed and was not covert. It was organized in a place those forums did not reach. Its members attended a hearing in matching apparel. Its most senior voice testified in public and on the record. A lobbying relationship connected the industry position to county decision-making. None of that appeared on a residents' forum, because a residents' forum is where residents coordinate and is not where a chamber of commerce, a developer or a lobbyist does. The correct inference is not that the residents were the only organized faction, nor that the quieter faction was therefore the more powerful one. It is that the platform decided which organizing was visible, and that organizing which does not appear in a collection may still exert disproportionate influence, in some cases and not in this one.

FIGURE 2 // WHAT EACH CHANNEL REVEALED, AND WHAT IT CONCEALED

CHANNEL	OBSERVED	NOT OBSERVED, AND THE CONSEQUENCE
NEIGHBORHOOD PLATFORM	Resident opposition, shared messages, meeting references.	Pro-development advocacy absent, so stakeholder balance cannot be inferred from it at all.
PUBLIC HEARING	Pro-development attendance in matching apparel, chamber testimony, and the council's contrary vote.	Recruitment and funding structure not collected, so the sponsorship question stays open in both directions.
OFF-PLATFORM MEDIA	Links and routing behavior only.	The persuasion content itself was not captured, so the narrative read is incomplete.
POLITICAL INFLUENCE	Public relationships and one lobbying history.	Private strategy not collected, so principal exposure may surface later rather than now.

SO WHAT Never let the loudest platform decide who is organized, and never let a quiet one decide who is powerful. State in the product what your collection was not positioned to see, and treat that gap as a finding rather than as background.

THE ATTRIBUTION FIGHT // BOTH SIDES CALL THE OTHER ONE FAKE

The visibility asymmetry documented above does not stay an analytic curiosity. It becomes ammunition. Each side observes that the other is organized somewhere it cannot see, and reads that absence as concealment rather than as a different venue. Through 2026 this hardened into a national attribution fight conducted by named parties, and it is the form in which most principals will actually encounter the problem.

FIGURE 3 // THE EXTERNAL-DIRECTION CLAIMS, IN BOTH DIRECTIONS, AND WHAT THE OFFERED EVIDENCE ESTABLISHES

CLAIM	WHO HAS MADE IT	EVIDENCE OFFERED	WHAT IT ESTABLISHES
OPPOSITION IS FOREIGN-DIRECTED, SPECIFICALLY CHINESE	Interior Secretary Doug Burgum; investor Kevin O'Leary, naming two Utah organizations as "cells"; fund manager Gavin Baker; the Bitcoin Policy Institute in a May 2026 report; House Energy and Commerce Committee leadership, which on 4 June 2026 asked the FBI and the President's science advisers to examine China-linked funding; the President, on 10 September 2026, relaying that "a lot of people say that it's a China PR thing"	Assertion, an unsubstantiated reference to IP analysis, a report characterized as offering little direct evidence, and a request for an inquiry whose findings have not been published	That the claim is now being made at the highest level. Nothing about direction.
OPPOSITION IS FOREIGN-AMPLIFIED ON SOCIAL PLATFORMS	NetChoice and Innovation Council Action; the Coalition for Affordability and Prosperity, which asked congressional intelligence committees to investigate	Posts geolocated to South Asia, Africa, Poland and Bangladesh, including Facebook pages with 44,000 followers posting on Indiana and Kansas projects. The groups said they cannot precisely quantify it. Separately, in August 2026 X reported about 200 accounts from a roughly 200,000-account network posting anti-data-center content, none with followers or engagement before suspension.	That foreign-located and inauthentic accounts post about this topic, at a scale the platforms themselves describe as small. Posting location is not direction.
OPPOSITION IS FOREIGN-FUNDED, \$39 MILLION AND UP	An energy-policy institute report, March 2026 data	Twelve named opposition organizations and five foreign philanthropic funders, with no breakdown by organization, no time period, and no stated methodology	That foreign philanthropies fund domestic advocacy, which is lawful and long-standing. Not that any local protest was directed.
SOME FOREIGN-ORIGIN CONTENT EXISTS	OpenAI, reporting on its own platform, winter 2026	Chinese accounts generating anti-data-center content through the company's tools	The one substantiated item here. The company assessed the impact as limited and the posts as gaining little traction.
SUPPORT IS A MANUFACTURED CORPORATE FRONT	Residents and reporting in North Carolina	North Carolina Connects ran television, radio and social advertising promoting data centers without disclosing its backing; it is funded by the Data Center Coalition, a trade group including Amazon, Microsoft and Google that reported \$4.6 million in 2024 revenue	Undisclosed sponsorship of an advocacy campaign, which is documented here and is the better-evidenced of the two accusations.

