



The Maryland Department of the Environment
Secretary Serena McIlwain

House Bill 1279

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

Position: Favorable with Amendments

Committee: Environment and Transportation

Date: March 6, 2023

From: Hadley Anthony

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) **SUPPORTS** HB 1279 **WITH AMENDMENTS**.

Bill Summary

House Bill 1279 would require the Maryland Department of Labor’s Building Codes Administration to adopt various changes to the Maryland Building Performance Standards (MBPS). The proposed changes include that new construction, starting on October 1, 2025, be required to meet all water and space heating demands of the building without the use of fossil fuels, energy conservation requirements, and an electric- and solar-ready standard for certain buildings.

Position Rationale

While MDE is asking for a favorable with amendments report on HB1279, it should be noted the Department’s position is contingent on the amendments, as otherwise MDE would be opposed to the bill. The proposed changes to the MBPS in HB 1279 generally align with Maryland priorities as outlined under the Maryland Climate Pollution Reduction Plan (CPRP) to decarbonize the buildings sector. The CPRP calls for electric-vehicle-ready and solar-ready standards for new buildings, Zero-Emission Heating Equipment Standards, and Clean Heat Standards, all of which aim to reduce building emissions, increase energy efficiency, and reduce reliance on fossil fuel-powered systems. Additionally, the Maryland Commission on Climate Change put forth a recommendation on adopting electric new construction standards in order to promote best practices in pollution mitigation.

MDE is proposing an amendment to strike energy use intensity language from the bill in order to allow the State to follow international building energy codes and better align with proposed Building Energy Performance Standards (BEPS) regulations establishing energy use intensity by building types. This amendment was coordinated with other State agencies.

Accordingly, MDE asks for a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report for HB 1279.

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Bill Amendments

On page 4, strike beginning with “**(8)**” in line 22 down through the period in line 28; and in line 29 strike “**(9)**” and substitute “**(8)**”.

On page 8, strike beginning with “**(C)**” in line 1 down through the period on page 10, line 16.