GREATER WASHINGTON COMMERCIAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®

1818 N Street, NW
Suite T-50
Washington, DC 20036-2406

Telephone (202) 887-6213
Facsimile (202) 789-4141
http://www.gwcar.org

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Zoning Commission for the District of Columbia
Office of Zoning
441 4th Street, N.W., - Suite 220
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Commissioners:

I write regarding the instant special exception applications on behalf of the Greater Washington Commercial Association of REALTORS® ("GWCAR"), a 700 member regional trade association dedicated to serving commercial real estate interests throughout the District of Columbia, Suburban Maryland and Northern Virginia. Since the Zoning Commission's adoption of the Office of Planning's recommended emergency regulations on the subject of *Electronic Equipment Facilities*, known more colloquially as "data centers", GWCAR has actively commenced an important new dialogue with the Office of Planning that addresses both the industry's concerns and those of the government.

GWCAR's Commitment to Responsible Growth

Our members understand the Commission's apprehensions regarding the proliferation of data centers in the District. Our members are specifically aware of the Office of Planning's concerns that the data centers may be (1) a stimulus for increased traffic flow and parking without the requisite infrastructure; (2) a barrier to engendering community-based streetscapes; and (3) too heavily concentrated in one particular area. All of these concerns are certainly viable for consideration during the rule promulgation process and reflect the governments need to comprehend the purpose and focus of what it is attempting to regulate.

Additionally, the voice of our membership has articulated the needs of our hi-tech clientele and encouraged the government to continue asking the appropriate questions. Our members stressed that our hi-tech clientele often focus their expansion efforts in jurisdictions that appreciate the industry's premium on "speed to market" and "speed to access" issues. In other words, responsible hi-tech growth will burgeon in jurisdictions where governmental entities strive to streamline transparent permitting procedures and promote a climate where government seeks to ensure that it appreciates the needs of the industry that it intends to attract and regulate.

The Instant Applications

The instant applications before the Zoning Commission represent several projects that are currently underway and were conceived long before the Office of Planning commenced

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BZA
Case No. 16664
Exhibit No. 26
Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16664
EXHIBIT NO.26
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its prospective regulatory oversight. GWCAR believes that the special exception process enables the D.C. Zoning Commission to effectively grandfather these existing projects, while the Office of Planning works with the community and industry to develop a new regulatory framework for data centers in the District of Columbia. Approval of the instant projects will engender a much-needed sense of confidence in the government's attempts to attract hi-tech business interests into the District of Columbia. Approval of the applications before you today, will demonstrate the District of Columbia's commitment to a transparent regulatory oversight process – a critical component to a hi-tech friendly, government-to-business marketplace.

In summation, I want to thank the D.C. Zoning Commission for granting GWCAR the opportunity to offer our industry-wide perspective on the applications at issue today. Finally, I want to ensure you that our industry is sensitive to the concerns of this Commission and the Office of Planning regarding data centers in the District of Columbia. We will work steadfastly to ensure that the forthcoming regulations serve GWCAR's commitment to the community at-large and the emerging hi-tech marketplace.

Sincerely,

Damian C. O'Doherty
Vice President for Government Affairs