



6 February 2023

The Honorable Brian Feldman
Chair, Education Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Letter of Support for SB 0166
Housing and Community Development – Adaptive Reuse

Dear Chairman Feldman and members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee:

On behalf of AIA Maryland and the nearly 2,000 Architects we represent, we fully support sustainable strategies in building design and construction as we collectively work to lessen our impact on the world we inhabit. We offer our support to Senate Bill 0166.

It has been said the greenest building is one that is already built, reusing an existing building will typically have a 50-75% lower carbon footprint than new construction. Indeed, the substantial amount of embodied carbon, time, materials, and investment means reusing an existing building is often the best approach to creating new uses and occupancies for underutilized existing structures. Including the adaptive reuse of existing building for affordable multifamily housing just make sense. The reuse of existing buildings can save up to 50% in construction cost vs. building new. Retrofitting and repurposing existing buildings is also typically faster than new construction. Reusing existing buildings, specifically in established areas, can provide much needed affordable housing and provides their residents a greater opportunity to live near necessary amenities, available infrastructure, and job opportunities.

When an existing building is given a new use, it triggers the need for compliance with modern building codes. This means that the building will operate more efficiently through energy and water use than it previously did, likely lowering demand on our public systems through more efficient practices.

Expanding our thinking beyond an individual building, there are also many reasons for reusing an existing building that are related to public infrastructure. Reusing existing buildings can lower demand for new land development because they already have sewer, utility and transportation connections or infrastructure to the site. Site enhancements may require changes to address stormwater runoff in alignment with our current regulations and lessen the burden of stormwater on our public infrastructure. Reusing these structures also enables them to enhance their connections to the existing community and be a net benefit to the new residents and their neighbors.

We support the state leading by example in considering how to make state funded construction more sustainable and accessible. We support SB 0166 in allowing DHCD funds to be used for the adaptive reuse of a property to develop affordable multifamily housing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Matthew J. Ormsby", written over a blue circular stamp or seal.

Matthew J. Ormsby, AIA
Director, Past-President