



4 March 2024

The Honorable Delegate Marc Korman  
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee  
Room 251  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Letter of Support for HB 1279  
Maryland Building Performance Standards – Fossil Fuel Use, Energy Conservation, and Electric- and Solar-Ready Standards (Better Buildings Act of 2024)

Dear Chair Korman and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

I am writing to voice AIA Maryland's support for House Bill 1279 – The Better Buildings Act of 2024. AIA Maryland represents nearly 2,000 architects in the state of Maryland and advocates for the profession and the quality of the built environment. We are architects and we have an important role in project planning, design, and systems implementation.

The key points of this legislation are:

- Establishing a standard that requires new buildings to meet all water and space heating demands without the use of fossil fuels
- Buildings that receive a waiver from this standard, shall be electric-ready.
- New buildings will be solar-ready if they meet certain parameters (20,000 sf or more of continuous roof area and 2 stories or less above grade plane).
- Buildings meet the electric vehicle charging infrastructure requirements.

We believe it is reasonable for the waivers permitted through this legislation that enables certain functions to operate with fossil fuel sources, but requires the buildings to be electric-ready, having adequate panel capacity and space to accommodate future install of High-efficiency electric appliances.

This bill aligns with building performance standards that calculates Site Energy Use Intensity, effectively energy consumed per sf of building area. This sets performance requirements for buildings to meet, progressing toward a net zero energy balance on or after October 1, 2035

As architects, we are happy to report that many of our projects are already being designed to meet water and space heating demands without the use of fossil fuels. This includes schools, commercial buildings, multifamily residences and many other types of projects. EV charging is certainly on the rise, and standards help in providing predictable guidelines to follow.

As identified in Maryland's climate pathway report, in the building sector, we need electrification and efficiency measures to be a priority to achieve our goals. The easiest piece of this is working with new buildings and those buildings that are being substantially renovated so they can be tied into renewable energy sources. Integrating renewable energy sources or capacity into building electrification helps to provide added grid stability and the opportunity to reduce peak loads. The grid study identified sufficient electric capacity without a need for capacity growth through 2031 and a progression of growth, no greater than prior needs will be developed to meet demands.

These guidelines establish performance targets, that are achievable and on some projects are already being met. It helps us move toward our statewide carbon reduction goals and, it provides a healthier environment in which to live or work. We ask for your support to sets Maryland up for success moving forward and we encourage you to issue a favorable report on HB1279.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of the letters 'C' and 'P' followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Chris Parts, AIA  
Director, Past President, AIA Maryland