



AIA
Maryland

Promoting Maryland Architecture Since 1965

19 February 2020

The Honorable Paul Pinsky
Chair of the Education Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Letter of Support for SB 0655
Capital Projects – High Performance and Green Buildings

Dear Chairman Pinsky and members of the EHEA Committee:

On behalf of AIA Maryland and the nearly 2,000 Architects we represent, we ask for your support of this bill with the amendment offered by the sponsor, to restore the Maryland Green Building guidelines. We strongly believe this path, previously prescribed, provides better buildings, greater accountability and greater opportunities to learn how to improve upon state funded construction. We are not asking for an easier path to building, or one that provides any more design fees. We simply believe that a program that tracks design consistently through a program like LEED, Green Globes or IGCC has the rigor and input at appropriate times to make the best decisions on projects that will have the greatest impact. The measures implemented in response to the 21st Century School bill in October of 2019 diminish the value of aspirational goals with the rating systems, those goals are an important element in school design. Additionally, without participation in some of these programs, tracking of building performance will be diminished and the opportunity to collectively learn from successful projects will be reduced. This bill provides a stronger path toward quality learning environments for our residents and we wish to remind you that 1 in 6 of our Maryland residents step foot in a school every day.

In 2008, Maryland passed a High Performance Building Bill requiring state funded buildings to meet a rating of LEED Silver or higher. This has been in place for over 10 years and has moved Maryland to one of the top 10 states in the country to have more LEED certified projects that provide healthier, more efficient buildings in which to learn. Maryland now ranks the 6 highest state in the country for LEED certified projects. Over time, the Maryland Green Building Council recognized that other paths provide comparable benefits and they have taken measures to enable alternate paths as equal, including the International Green Construction Code in 2014 and Green Globes in 2017. The core requirements of each path however have specific categories of requirements including site, water, energy, materials and health, to enable a comparable performance.

The American Institute of Architects

AIA Maryland
86 Maryland Avenue
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

T (410) 263 0916
F (410) 263 5603

www.aiaMaryland.org

Two years ago, the 21st Century Schools Act had a small clause that required the Maryland Green Building Council to establish Green School Guidelines without third party certification. This bill failed to acknowledge that the Council has already provided a path as an option for schools following the IGCC. Additionally, the language simply states that an independent letter of opinion can be provided when the documents are submitted to the state, stating that the project is compliant (this relieves fully participating in the design and construction review process of building rating systems). Many of our members have participated in similar programs, like the one implemented and then phased out in Baltimore City. While well intended, the level of oversight, the rigor of reviewing credits and making changes in design to enhance efficiency is often diminished. We believe a more rigorous system as was used previously has the opportunity to have a stronger impact on a building and its occupants for well more than 50 years of service and we therefore ask for your support of SB0655 as amended by the sponsor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Parts', with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

Chris Parts, AIA
Director, Past President, AIA Maryland

cc:

Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee:

Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair
Jack Bailey
Mary Beth Carozza
Arthur Ellis
Jason Gallion
Kate Fry Hester
Clarence Lam
Obie Patterson
Bryan W. Simonaire
Mary Washington
AIA Maryland Board of Directors

[The American Institute of Architects](#)

AIA Maryland
86 Maryland Avenue
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

T (410) 263 0916
F (410) 263 5603

www.aiaMaryland.org