

Committees: Environment and Transportation

Testimony on: HB1279 Maryland Building Performance Standards – Fossil Fuel Use, Energy Conservation, and Electric– and Solar–Ready Standards (Better Buildings Act of 2024)

Organization: Climate Law & Policy Project

Submitted by: Donald M. Goldberg, Executive Director

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: March 6, 2024

Climate Law & Policy Project strongly supports SB1023.

As described in Maryland’s Climate Pollution Reduction Plan, “Direct fuel use in the building sector accounted for 16% of Maryland’s GHG emissions in 2020” (citing the state’s Greenhouse Gas Inventory). Decarbonization of Maryland’s building stock is a vital part of the state’s climate efforts.

SB1023 would require Maryland’s Building Performance Standards to end the use of fossil fuels for water heating and space heating in new buildings. Technologies are available to efficiently, effectively, and affordably meet this requirement.

SB1023 would expand electric vehicle charging infrastructure requirements, to help ensure Maryland buildings have the infrastructure in place to support the growing numbers of electric vehicles that will be on Maryland’s roads as the state’s transportation sector decarbonizes.

SB1023 would gradually improve the site energy use intensity of new buildings over time until reaching net-zero around 2035. We applaud this provision, but believe it is insufficiently clear that it applies to new school buildings. If it does not, CLPP respectfully suggests that language should be added to make clear that the requirement applies to new school buildings. Indeed, the deadline to achieve net-zero for schools could be moved even earlier, as there is already substantial evidence that new net-zero schools can be built for the same or less cost compared to conventional schools, while providing a host of other benefits to students and staff in those buildings.

SB1023 makes common-sense improvements to the state’s Building Performance Standards. CLPP urges this Committee to issue a favorable report on SB1023.