



AIA
Maryland

Promoting Maryland Architecture Since 1965

18 January 2021

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 0228
Capital Projects – Green Building Restoration Act

Dear Chairman Pinsky and members of the Education Health and Environmental Affairs Committee:

On behalf of AIA Maryland and the nearly 2,000 Architects we represent, we ask for your support of this bill to restore the Maryland Green Building guidelines. Simply state, this bill restores using LEED or other approved, comparable guidelines to help guide and measure elements of building performance in design and operation. This bill also accommodates structures built in less developed areas where access to public transportation and commercial amenities may be less convenient. We strongly believe this path, provides better buildings, greater accountability and greater opportunities to learn about performance and 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 the International Green Construction Code has the rigor and input at appropriate times to make the best decisions on projects that will have the greatest long term 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 this impacts nearly 20% of Maryland residents every day in public schools across our state.

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
[The American Institute of Architects](#)

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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.

In 2019, 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). This also does not provide access to building energy data to be able to assess how design measures actually perform. 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 enables 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 SB0228 as proposed.

Sincerely,

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

Chris Parts, AIA
Director, Past President, AIA Maryland

cc:

Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee:

Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair
Mary Beth Carozza
Arthur Ellis
Jason Gallion
Kate Fry Hester
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