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Education, Energy, and the
Environment Committee
Energy Subcommittee

Chair, Joint Electric Universal
Service Program Workgroup



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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)

Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
March 4, 2024

Chair Feldman, Vice-chair Kagan and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you on SB1023– The Better Buildings Act of 2024. This bill honors the General Assembly’s commitment in the Climate Solutions Now Act to “move toward [the] broader electrification of... new construction” following a feasibility study.

This past December, the Public Service Commission (PSC) released that study. The PSC found that a high electrification of the State would only moderately increase the demand in electricity while significantly reducing gas demand. Specifically, the State’s electric grid would see a maximum growth of “2.1%” which is comparable to the average growth of Maryland’s electric grid over the past 40 years. Additionally, building sector gas demand would be reduced by about 31% by 2031.

After much research and patience, it is time for the General Assembly to act on its promise and pass the Better Buildings Act. The longer we wait to electrify our buildings and make our energy grid cleaner, the harder it will be to make the transition in the future. If passed, SB1023 has four key parts to ensure that our buildings are clean, efficient, and prepared for the clean energy economy of the coming decades.

1. The bill requires that all new buildings must get their energy from non-fossil fuel sources. This means that appliances like home furnaces and water heaters installed in new construction would have to be electric. The bill does allow jurisdictions to make exceptions for back-up generators, cooking stoves, and other buildings that have a demonstrated need for fossil fuels.
2. Next, the bill requires that parking at certain new buildings be “EV-capable” or ready to provide EV charging. This does not mean that all parking spaces will have to require EV charging– this requirement only mandates that a certain percentage of spaces, depending on the type or size of the building, be capable of having an EV charger.

3. The bill also requires the next building code to have energy conservation requirements for new buildings with increasing requirements every year. By 2035, all new buildings will have to have a net-zero energy balance which means that the new building produces as much energy as it uses.
4. Lastly, the bill requires that all new buildings which have more than 20,000 sq/ft of clear roof space, be solar ready. This requirement will allow large buildings to be able to meet the net-zero energy balance required by 2035 and ensure that clean electricity can easily power our State's large buildings.

SB1023 would be a tremendous step forward for Maryland in reaching our climate goals. It is a bold and ambitious plan, which is exactly the attitude we need for a task such as making our buildings energy efficient and electric-ready. However, this bill has not been hastily drafted. We have conducted the necessary studies since 2022 as well as made considerations for exceptions to the proposed requirements. Moreover, this transition will not be overnight, but phased in to ensure that new requirements are implemented properly and that builders can adapt and prepare for the all-electric transition.

For these reasons I am requesting a favorable report on SB1023.

With kindest regards,



Benjamin Brooks