



HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY

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Calvin Ball, County Executive • Timothy Lattimer, Director

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March 6, 2024

Delegate Marc Korman, Chair
Delegate Regina T. Boyce, Vice Chair
House Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: HB 1279: Better Buildings Act of 2024

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to convey Howard County's support for House Bill 1279. Howard County Executive Calvin Ball has made ambitious climate action and environmental justice a top priority throughout his tenure. We are already taking aggressive action on energy, transportation, waste, and nature-based climate solutions, which has reduced Howard County's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 15% since 2005. Since 2018, Howard County has prioritized energy-efficient building upgrades, County fleet electrification, expanding publicly available EV chargers, and advancing clean energy by executing Maryland's largest solar power purchase agreement that will ultimately power more than half of Howard County Government operations. As a result of these efforts, Howard County was the nation's first county to receive a LEED Platinum certification for Cities and Communities from the U.S. Green Buildings Council.

Recognizing the need for deeper reductions in this decisive decade for climate action, Howard County Executive Ball launched Howard County's "Climate Forward: Climate Action and Resiliency Plan" in June 2023. This plan sets forth comprehensive strategies required to achieve Howard County's ambitious goals of reducing GHGs by 60% by 2030 and achieving net zero emissions by 2045. Energy use in buildings is second only to transportation as the largest source of GHG emissions in Howard County. Building electrification is an important part of our plan because it reduces the emission of GHGs while also improving indoor air quality and health.

The Better Buildings Act of 2024 would advance Maryland's transition away from the use of fossil fuels for water and space heating, promote energy efficiency, and set important new electric-, solar-, and EV-ready standards for certain new buildings. Because new building systems can lock in and perpetuate carbon emissions for decades to come, the proposed standards are important to safeguarding a livable climate for us and future generations. Howard County requests the Committee's favorable report for HB 1279.

Sincerely,

Timothy Lattimer

Timothy P. Lattimer
Administrator, Office of Community Sustainability