



February 28, 2023

Committee | Economic Matters

Testimony | HB 0169 - Public Utilities- Energy Efficiency and Conservation Programs- Energy Performance Targets and Low-Income Housing

Position | Favorable

Hearing Date | March 2, 2023

Dear Chair Wilson and Distinguished Members of the Economic Matters Committee,

I am Staci Hartwell chair of the Environmental and Climate Justice Committee of the NAACP Maryland State Conference. I am writing on behalf of the Maryland State Conference in support of HB0169.

Energy efficiency is an energy justice issue. The legacy of racist housing policies and financial lending practices have negatively impacted housing quality in Black and Brown communities¹ creating energy issues that run the gamut- from bad insulation, to outdated heating and air conditioning equipment, advanced age of appliances, and building envelope failures. These conditions lead to a disproportionate burden of energy insecurity² as well as health issues.

This issue plagues our communities yet, we share this burden with Hispanic households, Native Americans, older adults (65+) on fixed incomes, renters, and low-income multifamily building residents.

To put this issue in numbers, a household's energy burden is the percentage of income spent on energy bills. A high energy burden is considered to be above 6%. In Baltimore almost a quarter of low-income households have an energy burden above 22%.³ That means for every one hundred dollars a family brings in, twenty-two of those dollars are unwaveringly committed to basic heating and cooling needs.

Energy efficiency is the low-hanging fruit in energy policy. "Using energy more efficiently is one of the fastest, most cost-effective ways" to lower utility bills and stabilize electricity prices for vulnerable houses.⁴

¹ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2214629621004552>

² [Green & Healthy Homes Initiative](#)

³ https://www.aceee.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/aceee-01_energy_burden_-_baltimore.pdf

⁴ <https://www.epa.gov/statelocalenergy/local-energy-efficiency-benefits-and-opportunities>

For these reasons, I request a favorable report on HB0169.

Respectfully submitted,



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