



11 February 2025

The Honorable Senator Brian Feldman
Chair of the Education Energy and the Environment Committee
250 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Letter of Support for HB 0256
Environment – Building Energy Performance Standards – Compliance and Reporting

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

I am writing to voice AIA Maryland's support for Senate Bill 0256 with proposed amendments by MDE. As a reminder, direct emissions from the combustion of fossil fuels **in buildings** contributes to approximately 40% of our greenhouse gas emissions in the state. While our climate change goal to reduce emissions currently in place is good, the Building Energy Performance Standards with Energy Use Intensity (EUI) measures are a more comprehensive and impactful approach because they drive to address the root cause of emissions in the building sector. The Building Energy Performance Standards focus on efficiency, taking steps in design and construction to lower the energy our buildings need to keep the indoor environment comfortable. This legislation does more than just a switch our buildings off fossil fuel, but it helps drive down the demand for power while keeping us comfortable indoors.

The EUI measures provide a fair comparison across building types wherein buildings are compared to their peers with the long term goal of net-zero direct greenhouse gas emissions by 2040. EUI targets enable the owner to choose the most efficient path to achieve the performance required with guidance from the design team modeling parameters. The amendments proposed by MDE allow greater flexibility toward achieving the goals, but they keep the end game in sight. Allowing flexibility as MDE has suggested enables the economics of improvements to come into play by enabling property owners to plan improvements to align with scheduled useful life of equipment or other factors impacting building upgrades.

Blanket exemptions for building types should not be considered. All buildings can manage improvements that make them perform better and make them more climate resilient. We have seen numerous cases in recent history wherein the more resilient structures prove to be valuable, whether it be major weather events that can disconnect structures from utilities or other conditions wherein a more resilient structure and building envelope prove to be valuable to occupants.

Enabling on-site renewable energy to be part of the equation is a valuable amendment. It promotes one of the most cost-effective means of energy generation and it provides a very short source to use pathway. When on-site energy generation is enabled, it provides another option for owners assessing their best path to performance, or simply a means of incrementally reducing overall energy demand.

The benefits of BEPS begin with the targets to enable a measured path toward better building performance. Through meeting efficiency goals, our buildings become more comfortable in all seasons, they are more resilient to climate change and utility bills are lower. The path toward these measured performance improvements has been slow but expected. We know it has health and economic benefits and we believe strongly that MDE has added amendments that make the transition to higher performance buildings flexible

to work with individual needs. We are pleased to support this bill as amended and we ask for your to vote in favor of SB 0256 with amendments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. R.' followed by a horizontal line.

Chris Parts, AIA
Director, Past President, AIA Maryland