It is that the documented foreign activity is marginal and does not account for the domestic position. OpenAI found Chinese accounts producing anti-data-center content and judged their traction low, with no meaningful breakout beyond the accounts' own activity. A Clemson media-forensics team tracking coordinated foreign activity said in June it had not found much, and by September had found about seventy accounts overlapping the OpenAI and X sets, a volume it judged far too small for a state that had made the issue a priority. Meanwhile Gallup put opposition to a nearby data center at 71 percent of American adults. A domestic baseline that broad makes foreign direction unnecessary to explain the opposition, though national sentiment does not by itself establish the provenance of any particular local campaign, and an analyst who says "no foreign activity" is as wrong as one who says "this is a foreign operation." The defensible statement names the scale: some documented, marginal, and nowhere near sufficient to explain the distribution.

THREE CATEGORY ERRORS DO THE WORK IN THESE CLAIMS

Foreign-located posting is treated as foreign direction, which is the layer-one inference error from Figure 1 with a flag attached. Foreign philanthropic funding of a domestic advocacy organization is treated as foreign direction of a local protest, which conflates a grant-making relationship with operational control and is lawful and unremarkable in either case. And organizing in an unobserved channel is treated as concealment, when in this county it was just a chamber of commerce doing what a chamber of commerce does. Each error converts an absence of collection into a positive finding.

THE NAMED-ENTITY EXPOSURE RUNS DOWN TO VERY SMALL ORGANIZATIONS

The Utah nonprofit publicly called a Chinese cell responded by publishing its finances: roughly \$200,000 in 2024 revenue, consistent with a decade-long average. A consultancy named alongside it said it was as confused as anyone. That is the exposure this series keeps describing, arriving from an unexpected direction: not a developer named into a residents' grievance, but small local organizations named into a national-security frame by a cabinet official and a television investor. Any organization that becomes locally visible on a contested infrastructure issue should assume this frame is available to whoever it is inconveniencing, and should be able to produce its own funding record on short notice.

► THE COORDINATION TEST

Before attributing a campaign on either side to outside direction, answer four questions in order: *what direct evidence shows external direction; does the observed conduct require coordination to explain it; are funding, messaging, timing and account behavior independently linked; and would ordinary local organizing, or ordinary trade-association advocacy, explain the same evidence?* Absent positive evidence on the first three, treat the activity as ordinary. Undisclosed sponsorship is a real and separate finding, and it is established by disclosure records rather than by inference from tone or volume.

THE FORECAST, AGAINST THE RECORD

The first version of this analysis, dated 10 July 2026, closed with four forecasts. Two months of record have accumulated since. The ledger below grades them against that record: one confirmed, one partially supported through external corroboration only, one not supported as written, and one unassessable.

