Green Machine

FROM FRONT PAGE

Gray said they began organizing after realizing how significant the loss of the Green Machine was for students without cars. They started a Discord server and created flyers to raise awareness about the issue.

Members of the meeting also had concerns about how the spring fee vote was communicated to students.

Mitchell said their understanding is that Marshall conducted a transportation survey during fall 2025 asking students how they traveled around campus and the surrounding area. Mitchell said they were told that approximately 10% of students were using Green Machine services.

In an interview with The Parthenon, Marcie Simms, vice president of student affairs, said in the survey there were 578 students submissions. She said at large, ridership of the Green Machine had decreased 50% in the last ten years, according to a report from the TTA.

Mitchell also said they believe students were not clearly informed during the spring special election that approving the $16 technology allocation would result in the end of the Green Machine service.

"They never communicated to students that, in that vote, if you fund network infrastructure improvements instead, the Green Machine will cease to operate," Mitchell said. That claim represents the organizers' interpretation of the communication surrounding the vote. The organizers are calling for greater transparency about the decision and its consequences. Mitchell also raised questions about the financial circumstances surrounding the agreement between Marshall and TTA, including broader discussions involving funding for public transportation in Huntington.

The fee change itself, however, has a direct effect on the funding structure surrounding student transportation: $16 of the former $18 fee is now designated for technology infrastructure, while $2 is designated for transportation.

The organizers argue that the Green Machine's disappearance affects more than just students who regularly used the bus.

Gray said students with cars could still benefit from public transportation by reducing the number of trips they make by car, saving gas and avoiding traffic.

Mitchell, similarly, said transportation access affects students' ability to participate fully in campus life.

"There are more people in the world than people that drive cars," Mitchell said.

Mitchell also believes the loss of the service could affect prospective students who expect a university to provide transportation options.

"It's creating barriers to education for people," Mitchell said.

Marshall's historical transportation materials emphasize the Green Machine's role in connecting students with parts of the Huntington community. The university previously described the service as part of its partnership with TTA, allowing students to ride with their Marshall ID.

The organizers say their next step is continuing to meet, build awareness, and push university officials to consider restoring the service.

For students like Gray and Mitchell, the issue is ultimately about whether students without cars can still access the same opportunities as their peers. The organizers plan to continue meeting as they work to build support for bringing the Green Machine back to Marshall.

Marshall students are available to receive a free TTA pass through the university. Simms said the university has spent $20,000 this year on TTA passes for students.

Students are available to receive a $5 value pass which allows for rides until the $5 or a 31 day pass which allows for unlimited rides within the 31 day period, starting after the first ride. Up to Tuesday, Oct. 6, 472 passes have been given out to students.

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Data Center Resolution signed by Putnam Co. Commission

By TALEIGH WHITE
STUDENT REPORTER

Putnam County Commissioners signed a resolution on the presence of hyperscale data centers after hearing resident concerns.

The resolution was signed on Tuesday, Sept. 29, and says Putnam County is open to economic benefits from hyperscale data center developments, but wants to protect "public resources, community character, and local ratepayers."

The official statement from the commissioners explains that they agree with Putnam United, a group of concerned residents from Buffalo, West Virginia, and surrounding areas. In their opinion, financial benefits should not be the only factor considered in the construction of hyperscale data centers.

Putnam County Commission president Andy Skidmore said he hopes the resolution will encourage companies that plan to bring hyperscale data centers into the area to align with the commission's beliefs.

"By putting this resolution out, we've kind of set the expectations at the standard of if you are coming to Putnam County, this is what we expect," Skidmore said.

The resolution will act as a suggestion to incoming data centers, rather than a list of rules they must follow due to House Bill 2014, signed by Gov. Patrick Morrissey last year.

H.B. 2014, also called the Power Generation and Consumption Act, increases the rate at which hyperscale data centers can be built in West Virginia and, in doing so, removes authority from local governments.

Although local governments can't force companies to follow specific rules, Skidmore said the commission will support companies behaving in accordance with the new resolution.

"A company can come in and ignore our resolution [and] our expectations," Skidmore said. "We wanted to put it out there that if you want our support, you're going to do things the right way."

The data center owned by Google set to be constructed in Buffalo doesn't seem to have any issues working with the resolution, Skidmore said.

"Google is going about business as if House Bill 2014 didn't exist, and that is what we expect of any future developer," Skidmore said. "They're already making donations to schools and senior centers in the local area. They want to be part of this community."

Putnam United organizer Heather Ransom said the group is glad the commissioners signed the resolution, but not everyone is satisfied with the response.

"I would say that there's going to be mixed opinions across the group," Ransom said. "I think what would be consistent across the group is that everyone is appreciative of the fact that they passed something. We feel like they've heard us to some extent."

Putnam United members are still pushing back against H.B. 2014.

"I feel like it's a win, but it wasn't a home run," Ransom said. "It's a step in the right direction."

Skidmore said he would also like to see changes made to the current legislation.

"I hope the legislature, when they go into session in January, would revisit [House Bill 2014] and maybe make some adjustments now that we're seeing potential developers come into the state."

One of Skidmore's concerns with the current state of H.B. 2014 is that the local community being impacted by incoming data centers should receive more benefits from their construction.

"I personally would like to see more of the tax dollars going to the area where the data center is located," Skidmore said. "That is the community that has to deal with the construction process and any nuisances that do come along, so that community should receive the tax dollars."

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