



Committee: Education, Energy and the Environment
Testimony on: SB256 - Environment - Building Energy Performance Standards - Compliance and Reporting
Organization: Maryland Legislative Coalition Climate Justice Wing
Submitting: Laurie McGilvray, Co-Chair
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: February 13, 2025

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of SB256. The Maryland Legislative Coalition Climate Justice Wing, a statewide coalition of nearly 30 grassroots and professional organizations, urges you to vote favorably on SB256.

Building Energy Performance Standards (BEPS), required pursuant to the Climate Solutions Now Act, represent a critical tool to make Maryland's buildings more energy efficient, healthier, less costly to heat and cool, while helping us meet our greenhouse gas reduction targets. Maryland's [electricity demand has declined over the past twenty years](#) despite a growing economy and increased population, because the state invested in energy efficiency. Now, at a time of increasing electricity demand, energy efficiency is one of the most cost-effective ways to reduce our consumption, without building new electricity generation and transmission. These BEPS regulations will accelerate the pace of large buildings becoming more energy efficient.

Over the last year, the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) has done a great job working with building owners and other stakeholders to design the policies included in SB256. Specifically, the bill increases MDE's administrative capacity to support building owners, gives some flexibility to those who need it, and sets upper limits on how much any building owner will be required to pay.

We urge you to refrain from amending the bill and to respect these four redlines:

1. **Protect Emission Reduction Requirements** – Building emission requirements are the foundation of BEPS and should not be weakened. Under current law, buildings 35,000 square feet and larger must benchmark their energy performance and report it to MDE. By 2030, these building must emit 20% fewer emissions than the average building of its type and have net zero direct greenhouse gas emissions by 2040. This means that high performing buildings are already in compliance with the 2030 standards, but other buildings have more work to do.
2. **Protect Energy Use Intensity Standard** - Energy Use Intensity (EUI) is the total energy consumed by a building in one year (gas and/or electric) divided by the size of the building (total gross floor area). Buildings with lower energy use per area have lower EUI (think measure of energy efficiency). We want efficient buildings that also reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Having an EUI Standard ensures that buildings will use

efficient heat pumps rather than energy-hog resistance heating, which will also lower bills and reduce energy demand on the grid.

3. **Do Not Exempt Certain Types of Buildings** - No entire category of building, such as multifamily buildings, should be exempted from BEPS. The Alternative Compliance Payment sets an upper limit on how much any building owner will have to pay if they don't meet the targets. Any needed exceptions or adjustments should be made on a building-by-building basis through an application process to MDE rather than for a class of building types.
4. **No Credits for Offsite Renewables** – Buildings should not be allowed to “offset” their onsite emissions by buying credits from offsite renewable energy. The point of BEPS is to lower energy use in buildings. A work-around such as buying offsite renewable energy credits undermines the goals of BEPS and should not be allowed.

We urge you to support SB256 without weakening amendments and request a FAVORABLE report in committee.

350MoCo

Adat Shalom Climate Action

Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church Environmental Justice Ministry

Chesapeake Earth Holders

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility

Climate Parents of Prince George's

Climate Reality Project

ClimateXChange – Rebuild Maryland Coalition

Coming Clean Network, Union of Concerned Scientists

DoTheMostGood Montgomery County

Echotopia

Elders Climate Action

Fix Maryland Rail

Glen Echo Heights Mobilization

Greenbelt Climate Action Network

HoCoClimateAction

IndivisibleHoCoMD

Maryland Legislative Coalition

Mobilize Frederick

Montgomery County Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions

Montgomery Countryside Alliance

Mountain Maryland Movement

Nuclear Information & Resource Service

Progressive Maryland

Safe & Healthy Playing Fields

Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee

The Climate Mobilization MoCo Chapter

Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

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