FORECAST (10 JUL)	WHAT THE RECORD SHOWED	STATUS
ACTIVITY MIGRATES FROM THE MORATORIUM DECISION TO THE ZONING FRAMEWORK THAT CAN LIFT IT EARLY.	Council member Wanika Fisher introduced zoning legislation within roughly two weeks, designating where data centers would be permitted and requiring detailed site-plan review for campuses under 200 acres. It uses the moratorium's own off-ramp. Planning staff recommended against it on environmental grounds. Still under debate on 1 September, with no further public action found through early October. Meanwhile the council moved the other way: on 17 September a committee unanimously advanced a separate bill, sponsored by the council chair and two members, reinstating detailed site-plan review for data centers and leaving the moratorium in place, and the chair said she would push for a permanent ban.	Confirmed. Specific, local, temporally bounded. The framework fight is now running in both directions.
THE POWER-BILL FRAME IS THE MOST DURABLE THREAD IN THE OPPOSITION.	The frame traveled: New York's Executive Order 62, signed 14 July 2026, established the first statewide hyperscale moratorium, and ratepayer cost appears in its recited grounds. But it appears fourth among ten, alongside water and energy intensity, grid queue volume, clean-energy targets, stranded-infrastructure risk, air quality, noise, lighting, and water scarcity. Nothing here establishes it was the most durable thread in Prince George's County specifically.	Partially supported, through external corroboration only.
THE FOLLOW-THE-MONEY FRAME STAYS LIVE SO LONG AS NAMED OFFICIALS REMAIN IN PUBLIC VIEW.	Officials did lose: in Calvert County the board president, vice president and a commissioner; in Frederick County the council president finished third at large. A Frederick member who supported the zoning expansion placed second and advanced. But official accountability at the ballot is not follow-the-money attribution. No private party or funding relationship was inserted into the grievance frame, which this brief states plainly two sections below. Both judgments cannot stand.	Not supported as written.
THE PUBLIC SURFACE QUIETS EVEN AS LEGAL, LOBBYING AND LEGISLATIVE COORDINATION INTENSIFIES.	The institutional half happened immediately. The other half cannot be graded: residents were still testifying against the zoning bill on 1 September, but hearing testimony is a different channel from the neighborhood platform the forecast was about, and no second comparable collection was run. This forecast was graded refuted in September by silently swapping one public surface for another.	Unassessable without repeated platform measurement. Observable evidence points against the substitution assumption.

THE SELF-AUDIT FAILED BEFORE THE FORECAST DID

The September grading called this forecast refuted because public opposition continued. But "public surface" quietly changed meaning between the prediction and the grading: the forecast concerned the neighborhood platform, and the evidence offered was council testimony. That is an equivocation, and it is the same class of error as the unit substitutions this series has been correcting in other people's numbers. A self-audit that redefines its own terms to reach a verdict is worse than no self-audit, because it carries the authority of having checked. The honest grade is unassessable, and the fix is a second collection on the original surface.

WHAT CAN STILL BE SAID ABOUT CHANNELS

Institutional activity in the zoning fight and continued public participation in council hearings ran over the same weeks. That supports a narrow claim: **channels can remain active simultaneously**, so an analyst should not assume that a fight moving into legislative and legal venues implies the public venue has gone quiet. One case does not establish that they always run together, and nothing here measures whether the original forum surface rose, fell or held.

Fisher is term-limited and leaves in December, and had previously argued against the moratorium. That is not an accusation; it is a scheduling fact with consequences for anyone reading this fight. The window in which the moratorium can be undone by the mechanism written into it may be shorter than the moratorium, and it is being worked by someone who will not face the electorate that CB-153 documents removing officials over this issue. Read the calendar of the decision-makers, not only the calendar of the decision. The counter-move is also on the calendar: the chair's site-plan-review bill advanced from committee on 17 September and awaits a full council vote, and the same chair has said she will seek a permanent ban. Two frameworks are now being worked at once, one that would open the off-ramp and one that would close the road.

