

County Council of Howard County, Maryland

2026 Legislative Session

Legislative Day No. 11

Resolution No. 144-2026

Introduced by: The Chairperson at the request of the County Executive

SHORT TITLE: Appointment – Jennifer Jones – SMART Data Center Task Force

TITLE: A RESOLUTION appointing Jennifer Jones to the SMART (Strategic Moratorium for Assessing Responsible Technology) Data Center Task Force as an appointee for the County Executive.

Introduced and read first time Sep 8, 2026.

By order Michelle Harrod
Michelle Harrod, Administrator

Read for a second time at a public hearing on Sep 22, 2026.

By order Michelle Harrod
Michelle Harrod, Administrator

This Resolution was read the third time and was Adopted ☒, Adopted with amendments __, Failed __, Withdrawn __, by the County Council on Oct 5, 2026.

Certified By Michelle Harrod
Michelle Harrod, Administrator

NOTE: [[text in brackets]] indicates deletions from existing law; TEXT IN SMALL CAPITALS indicates additions to existing law; ~~Strike out~~ indicates material deleted by amendment; Underlining indicates material added by amendment

WHEREAS, on June 1st, 2026, the Howard County Council approved Council Bill 31-2026, which established a temporary prohibition of issuance of certain approvals of development plans on data processing centers, and called for the creation of the SMART (Strategic Moratorium for Assessing Responsible Technology) Data Center Task Force (the “Task Force”); and

WHEREAS, the members of the Task Force are tasked with developing a definition of “Data Center” for the Zoning Regulations; recommending best practices for data center siting and location, setbacks and screening, water consumption and impact, power and energy infrastructure, noise and acoustic mitigation, impact fees or excise tax application, decommissioning plans, removing the data center tax credit; and assessing the impact of data centers on the Howard County Climate Forward: Climate Action and Resiliency Plan; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with Council Bill 31-2026, each Councilmember shall nominate one member to the Task Force and the County Executive shall nominate no more than six members with all members appointed by individual Council Resolution; and

WHEREAS, the County Executive has the utmost confidence in the abilities and the character of:

Jennifer Jones
Fulton, Maryland

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the County Council of Howard County, Maryland this 5 day of October, 2026 that Jennifer Jones be appointed as a member of the SMART Data Center Task Force of Howard County, Maryland, to serve from the date this Resolution is adopted until August 3, 2027, or until a successor is appointed.

JENNIFER JONES

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ENTERPRISE STRATEGY, GROWTH AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EXECUTIVE

Enterprise-level executive with 25 years of leadership across private-sector strategy, quasi-governmental economic development, and executive government. Leads platforms at the intersection of business, government, capital, innovation, talent, institutions, and place to drive investment, performance, and measurable growth. Brings enterprise leadership experience spanning corporate strategy, transactions, public-private partnerships, ecosystem development, and cross-sector execution.

EXPERIENCE

Howard County Economic Development Authority (HCEDA) (Columbia, MD)

Chief Executive Officer

2023-present

Lead Howard County's public-private economic development organization, setting enterprise strategy and directing governance, people, resources, financing, business development, innovation, and partnerships to strengthen the county's business climate, expand investment, and deliver measurable economic growth.

- Repositioned HCEDA as a more strategic, visible, and execution-focused economic development organization serving businesses, entrepreneurs, and ecosystem partners across Howard County.
- Lead HCEDA's innovation strategy for the 1,100-acre Gateway Innovation District, aligning public, private, institutional, and community stakeholders around a long-term transformation agenda for a mixed-use innovation district.
- Delivered 57 business attraction, retention, and expansion project wins, generating \$118.9M in capital investment, 961 new jobs, and 472 retained jobs across the county's business ecosystem.
- Scaled the Maryland Innovation Center to 660 member companies supporting ventures generating \$34.4M in revenue and \$24.7M in payroll.
- Directed 1,319 business assistance engagements across financing, international expansion, site selection, and technical support to accelerate company growth.
- Launched and scaled strategic programs including the Cyber Howard Accelerator, targeted financing initiatives, agricultural relief funding, and grant programs, deploying resources to strengthen sector resilience, support business growth, and advance Howard County's innovation ecosystem.

Howard County Executive's Office (Ellicott City, MD)

Chief Strategy Officer & Deputy Chief of Staff

2018-2022

Served as Chief Strategy Officer and Deputy Chief of Staff to the County Executive, translating executive priorities into enterprise-wide strategy and execution across a complex government organization. Led cross-agency initiatives requiring alignment of policy, operations, resources, political priorities, external institutions, and private-sector stakeholders.

