

Dear Energy, Education & Environment Committee,

My name is Neal Goturi and I am a junior at River Hill High School. I am passionate about energy and the role it plays in our lives. I believe it's imperative that we constantly try to improve the world around us to make it safer, more equitable and ultimately more prosperous. I take the independent research course offered by the Howard County Public School System where I study the future of the American energy landscape. In my months of reading scientific articles, analyzing data and discussing my ideas with experts, I've realized that academia has a consensus: the future of America is electric. Fossil fuels are unstable, unequal and they are quite simply, antiquated.

I am thrilled to be able to write in support of the Better Buildings Act.

In 2012 my family moved to a home, built in 2011 with a gas stove. All throughout elementary school, I had severe asthma and it limited my ability to participate in PE, have fun in sports and play outside. Recently, troves of evidence have come out highlighting the respiratory danger of gas stoves; most importantly, the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health showed that 12.7% of current childhood asthma in the US is attributable to gas stove use. In the past few years, gas stoves have become a known risk factor for asthma and I'm unsure to what extent the gas stove contributed to my asthma.

I'm writing to ask for your support of this bill and further support of a strong electrification statute in the Maryland Building Code; I recognize the importance of the Act and the electrification and efficiency it predicates. For that reason, I've spent the last month educating and organizing students all over Maryland. Every student I spoke to about the Act supported the bill as they also recognize that electrification is necessary to secure the future; over 300 students have signed off in support of the BBA. The climate crisis resonates with students and they are looking towards their elected officials for action. We students are inheriting the future, yet we often feel like we're powerless to shape it.

Climate change is a global problem with global impacts but the solution is local. 11% of the county's emissions come directly from burning methane gas or propane in furnaces and appliances in buildings. As our population grows, and new construction without electrification follows, that number is only going to go up. Change starts from the ground up and unless communities band together and work towards the common good then there is little hope for the future.

These students are aware of the economic need for electrification; gas is slated to become 56% more expensive in the next 12 years. They are also passionate about the equity aspect of this

projection because as prices go up, low-income families will have to start making budgetary concessions in order to keep the heat on.

The facts are clear: electrification helps health, makes society more equitable, is an economic necessity and a necessary first step in fighting back climate change. I hope that my letter has shown that electrification is also vehemently supported by the younger generation.

I urge you again, to vote in favor of the BBA and to enact a strong electrification code within our State in the coming months.

Sincerely,
Neal Goturi