FIGURE 5 // WHAT EACH FORECAST RESTED ON, AND THE TRANSFERABLE RULE

Forecast	The signal it rested on	The transferable rule
MIGRATION TO ZONING	The moratorium carried an early-lift trigger tied to a zoning framework. The decision that mattered was visibly deferred, not settled.	Read the mechanism, not the vote. Authority moves to wherever the off-ramp sits.
POWER-BILL DURABILITY	A grievance that is concrete, personally felt and cross-partisan travels further than one that is abstract. It does, but it travels alongside other grievances rather than displacing them.	Expect durable frames to coexist, and do not rank them without a measurement that can separate them.
FOLLOW-THE-MONEY AT THE BALLOT	A standing grievance with named targets and an approaching election. The error was treating officials and private parties as one target class.	Name whose accountability you are predicting. Electoral consequence for officials is not attribution to funders.
THE QUIETING SURFACE	The visibility-asymmetry doctrine, which assumed channels trade off. The forecast was written without specifying the measurement that would test it.	Write forecasts that name their own instrument, or they cannot be graded honestly later.

One confirmed, one partially supported through external corroboration, one not supported as written, and one unassessable. A ledger that grades everything confirmed is the thing this brief argues against, and so is a ledger that reaches a clean refutation by moving its own goalposts.

THE THESIS, CHECKED AGAINST ITS OWN CASE

This brief's exposure claim is that a name, a fund or a lobbying record can be inserted into a grievance frame that already has public traction. In this county that has not happened, and the honest statement is the plain one: **private-party attribution remains plausible but was not observed**. The developers were named in a public planning-board record in March 2024. The grievance has run at full strength for a year. A moratorium fight, a contested hearing, zoning legislation and a primary election have all occurred. Attribution still resolved onto council members and candidates rather than onto Brightseat Associates, Lerner Enterprises or The Tower Companies, and CB-153 records the same prediction failing in the same county.

An earlier draft of this revision explained that away by saying the exposure was latent and no occasion had arrived. That reasoning is not available: the occasions listed above are exactly the kind that would trigger the conversion, and treating their passage as evidence of a hidden condition makes the claim unfalsifiable. The discipline the brief demands of others applies here. The conversion is plausible on the structure, it has not been observed across four plausible occasions, and that is disconfirming evidence for the prediction even though it is not a reason to stop auditing the exposure.

► THE PRACTICAL TEST

The exposure question is not only whether each opposition claim is technically accurate. *It is whether a name, a fund or a lobbying record can be inserted into a grievance frame that already has public traction.* Audit that on your own record before someone else compiles it. Do not treat the absence of such an insertion so far as evidence that it cannot happen, and do not treat its structural possibility as evidence that it will.

THE STEELMAN // THE BEST CASE FOR READING THIS AS A DIRECTED CAMPAIGN

THE BEST CASE AGAINST THIS BRIEF'S READING

- + An identical advocacy message across four or more accounts is a textbook coordination signature.
- + A near-total one-sided conversation is anomalous on its face and can indicate a managed narrative.
- + Tight timing against a decision cycle is consistent with a directed effort keyed to the vote.

Concede all three as reasonable priors. The reviewed material shows the repeated message anchored to real meetings, accounts mapping to real neighborhoods, and a posting cadence with no obvious automation signature. That is consistent with ordinary advocacy. It does not rule out consultants, supplied materials, paid support or coordinated amplification, and the collection lacks the account-provenance and cross-platform data needed to test any of it. This is a limit, not a clearance, and the brief rates authenticity accordingly rather than strongly. The correct move is to keep the coordination question open in both directions and direct the next collection at the channels this one never reached. The same caution applies to outside assessments of this space that describe a diffuse, cross-partisan, multi-source environment and then label it an organized campaign, a conclusion their own distributed data does not support.

