



Letter of Information on SB 0818 - Education - School Building Energy Usage - Monthly Report – February 18, 2025

Senator Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Senator Feldman,

Staff of the Interagency Commission on School Construction have been asked to provide to the members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee its technical findings regarding SB 0818 - Education - School Building Energy Usage - Monthly Report. The IAC has evaluated the proposed legislation and its findings are as follows:

Utility of the Covered Data

- 1) Extremely high. Data on the quantity of energy used by and the energy efficiency of each facility is highly valuable and usable information that the IAC and the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) will immediately use to assist local education agencies (LEAs) in the management of their facilities, the formation of their capital strategies, and their efforts to meet the State's adopted climate-protection goals. To support this specific work, the MEA awarded grants in 2024 to ten LEAs, with more LEAs eligible to apply this year, and the IAC and the MEA continue to collaborate on technical support opportunities that benefit LEAs. The IAC anticipates that the monitoring of this energy data could provide cost savings to LEAs and county governments by pinpointing the specific areas in which buildings may be using more energy than needed for optimal building performance, thereby reducing utility costs to only the levels necessary for good operations. Additionally, future savings could be realized through the understanding of energy usage when LEAs make determinations on ways to reduce CO2 emissions and plan future capital projects. The data collected under this legislation is essential not only to a greater understanding of energy usage and potential savings, but also to the larger effort of statewide decarbonization.

Associated Burdens and Costs

- 2) Minimal, and mitigated by State support through available grants. Most of the covered data is already available to LEAs via their utility providers, either through the monthly bills that are received by school districts or by data automation. Many utility providers in Maryland have the ability to upload energy usage data to a free online platform automatically each month. The platform provides free access to State agencies to upload data, eliminating the need for LEAs to manually dispatch data to the State. A significant percentage of Maryland LEAs already are receiving MEA grant funding supporting their



portfolio-management activities that can include managing this data and its submission through the online system, and more LEAs are eligible to receive such funding in 2025.

Effects on Transparency and Accountability

- 3) Positive. The proposed legislation would increase both the transparency and accountability of LEAs with regard to their facilities operations by making available to decision makers current data on the quantity of energy used and the energy efficiency of each facility—information that is essential to identifying inefficiencies, waste, and opportunities for reducing cost and decarbonizing facilities to meet the State’s adopted climate-protection goals. Although Governor Moore has not made any statement of support for this specific legislation, its outcomes are aligned with Governor Moore’s stated initiatives to increase the transparency of government, including through making public information more easily available to stakeholders.

Regards,

Alex Donahue
Executive Director

Cc: Senator Jim Rosapepe, District 21
Senator Ron Watson, District 23
Eric Coffman, Maryland Energy Administration
Joanna Freeman, Maryland Energy Administration