



MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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**BILL:** **Senate Bill 655**  
High Performance and Green Buildings – Community Colleges and Public Schools – Repeal of Requirements and Guidelines

**COMMITTEE:** Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs

**DATE:** February 19, 2020

**POSITION:** Letter of Information

Upon review of Senate Bill 655 – High Performance and Green Buildings – Community Colleges and Public Schools – Repeal of Requirements and Guidelines, the Department of General Services (DGS) provides these comments for your consideration.

The fiscal impacts of repealing the requirement for the construction or renovation of community college buildings be done in a manner that makes them high performance buildings may include:

- A potential 2% reduction in costs to design and construct non-high-performing facilities;
- 25% to 45% higher energy costs than high performance buildings – as measured over the life of the facility;
- Up to 25% higher maintenance costs than non-high performance buildings; and
- Up to 9% higher operating costs than non-high performance buildings.

Other factors that should be noted in considering Senate Bill 655:

- Careful construction techniques can reduce the amount of construction waste that reaches landfills by 95% or more;
- Materials used in construction may not be renewably sourced or sourced in a manner that is sensitive to the protection of the environment;
- High performance buildings are linked to improved productivity, health and wellness.
- The sum total of the schools and school property in the state offers significant opportunity to help the state meet numerous other environmental commitments under the Watershed Agreement and achieve the State's goals under multiple other plans, such as the Greenhouse Gas Reduction and Climate Adaptation Plans, as well as targets for improved water quality, air quality, tree canopy, etc.;
- The Maryland Project Green Classrooms Initiative was created by Governor's Executive Order 01.01.2017.12. Among education and youth-related topics the Initiative addresses is increasing the number of high performance schools in Maryland (certified Green Schools), through sustainable practices that engage students as part of the curriculum. This is also directed by our State commitments under the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement's Environmental Literacy goal. The



Initiative is highlighting the need for guidance and/or policies that will enable schools to undertake sustainable practices; and

- Senate Bill 655 repeals the changes made by the 21<sup>st</sup> Century School Act of 2018 which created an alternative path for K-12 schools related to ‘high performance green buildings’. Senate Bill 655 allows K-12 Schools to be exempt from the actual certification process, but required them to continue to meet the design standards. This created a separate process for K-12 projects, the largest user of the State Capital Construction program.

DGS understands that amendments are being drafted to address issues raised in this letter, specifically as it relates to the repeal of the requirement for community college buildings.

For additional information, contact Ellen Robertson at 410-260-2908.