FIGURE 6 // ANALYTIC CONFIDENCE BY CLAIM

A single collection surface systematically under-describes constituencies that do not use it.	STRONG / THE CENTRAL FINDING, AND THIS CASE DEMONSTRATES IT
The decision-cycle anchors: 16 Sep 2025 order, 30 Jun lapse, 7 Jul moratorium, zoning bill weeks later.	STRONG / COUNTY RECORD AND CONTEMPORANEOUS REPORTING
The pro-development cohort achieved coordinated attendance and institutional access.	STRONG / HEARING RECORD, CORROBORATED ACROSS FOUR OUTLETS
The visible side prevailed in the decision examined here.	STRONG / THE MORATORIUM PASSED OVER THE INDUSTRY COHORT'S OBJECTION
Reviewed activity was consistent with genuine local participation.	MODERATE / ONE PLATFORM, ONE QUERY, NO ACCOUNT PROVENANCE
Channels can remain active simultaneously.	MODERATE / ONE CASE, AND ONLY ACROSS TWO DIFFERENT CHANNELS
Data center opposition drove the July primary outcomes.	MODERATE / NAMED ADVOCATES AND OBSERVERS ATTRIBUTE IT; ONE SUPPORTER OF EXPANSION ADVANCED
Unobserved organizing decides outcomes.	REJECTED / IT DID NOT DECIDE THIS ONE, AND NO DENOMINATOR SUPPORTS A GENERAL CLAIM
The follow-the-money frame produced private-party attribution here.	NOT OBSERVED ACROSS FOUR PLAUSIBLE OCCASIONS / DISCONFIRMING FOR THE FORECAST
The pro-development cohort was funded, paid, sponsored, or concealed.	NOT ESTABLISHED / ATTENDANCE IS EVIDENCED, SPONSORSHIP IS NOT
Volume, repetition or one-sidedness establishes manipulation, or establishes authenticity.	REJECTED IN BOTH DIRECTIONS / THE SURFACE SUPPORTS NEITHER VERDICT
Local data center opposition is directed or funded by a foreign state.	REJECTED ON THE EVIDENCE OFFERED / ASSERTION, GEOLOCATION AND GRANT RECORDS, NONE SHOWING DIRECTION
Foreign-origin content on this topic exists at some scale.	MODERATE / DOCUMENTED BY ONE PLATFORM OPERATOR, ASSESSED AS LIMITED IN IMPACT
Undisclosed industry-funded advocacy exists in this space.	STRONG / A TRADE-FUNDED CAMPAIGN ADVERTISED WITHOUT DISCLOSING ITS BACKER
The neighborhood platform surface quieted after July.	UNASSESSABLE / NO SECOND COMPARABLE COLLECTION WAS RUN

FOR PRINCIPALS

- Audit whether a lobbying history, fund association or named-executive tie can be inserted into a grievance frame residents have already built, and do it on your own record before anyone else compiles it. Treat the audit as prudent regardless of whether the insertion has happened.
- Do not read a loud, one-sided local conversation as manufactured, and do not read a quiet one as absent. The reputational risk is in the grounded frames, not in the volume, and publicly alleging manufactured opposition converts a siting dispute into a credibility fight.
- Read the calendar of the decision-makers alongside the calendar of the decision. A mechanism written into a moratorium can be worked by a member who will not face the voters it was written for.
- Expect to be accused of manufacturing your own side. If you are backing a project, expect residents and reporters to look for an undisclosed front group; if you are opposing one, expect an outside-money or foreign-direction frame. Be able to produce your own funding and disclosure record on short notice, because in this fight that record is the strongest factual defense against a sponsorship allegation, and it is the one thing an accusation cannot manufacture. It will not neutralize every narrative attack; it settles the one that can be settled.

FOR FAMILY OFFICES

- For direct or fund-level exposure to data center, power or land assets in contested jurisdictions, map each constituency to the channel where it actually participates before an allocation, not after a vote.
- Do not treat declining public post volume as a sign the fight is over, and do not treat continuing volume as a sign the institutional fight has not started. In this case activity ran in both venues at once, and no measurement here tells you the trade-off rate.

