

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB1279
Maryland Building Performance Standards – Fossil Fuel Use, Energy
Conservation, and Electric – and Solar – Ready Standards
(Better Buildings Act of 2024)

The Electrify Our Future organization strongly encourages the Committee to recommend the favorable reporting of HB1279, also known as the Better Buildings Act of 2024, introduced by Delegates Boaf, Charkoudian, Foley, Guzzone, Hill, Kaiser, Ruth, Stein, Terrasa, and Wu.

Electrify Our Future (EOF) is a student-led organization, advocating for electrification throughout the state of Maryland. Electrify Our Future, consists of multiple chapters across the state, the primary ones being in Baltimore, Howard, and Montgomery counties. As an organization, we work to educate Maryland residents and communities about the benefits of electrification, whilst staying politically active to support legislative action favoring electrification. Electrify Our Future commends the Maryland General Assembly for its prior work in combat climate change. However, Electrify Our Future recognizes that more legislation needs to be passed to further the fight against the pressing issue of global warming and pollution. The Better Building Act of 2024 greatly aligns with the perspectives of our organization, as we believe this bill will progress the future of electrification, allowing future Maryland generations to live sustainable lives.

House Bill 1279 addresses two striking issues regarding Marylanders; air pollution and overly expensive electrical billing.

Climate change and global warming have caused many of the environmental problems our state, nation, and planet face today. The state of Maryland is home to the beauties of nature, yet the overuse of fossil fuels is rapidly deteriorating our glorious state. From 2017 to 2023, Maryland residential, commercial, and institutional buildings recorded a 3.7% increase in fossil fuel pollution. Maryland's Climate Change Program emphasized a goal in which the state of Maryland would record a net zero carbon pollution by 2045. However, based on current trends, Maryland's infrastructure is putting a halt to achieving this task. HB1279 states " a requirement that new buildings and significant improvements of buildings and structures meet all water and space heating demands of the building or structure without the use of fossil fuels;" (Section 12-503.1(B)(1)(i)). Additionally, the Better Buildings Act of 2024, encourages the use of electric, non-fossil-fuel-dependent vehicles, by demanding greater implementation of electric vehicle charging stations. Overall, this bill establishes guidelines and provisions for making a more sustainable Maryland.

Augmented rates of pollution are being linked to thousands of cases in which Maryland citizens endured negative health effects, as a result of pollution and smog production. Smog and dense air pollution are proven to cause severe respiratory problems, which may result in premature death. Individuals living in highly polluted urban environments are the most

susceptible to these conditions. Oftentimes, those living in poorer socioeconomic communities have the highest exposure to pollution, as many of their households rely upon older machinery, requiring more fossil fuel input. For example, residents in Baltimore City, on average, pay \$2,556 per year for electricity and energy alone. In comparison, to the average salary of a Baltimore resident, according to the United States Census, \$2,556 equates to approximately 4.38% of their yearly income. If the Maryland General Assembly were to pass the Better Buildings Act of 2024, Maryland citizens would feel assured that their government is taking action that meets the people's medical and financial needs.

Climate change is a matter that needs to be met with a sense of urgency. Passing HB1279 will build upon Maryland's basis for a cleaner future, by outlining new requirements for Maryland infrastructure and transportation. As a state, we must all fulfill our respective responsibilities to make Maryland, a better environment for our children and grandchildren, to come.

For these reasons, the Electrify Our Future organization asks for a FAVORABLE REPORT on HB1279.