



February 6, 2023

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

Re: Support for Senate Bill O250
Environment – Climate Crisis Plan – Requirement

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

I am writing to voice AIA Maryland's support for Senate Bill O250. AIA Maryland represents nearly 2,000 architects in the state of Maryland and advocates for the profession and the quality of the built environment. As architects, we fully support sustainable strategies in building design, construction, and technology as we collectively work to realize environmental, economic and social sustainability for the citizens of Maryland. We find the concepts outlined in this bill to be in alignment with our policy agenda on building and maintaining strong, resilient communities. We also acknowledge that without a written plan and established goals, measures to respond to the climate crisis will likely not be met.

We recognize that buildings alone are responsible for approximately 39% of the global greenhouse emissions and that we need to reduce our appetite for energy consumption. The latest climate data tells us that reducing carbon emissions is not enough. The AIA 2030 challenge is driving many of our members to strive for carbon neutral major renovations and new buildings by 2030. At AIA Maryland, we are in support of this move away from fossil fuels and, as we continue to design our buildings to be more efficient, a switch from fossil fuels to electrification and renewable resources.

We also recognize that while this bill proposes establishing benchmarks of existing conditions and reduction targets for greenhouse gases, it also looks beyond the built environment. While reductions in energy usage in general, as well as safer infrastructure make sense for all counties, we agree that allowing each county to prepare their own climate crisis plan will allow jurisdictions the flexibility required for our very varied regions. Solutions for low-lying sea level regions in Eastern Maryland may not be as applicable for Western Maryland, and vice versa. These individual county crisis plans will serve to allow each county to determine where the most meaningful impact for their situation will be. Revisiting these plans at a regular interval will serve to avoid stagnation and allow adoption of future discoveries and technologies.

AIA Maryland and its membership encourages steps to improve the quality of Maryland's built environment, especially those items which address the changing climate and the impacts it has on our communities. We have a history of supporting those bills that encourage positive movement towards a more sustainable future. Therefore, AIA Maryland is happy to support the intent of this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jennifer Verbeke".

Jennifer Verbeke, AIA
Director and Past President