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February 23, 2026

The Honorable Thaddeus J. Claggett, Chairman
House Technology and Innovation Committee
1 Capital Square
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Re: In the matter of H.B. 646

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of H.B. 646. My name is Barry Blankenship, and I am a resident of Trenton, Ohio. Prologis is proposing to build a 1 million sq. ft. data center in Trenton, Ohio. I am an organizer and administrator for Woodsdale and Trenton Environmental Resistance (W.A.T.E.R.) formed to oppose this development until more transparency and appropriate studies are performed. I am in support of H.B. 646.

The proposed Prologis data center has triggered significant public concern due to lack of transparency, incomplete environmental and infrastructures studies, extraordinary power and water demands, it's close proximity to our residential neighborhoods and schools, and community benefits that are uncertain. Residents have organized to demand accountability by filing numerous public records requests and calling on several occasions for a moratorium until due diligence has been completed. We have been met with rejection of our concerns. I support the passing of this House Bill for the following reasons specific to the Trenton project:

1. Transparency and Public Process Failures

Residents were made aware of this project only after the land had been sold. When pressed for information, officials stated that many studies did not exist or our concerns were dismissed as false information. This has left the community feeling blindsided and misled about the scope and timing of the project. At a recent council meeting in February 2026, we were told that the city had been working on this project for over 4 years, far longer than residents knew.

These transparency failures have eroded trust in our local government and have raised questions about whether our officials have followed the best practices for this type of large-scale industrial facility.

2. Environmental and Public Health Concerns

Residents have expressed concerns about many environmental issues including noise pollution, air quality, diesel emissions, stormwater discharge, and lack of environmental impact studies. This site is located approximately 750 feet from 2 homes and a water treatment facility for Molson Coors. It is less than ½ mile from the beginning of a residential neighborhood and approximately ¾ mile from a primary school. That is just in Trenton. This facility will be located just as close to our neighbors in Woodsdale, St. Clair, and Madison Township, including a century farm still occupied by the original family and the historic Chrisholm farm which is on the Historic Register. Our concerns have been brushed aside.

3. Power Demand and Grid Capacity Risks

This facility is expected to require a massive electrical load consistent with other data center proposals. This is evidenced by Duke Energy and PJM applying for an expansion of the Woodsdale Substation. Cited in the expansion project request, it should be noted that the expansion was to bring additional requirements to a new customer. As the Prologis site is directly in front of the substation, this seems consistent with Prologis being the new customer. This application to expand the substation was hidden from residents. Trenton has not publicly released any grid capacity study to confirm the power requirements of this facility. Expansion projects cost tens to hundreds of millions of dollars and typically take years to complete. Without transparency, Trenton residents cannot know whether we, as local ratepayers, will bear the cost of this infrastructure expansion.

4. Water Consumption and Strain on Utilities

Concerns have been raised about water usage and its impact on local businesses, farms, and families. Our mayor stated in a city council meeting that the facility “can only use as much water as we give them,” and has since made numerous competing statements as to water usage rates. There is no public documentation or studies that show limits or long term planning if the facility should use more water than they report. The facility will sit atop the Great Miami Valley Buried Aquifer which has been reported as the sole source of drinking water for the region. This is a precious resource that will be damaged or drained by the needs of a hyperscale facility in Trenton and compounded by the other hyperscale facilities throughout Ohio that will pull from this same aquifer. We support H.B. 646 so that this resource can be protected.

5. Land Use, Zoning, and Proximity to Neighborhoods and Schools

This site is adjacent to residential neighborhoods, a primary school, a park, soccer fields and a playground. A million square foot industrial complex facility is incompatible with this area. Traffic, safety, noise and permanent changes to the character of our small-town

community are imminent. Many residents have said that they never would have moved to Trenton if they had known about a data center being built in their midst; others say they will move.

6. Economic Impact and Job Creation

Our city government cites there are economic benefits, though the actual proposals and figures have yet to be disclosed. The residents question that the risks outweigh the benefits. We are aware that data centers generate very few permanent jobs vs. their footprint and resource consumption. Tax incentive packages and abatements will reduce the net benefit to the city, its schools, and residents. There is a concern that long-term costs for grid updates, roads, and emergency services may fall on the taxpayers.

7. Community Response and Organized Opposition

Our organization was formed to demand transparency and accountability. We have asked on more than one occasion for a moratorium until proper studies could be performed and the citizens to be well-informed but have been rebuffed in our efforts.

8. Fire Safety and Emergency Response

Hyperscale data centers contain massive amounts of combustible materials including lithium ion batteries (BESS), diesel fuel for generators, high voltage electricity, and dense cabling and plastics that produce toxic smoke if a fire would occur. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) guidelines classify these facilities as high hazard occupancies requiring special suppression systems, fire modeling, and emergency response plans. In spite of this important guideline, no fire safety plan, hazard analysis, or emergency response protocol has been released to the public for the Trenton site.

This is exceptionally concerning because residents and first responders are left unprepared for the worst case scenario.

9. Inadequate Local Fire Capacity for Hyperscale Facility

Let me first say, we have great admiration for our local firefighters. Trenton's fire department like many small localities, does not have specific training for lithium ion thermal runaway, large scale foam suppression capability, high volume water delivery systems as required for a data center fire, or hazardous materials response capacity for toxic smoke events. A fire of this magnitude could overwhelm local resources and delay response to residential emergencies.

10. Evacuation Challenges for Residents and Schools

There is no published evacuation plan for this high risk industrial site. With its close proximity to schools and residential neighborhoods, a detailed evacuation plan is necessary. Without a plan, families and schools have no guidance on evacuation routes, shelter in place procedures, air quality thresholds, or communication protocols.

This is a fundamental public safety failure.

11. Road Access Limitations and Bottlenecks

Trenton's road network is extremely limited, with only a handful of ways in or out of the city, mostly with two lane roads. This would create a dangerous bottleneck during an emergency as mentioned above. A major event such as a fire at the data center could block primary evacuation routes, trap residents in neighborhoods, prevent fire and EMS from reaching affected areas, and create gridlock that endangers children and families. This is especially true because the city is bisected by a railroad line that, when a train is on the tracks, creates a log jam of vehicles. For a high risk industrial facility, this is an unacceptable vulnerability.

12. Heavy Truck Traffic on Residents Streets and School Zone Roads

Residents have already documented tractors trailers, dump trucks, and semis using narrow residential streets, in school zones, traveling far faster than the posted speed limits. This raises the concerns of increased accidents involving children, road degradation/pot holes, noise and vibration impacts on homes, safety hazards during peak school hours, and safety for residents pulling out of their driveways. A million square foot data center complex will only intensify this traffic, especially during large scale construction, and yet no traffic mitigation plan or study has been released.

13. Combined Risk is a Perfect Storm of Safety Failures

When you combine high hazard fire loads, not public fire safety plan, no evacuation plan, limited road access, heavy truck traffic through neighborhoods and school zones, and insufficient local fire / EMS capacity, you get a catastrophic risk profile that no responsible government should ignore. This is not a theoretical concern, it is a foreseeable and preventable public safety risk.

14. Policy Considerations for State Legislators

Ohio is experiencing rapid data center expansion with projects proposed in Trenton, Wilmington, Sidney, Piqua, Springfield, Urbana, Mt. Orab, Hamilton and other cities. These facilities have outsized impact on the electric grid, water systems and land use. State law should require sufficient environmental studies, public notice, and utility impact analysis

before these facilities are built. A complete moratorium is in line until these impacts can be truly assessed.

Thank you for your consideration of these important issues.

Respectfully,

Barry W. Blankenship

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