FOR SECURITY & LEGAL FUNCTIONS

- Before concluding which side is organized, state what you were not positioned to see, and put that statement in the product rather than in a footnote. Never let the loudest platform decide it.
- Keep any channel mapping proportionate and confined to publicly recorded sources: lobbying registrations, campaign-finance records, hearing testimony and rosters, disclosed coalitions and sponsors, public event materials, corporate and chamber statements, and legislative calendars and official contacts where publicly recorded. This is stakeholder mapping, not investigation of private citizens, and the distinction should be written into the tasking.
- Do not adopt an external-direction frame without positive evidence, and do not brief one up the chain because a senior figure has said it publicly. A cabinet secretary and a national investor have both asserted foreign direction here on evidence that does not carry it, and an intelligence function that repeats an unsupported attribution because of who made it has stopped being an intelligence function.
- Matching apparel, lawful advocacy, petition activity and opposition to a project do not independently create a security predicate, for either side. Treat "absent from the reviewed feed" as a statement about the collection and never as a statement about the world. This is intelligence analysis, not legal advice; validate zoning and moratorium characterizations against primary legislative text before external use.

CONFIDENCE High on the central finding, which is a measurement claim rather than a power claim: a single collection surface systematically under-describes constituencies that do not use it, and this case demonstrates it in both directions. High on the decision-cycle anchors, on coordinated attendance and institutional access at the hearing, and on the outcome, which is that the council passed the moratorium over the industry cohort's stated objection. That outcome is why the brief does not claim unobserved organizing decides outcomes; here it did not. Moderate that the reviewed activity reflects genuine local participation, limited by one platform, one query, one geography and no account-provenance data; volume and repetition establish neither manipulation nor authenticity, and the brief rates neither strongly. Moderate that channels can remain active simultaneously, on one case and across two different channels. Moderate that data center opposition drove the July primary outcomes: named advocates and observers attribute the Calvert and Frederick results to it, one Frederick member who supported expansion advanced anyway, and no independent causal finding is made here. Private-party attribution into the grievance frame was not observed across four plausible occasions, which is disconfirming for that forecast rather than a hidden condition. Whether the neighborhood platform surface quieted after July is unassessable, because no second comparable collection was run. On the attribution fight: high that senior named

parties have publicly attributed local data center opposition to foreign direction, since those statements are on the record; rejected, on the evidence offered, that the attribution is supported, since it rests on assertion, on posts geolocated abroad, and on foreign philanthropic grants to domestic advocacy organizations, none of which establishes direction of a local protest. Moderate that foreign-origin content on this topic exists at some scale, documented by one platform operator on its own systems and assessed by it as limited in impact and low in traction; this brief does not claim none exists. Strong that undisclosed industry-funded advocacy exists in this space, which is established by disclosure records rather than inferred. No prevalence claim is made about how often either accusation is raised.

METHOD Revised edition. First published 16 July 2026; revised 12 September 2026 following external review, restating the finding as a measurement claim rather than a power claim and adding the forecast ledger and the attribution fight; facts re-verified and the record extended to early October 2026. Collection is one platform, one query, one geography and one window, with no account-provenance data. The four-layer model is CB-145's; Figure 1 instantiates it here.

