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March 4, 2024

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

RE: USGBC Support for HB 1279 (Better Buildings Act of 2024)

Dear Delegate Korman and Members of the Committee on Environment and Transportation,

On behalf of the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) and our strong green building community in Maryland, **we are writing to express our support for HB 1279, the Better Buildings Act of 2024, and to kindly ask for your support of the bill.**

USGBC is a nonprofit organization dedicated to transforming the way buildings and communities are designed, built, and operated to create thriving, healthy, equitable, and resilient places that advance human and environmental wellbeing. Best known for the LEED green building rating system, USGBC has a thirty-year history of championing proven building decarbonization strategies, because we know that green buildings save money, improve energy and water efficiency, reduce carbon emissions, and create healthier places for people.

According to USGBC's [State of Decarbonization report](#) released in December 2023, the U.S. needs to deploy building decarbonization solutions at a greater speed and scale to align with climate goals in the Paris Agreement. Building decarbonization strategies include emphasizing energy conservation, removing indoor combustion sources, and creating EV & PV ready buildings, all of which are referenced in HB 1279. Because Maryland has already committed to climate goals that are more stringent than the Paris Agreement through the 2022 Climate Solutions Now Act, and the [2023 Maryland Climate Pathway Report](#) identifies the buildings sector as one of the most critical pathways to achieve the state's climate targets, Maryland must enact new building decarbonization legislation like HB 1279 to meet its public commitment to achieve net-zero emissions by 2045.

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HB 1279 strengthens and complements Maryland's existing building energy performance standard (BEPS) by adding a requirement for new buildings and major renovations to meet all water and space heating demands without the use of fossil fuels, as well as meet energy conservation, electric-, EV- and solar-ready standards. By pairing building electrification in tandem with energy efficiency measures, the bill will help ensure equitable impact on consumers and reduce impacts to the grid. That being said, Maryland's grid is already equipped to accommodate high building electrification; the Maryland Public Service Commission's recent [electrification grid impact study](#) states that "peak load growth through 2031 with high electrification of the building sector will be comparable to or less than the growth rate the Maryland system has seen over the past 40 years."

Finally, as buildings have a direct impact on human health and wellbeing, it is imperative that all Marylanders can access the health benefits of improved indoor air quality, as well as the financial benefits of reduced energy bills. HB 1279 ensures that everyone will receive the benefits of living and working in healthy, energy-efficient, electric buildings.

Overall, USGBC has decades of experience in the green building space, and we fully support this bill. HB 1279 is complementary to Maryland's existing climate goals and policies, leverages cost-effective building decarbonization strategies, and supports human health. We respectfully urge the Committee to support HB 1279.

Sincerely,

Gracie Tilman

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