

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB1023
Maryland Building Performance Standards – Fossil Fuel Use, Energy
Conservation, and Electric – and Solar – Ready Standards
(Better Buildings Act of 2024)

The Electrify Our Future organization strongly encourages the Committee to recommend the favorable reporting of SB1023, also known as the Better Buildings Act of 2024, introduced by Senator Brooks, Young, and Lam.

Electrify Our Future (EOF) is a student-led organization, advocating for electrification throughout the state of Maryland. Electrify Our Future, consists of multiple chapters across the state, the primary ones being in Baltimore, Howard, and Montgomery counties. As an organization that represents a diverse body of students, we work to educate Maryland residents and communities about the benefits of electrification, whilst staying politically active to support legislative action favoring electrification. Electrify Our Future commends the Maryland General Assembly for its prior work in combat climate change. However, Electrify Our Future recognizes that more legislation needs to be passed to further the fight against the pressing issue of global warming and pollution. The Better Building Act of 2024 greatly aligns with the perspectives of our organization, as we believe this bill will progress the future of electrification, allowing future Maryland generations to live sustainable lives.

The Better Buildings Act embodies principles that resonate deeply with our organization's mission and values. As students, we recognize the urgent need to address climate change and reduce fossil fuel consumption in order to create a sustainable future for ourselves and future generations. The data before us are alarming. Statistics such as children living in homes with gas cooking have a 42% increased risk of having asthma (Oxford Journal of Epidemiology) are terrifying. Yet these data should not serve to scare us, they must serve to warn us, a warning of a fast-approaching future and a call to action that change must happen now. The Better Buildings Act offers a crucial step forward in achieving these goals by promoting energy efficiency, electrifying new buildings in Maryland, and requiring them to have the capability for electric vehicle chargers and solar panels.

Furthermore, the Better Buildings Act aligns with our commitment to social justice and equity. Energy-efficient buildings not only reduce environmental harm but also improve indoor air quality and comfort, particularly in low-income communities that are disproportionately impacted by pollution and climate change. By prioritizing energy efficiency, the Better Buildings Act promotes healthier and more equitable communities for all.

As students, we recognize the importance of taking decisive action to combat climate change and create a more sustainable future. The Better Buildings Act represents a critical opportunity to advance these goals, and we urge you to support its swift passage and implementation.

As a student organization, we highlight that SB1023 is broadly supported by students across the state, most notably including the Baltimore County Student Councils which represents over 110,000 students. Our students are our future, thus it is imperative for them to be heard when decisions that affect them are decided.

The future of Maryland is in the hands of our youth, yet, the proper framework must be laid out. Infrastructure is continuously being built in Maryland to accommodate new generations, who will be heavily affected by environmental policies and actions. The data are there, the support is clear, and the precedent is set. Senator, we as students, we as an organization, we as citizens in the state of Maryland ask for one thing: the chance at a better future.

For these reasons, the Electrify Our Future organization asks for a FAVORABLE REPORT on SB1023.