

March 6, 2024

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

Re: HB 1279 - Better Buildings Act of 2024

Dear Chair Korman and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

Good afternoon Chair Korman and committee members, for the record, my name is Stephen Pantano, and I am representing Rewiring America, the nation's leading electrification nonprofit. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Today, we urge a favorable report on HB 1279, which would ensure that Maryland reaps the [myriad of benefits](#) of a more resilient, sustainable, and electric built environment.

I'd like to use my time today to set the record straight on what electrification means and how it will advance equity and energy affordability while also bringing Maryland closer to achieving its climate goals. Here are 9 facts about what all electric buildings mean for Maryland.

1. **Maryland's electric grid can handle the electrification of all newly-constructed buildings.** The [PSC's December 2023](#) study indicated that high electrification scenarios in Maryland result in aggregate electric system load growth rates in the range of 0.6-2.1% per year through 2031, which is well within the normal range of growth (-0.6 - 4.9%) over the last 40 years.
2. **Newly constructed all-electric buildings are more affordable to build and maintain.** A 2022 New Buildings Institute [analysis](#) found that new all-electric, single-family homes were less expensive to build than new mixed-fuel homes that rely on gas for cooking, space heating, and water heating.
3. **Electrification of newly constructed buildings will create economic benefits.** This includes up to [\\$2 billion in health benefits by 2031, more than 16,000 new jobs created, and increased personal income by nearly \\$1.5 billion by 2031.](#)¹
4. **Newly constructed electric buildings will mean lower energy bills for families.** . The average Maryland household would save over \$1100² per year in reduced energy

¹ [Maryland Climate Pathway Report](#), 2023

² Rewiring America analysis - Community profiler: Medium efficiency heat pump scenario + heat pump water heater scenario (unpublished)

bills if they electrified their home's space and water heating and cooling. Those savings are enhanced if basic weatherization and insulation are also included.³

5. **Electrification of newly constructed buildings will be equitable.** Sixty-five percent would save more than \$300 a year on energy bills by heating with heat pumps and heat pump water heaters, with space heating energy demand projected to be 50 to 60 percent less than for typical buildings.
6. **The Better Buildings Act is essential in reducing carbon pollution from the building sector and achieving the state's climate goals.** Maryland's Climate Pathway report found that to meet our climate goal of slashing emissions by **60% percent by 2031**, Maryland must require the phaseout of methane gas and petroleum in household appliances so that over 90% of new appliance sales are zero-emission by 2031 and 100% electric by 2045.
7. **Newly constructed buildings with heat pumps reduce carbon pollution no matter the generating source of the energy.** Even under conservative modeling assumptions, [98 percent of U.S. households would cut their carbon pollution](#) by installing heat pumps today — no matter the fuel mix of their grid-generated electricity.
8. **Heat pumps can be used in cold-climates.** Cold climate heat pump technologies are common in places like Norway and Maine, both of which have significantly colder climates than Maryland.
9. **Heat pumps are no less reliable than fossil fuel space heating equipment during power outages.** [Gas furnaces](#) on the market today still need electricity to power their electronics and fans so they don't necessarily increase household resilience.

As we continue residential development in Maryland, it is critical that we build smart from the start. In passing HB 1279, this committee recognizes that reality and would be taking necessary action. We urge a favorable report on HB 1279 and help Maryland communities move closer to a more resilient, healthier, and cleaner future. I am available for any questions.

Thank you,



Jamal Lewis
Director of Implementation Learning & Integration
Rewiring America

³ Rewiring America analysis - Community profiler: Medium efficiency heat pump + basic weatherization scenario and heat pump water heater scenario (unpublished)