

To Members of the Education, Energy and Environment Committee,

I would like to submit FAVORABLE testimony for SB1023, the Better Buildings Act of 2024.

As the Baltimore Sun said in its editorial on January 25 (**Climate change must be on top of the General Assembly agenda this year**), "...it's simply irresponsible to plan for greatly expanded consumption of natural gas". I agree. If Maryland is to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions from our building stock, we must act to begin that process. This bill does that by requiring new buildings to generate heat and hot water without using fossil fuels.

And that's totally possible. When I bought my new home in 1980, there were no gas lines in my new development. My house was heated and cooled by an electric heat pump, and its water was heated by an electric hot water heater. All of the homes in this new neighborhood were quickly sold. My family was quite satisfied with our all electric home. I submit that it's time we go "back to the future" and require new buildings in Maryland to be all electric for heat and hot water. Heat pumps are now more effective at providing heat at much lower temperatures and much more efficient than they were in 1980. And they have always been much more efficient when compared to natural gas.

At a time of greater budget constraints in Maryland, it's noteworthy that this bill will require very little state money to implement. But at the same time, it gives Maryland a lot of bang for its buck in mitigating climate change by gradually but steadily converting our building stock to be fossil fuel free.

At the same time it will save future building owners money because of the other energy conservation requirements in this bill. Those same efficiency requirements will mean less electricity is required from the grid.

Getting rid of gas furnaces in new buildings also makes them safer. If a gas furnace is not operating properly, it can release carbon monoxide into the air. If undetected and not remedied, that can be a killer.

For all these reasons, I ask that you return a FAVORABLE vote on SB1023. Thank you.

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