SOURCES The project: [Data Center Dynamics](#) (18 March 2024) for the unanimous 14 March 2024 planning-board approval, the 87 acres and roughly 4.1 million square feet; [Commercial Observer](#) (16 September 2025) for the executive order, the roughly \$5 billion valuation, 820 megawatts across five data centers, the projected \$54 million in annual county revenue, and Brightseat Associates as an affiliate of Lerner Enterprises and The Tower Companies. The moratorium and the hearing: [Maryland Matters](#) (8 July 2026); [WTOP](#) (July 2026); [The Baltimore Banner](#); WJLA hearing coverage, July 2026. The zoning off-ramp: [NBC Washington](#) (21 July 2026) for Fisher's legislation, the zones covered, the 200-acre site-plan threshold and the planning-staff recommendation against; [Fox Baltimore](#) (1 September 2026) for the continuing debate, the positions of the council chair and county executive, Fisher's term limit, and continuing public testimony. Primary elections: [Maryland Matters](#) (13 July 2026) for the Calvert and Frederick results, the named advocate and observer attributions, and the Frederick member who supported expansion and advanced. Statewide scaling: [New York Executive Order 62](#), signed 14 July 2026, for the 50-megawatt threshold, the duration tied to a Generic Environmental Impact Statement, and the ten recited grounds in which ratepayer cost appears fourth; [Harris Beach Murtha](#) (9 June 2026) for the Responsible Data Center Development Act as passed on 4 June 2026 and its 20-megawatt threshold; [FingerLakes1](#) (1 September 2026) for the distinction between the executive order and the pending bill, and the 31 December 2026 signing deadline. The attribution fight: [NPR](#) (10 June 2026) for Interior Secretary Doug Burgum's "not organic and local" statement, Kevin O'Leary's "cells" claim and its lack of substantiation, the Bitcoin Policy Institute report, OpenAI's finding of Chinese accounts with limited impact, Clemson researcher Darren Linvill's assessment, and Alliance for a Better Utah's roughly \$200,000 in 2024 revenue; [Axios](#) (5 June 2026) for the NetChoice, Innovation Council Action and Coalition for Affordability and Prosperity claims, the geolocated-post evidence and the groups' acknowledgment that they cannot precisely quantify it; an American Energy Institute report (data as of March 2026) for the \$39 million figure across twelve named organizations and five foreign philanthropic funders, cited here as an example of the claim and of its missing methodology rather than as a finding; [NC Newsline](#) (15 August 2026) for North Carolina Connects, its undisclosed backing by the Data Center Coalition, and that trade group's \$4.6 million in 2024 revenue. Polling context from Gallup as cited in CB-158. Record extended to early October 2026: [The Diamondback \(17 September 2026\)](#) for the committee's unanimous advance of the site-plan-review bill, its sponsors, and the chair's stated aim of a permanent ban; [E&E News \(4 June 2026\)](#) for the House Energy and Commerce Committee request to the FBI and the President's science advisers; [PolitiFact \(23 September 2026\)](#) for the 10 September presidential remark, X's August account takedown, the Clemson overlap count and assessment, and OpenAI's no-breakout finding. ObscureIQ single-platform SOCMINT collection, 6 June to 10 July 2026.

Scope note: surface-composition characterizations are analyst estimates under single-platform, single-query limits, not a census, and require broader collection before external reproduction. "Absent from the reviewed feed" means absent from this collection, not absent from the campaign, and no second comparable collection has been run. The pro-development cohort's funding and organizer identity were not collected and are named as gaps, not findings. Primary-election causation is an attribution by named advocates and observers, not an independent causal finding, and one counterexample is recorded. The developers and officials named here appear as they appear in public planning, council and election records, and nothing here characterizes any resident, official, developer or opposition group as a threat; lawful advocacy, petition activity and coordinated attendance create no security predicate. External-direction claims described in Figure 3 are reported as claims made by the named parties and are not adopted; where this brief assesses them it assesses only the evidence those parties offered, and nothing here characterizes any named organization, official, investor, trade association or advocacy group as an agent of a foreign government. Undisclosed-sponsorship findings rest on disclosure records. No estimate is offered of how often either accusation is raised. The forecast ledger grades predictions against reporting through early October 2026; the zoning legislation and the pending New York bill are both live, so those rows are perishable. This is intelligence analysis, not legal advice; validate zoning and moratorium characterizations against primary legislative text before external use.

OBSCUREIQ INTERNAL ANALYSIS // ARCHIVE COMM-143-VISIBILITY-ASYMMETRY-LOUD-VS-ORGANIZED-2026Q3 // XREF [CB-144](#) [CB-152](#) [CB-153](#) [CB-158](#) // ACCESS PUBLIC • RELEASED ON PUBLICATION • REVISED 06 OCT 2026