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FOUNDERS

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RE: U.S. Green Building Council Support for HB 192; Maryland Sustainable Buildings Act of 2020

Dear Chairwoman Pendergrass and Members of the House Health & Government Operations Committee,

On behalf of the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), a non-profit organization with 12,000+ member companies nationwide, and our strong community in Maryland, the below are our comments **in support of HB 192 the Maryland Sustainable Buildings Act of 2020.**

USGBC is a nonprofit organization dedicated to transforming the way buildings and communities are designed, built and operated, enabling an environmentally and socially responsible, healthy, and prosperous world. Best known for the successful Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) green building certification system, we leverage our education, credentials, events, communications, and policy advocacy activities to support the public and private sectors in advancing high-performance, cost-effective, buildings that save energy, water and money. Reducing the contribution of buildings to impacts on our ecosystems while reducing energy consumption and costs has long been a core area of our work.

Bright, reflective buildings are killing up to one billion birds in the U.S. each year, contributing to a 30% decline in bird populations in North America. Birds contribute to balanced ecosystems and encourage the health of vegetation, pollinators, and people. LEED Pilot Credit 55, referenced in HB 192, outlines easily implemented and innovative design strategies while also establishing standards for conservation and energy efficiency.

Specifically, the pilot credit requires buildings to implement cost-effective strategies such as bird-friendly facades and reduction of unnecessary lighting. While simple, these solutions have significant impacts in preventing bird deaths. These strategies also provide co-benefits such as reducing energy consumption/costs through decreased heat gain and increased heating and cooling efficiency. Additionally, these strategies when incorporated in the initial design phase of a new building can be included at little to no added cost.

Over a dozen local governments and one state have already implemented policies aimed at increasing the bird-safety of buildings while reducing energy costs. By passing HB 192 Maryland will continue its long history of leadership in building and maintaining the highest performing, efficient, and environmentally safe buildings. We urge the Committee to vote favorably on this bill.

Respectfully,

Maren Taylor, Advocacy and Policy Associate, U.S. Green Building Council