- Served as a senior strategic and operating advisor to the County Executive, providing analysis and recommendations on economic development, organizational priorities, major initiatives, and complex issues.
- Led business and economic resilience initiatives during the pandemic, mobilizing government, financial, technical-assistance, and community resources to support more than 2,000 businesses through disruption and recovery.

- Coordinated executive-level response across multiple organizations, aligning agency leaders and external stakeholders around common objectives and resolving policy, operational, political, and resource constraints.
- Translated executive priorities into cross-agency implementation plans, coordinating policy, operations, resources, and stakeholder engagement to advance countywide initiatives.

Economic Development & Strategy Consultant

2015-2018

Seabridge Ventures (Columbia, MD/Los Angeles, CA)

Advised companies and investors on international growth, market-entry strategy, investment analysis, and cross-border expansion initiatives, translating commercial objectives into actionable business plans and execution roadmaps.

- Advised clients on international growth priorities, market-entry requirements, and expansion strategies across emerging and established markets.
- Conducted market, financial, and competitive analyses to evaluate strategic investments, partnerships, site selection options, and expansion economics.
- Developed market-entry strategies and business plans supporting successful expansion into India and South Korea.
- Built financial models for acquisition opportunities, including cash flow forecasts, valuation inputs, and return analyses to guide investment decisions.
- Led cross-functional deal execution for the acquisition of a \$5M distribution company, coordinating financial analysis, due diligence, stakeholder alignment, and transaction close.

VP, Business Analysis Europe

2009-2015

Director, Analytics, and Insights

2007-2009

Live Nation Entertainment (Los Angeles/London, UK)

Led international business analytics for Live Nation, the world's largest live entertainment and ticketing company (\$15B revenue; 15,000+ events annually across 75+ markets). Built and scaled analytics capabilities that informed growth, profitability, and strategic decision-making across global operations.

- Founded and led the company's internal Business Analytics function, building and managing an 8-member cross-functional team supporting international ticketing, distribution, and growth strategy.
- Drove profitability across a diverse portfolio of artists, venues, digital content, and sponsorships by developing integrated reporting and performance analytics used in executive decision-making.
- Designed and implemented the company's first sponsorship management and analytics system, contributing to a 70% increase in sponsorship revenue over three years.
- Delivered consumer insights and pricing analysis to inform product strategy, ticket pricing, and market positioning across international markets.

Director, Business Development and Strategy

2005-2007

Liberty Media/Sony Pictures Joint Venture (Los Angeles, CA)

Held strategy and business development roles across Liberty Media and Sony portfolio companies, including Game Show Network, WorldWinner digital gaming, and Liberty Digital (venture arm).

- Designed and advanced new business models and monetization strategies for online and interactive gaming platforms.
- Led strategy and performance tracking for interactive game shows integrating mobile participation, enhancing audience engagement and revenue generation.
- Developed and executed a strategic distribution plan that expanded reach from 35M to 75M households.

Director, New Business Development**1999-2005****United Cinemas International/Paramount Pictures Joint Venture (Los Angeles, CA)**

Led international cinema expansion into emerging markets, directing site selection, investment strategy, and deal execution for projects ranging from \$25M–\$75M.

- Led market entry and expansion strategy across Europe and Asia, supporting deployment of \$25M–\$75M per project in new cinema developments.
- Negotiated key commercial terms with developers and landlords, securing sites and structuring agreements to support long-term profitability.
- Developed investment models and return analysis to evaluate and prioritize expansion opportunities.

Manager, Corporate Finance**1996-1999****Ernst & Young LLP (Los Angeles, CA)**

Advised private companies on M&A transactions, financing, growth strategy, and organizational transformation across multiple industries, helping clients evaluate strategic options, structure deals, and execute complex business transitions.

- Executed M&A and financing transactions valued at \$50M–\$400M, advising clients on investment strategy, deal structuring, capital requirements and operational implications.
- Directed multi-party transaction processes, aligning stakeholders across finance, legal, and executive teams to drive successful deal execution.
- Led due diligence and integration efforts to assess risk, validate value, and support post-transaction performance.

EDUCATION

CEcD, Certified Economic Developer, IEDC

M.S., Business Intelligence & Analytics, Saint Joseph's University, Pennsylvania

J.D., Pepperdine University School of Law, California (California Bar member)

M.B.A., Pepperdine University School of Business, California

B.S., Electrical Engineering, Purdue University, Indiana