

# **Testimony\_SB818\_CCAN\_Baker.pdf**

Uploaded by: Brittany Baker

Position: FAV



SB818- EDUCATION- SCHOOL BUILDING ENERGY USAGE-MONTHLY REPORT

**TESTIMONY OF BRITTANY BAKER, MARYLAND POLICY DIRECTOR AT THE  
CHESAPEAKE CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK**

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

SB818 requires each county board to collect data on school building energy usage and report their findings to the Interagency Commission. The Interagency Commission will then analyze the provided data and make recommendations to the County Board for improving school energy efficiency.

School buildings becoming more energy efficient will be beneficial to the school itself, and also the larger community. Increased energy efficiency lowers utility costs, making it a sensible choice to save money. Additionally, increased energy efficiency reduces carbon dioxide emissions and general air pollutants that harm the health of residents<sup>1</sup>. SB818 will help the state decrease its greenhouse gas emissions and therefore create a more efficient and healthier Maryland.

This bill is a necessary step to help us reach our ambitious climate targets. Maryland Department of the Environment's Maryland's Climate Pollution Reduction Plan requires the state to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 60 percent below 2006 levels by 2031 and reach net zero emissions by 2045. Governor Moore also issued an executive order last year that instructed the Maryland Energy Administration to establish a framework for a clean energy standard to achieve 100% clean energy by 2035<sup>2</sup>.

I respectfully request a favorable report on SB818.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nrdc.org/stories/energy-efficiency-clean-facts>

## **SB 818**

Uploaded by: Senator Watson Senator Watson

Position: FAV

RON WATSON, PH.D  
*Legislative District 23*  
Prince George's County

Education, Energy, and  
the Environment Committee

*Vice Chair*  
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## *The Senate of Maryland* ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

### Senator Ron Watson's Testimony for SB 818

#### Education - School Building Energy Usage - Monthly Report

Good afternoon Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and my committee colleagues.

For the record, I am Senator Ron Watson representing District 23. Today, I am presenting SB 818, Education School Building Energy Usage Monthly Report, and respectfully request your favorable report. This bill does not have a fiscal impact. In fact, it will result in long-term savings for the school system by improving energy management and extending the lifespan of school buildings.

During my time as a member of the Prince George's County Board of Education, it was particularly challenging to negotiate the demands of our limited budget, and it was most difficult to identify savings. One area where schools can adjust and save is in energy consumption. Did you know that by adjusting the school building temperatures by one degree lower in winter and one degree higher in summer, this simple adjustment can save the school system approximately \$1 million annually, preserving more than ten teaching positions in a budget cycle?

I am sure many of us have probably encountered experiences, especially in a lot of buildings during the summer when it feels like a freezer, and you're forced to put on a coat inside the building, but in the winter, it's so hot that you have to remove your blazer to feel comfortable. SB 818, which requires school systems to report their energy usage to the Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC), will help to ensure buildings are comfortable and schools are not wasting energy. Every month, the IAC will analyze this data to provide recommendations for energy savings and identify potential issues, ensuring optimal temperatures in school buildings and addressing other concerns. Properly heated and cooled buildings can reduce maintenance costs by up to 20% and extend the lifespan of the facilities by 20% as well.

We know that the Maryland Energy Administration provides grants to help schools decarbonize. However, this bill is not directly about green energy; it is something different. The bill does not require any additional funding, nor does it involve school construction at all. It simply requires local school systems to share their energy usage data with the IAC. This bill will hold school systems accountable for their energy usage to ensure that energy is used efficiently, and waste is minimized.

According to the IAC, this initiative is both feasible and readily implementable. We simply need to establish a structured process to move forward. Most local education agencies (LEA's) already have this energy information available through their utility providers that can 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 the schools to manually dispatch data to the State.

In addition, SB 818, will increase both transparency and accountability of LEA's. This information is essential to identifying inefficiencies, and waste providing opportunities for reducing cost and decarbonizing facilities to meet the State's adopted climate-protected goals.

I'm confident that this bill will allow us to access data effectively and efficiently, improve our practices, and significantly enhance the management of school properties. I ask for a favorable report on SB 818.

# **IAC Letter of Information SB 818.pdf**

Uploaded by: Alex Donahue

Position: INFO



## 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



# **SB0818 - LOI - Education - School Building Energy**

Uploaded by: Landon Fahrig

Position: INFO



# Maryland

## Energy Administration

**TO:** Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

**FROM:** MEA

**SUBJECT:** SB818 - Education – School Building Energy Usage – Monthly Report

**DATE:** February 21, 2025

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### **MEA Position: LETTER OF INFORMATION**

Senate Bill 818 would require each county board of education to collect and report energy usage data to the Interagency Commission on School Construction, which would additionally be tasked with adopting regulations that specify the data to be collected, along with the means and frequency of reporting.

Energy benchmarking efforts to track a building's annual energy use are important first steps to identify energy efficiency opportunities. Before school systems move forward with energy benchmarking, it is important to ensure that they have sufficient staffing and financial resources available to track and analyze energy use over time. The Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) recognizes that not every board of education has the staffing capabilities to sufficiently collect data from every building, and may not have additional funds to allocate for an additional role.

MEA has several existing programs that are designed to support local governments, state agencies, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, and communities as they engage in sustainable, clean energy projects. MEA's Decarbonizing Public Schools Program provides support to public schools for energy monitoring. MEA encourages the committee to include these existing programs in their consideration of Senate Bill 818.

Our sincere thanks for your consideration of this testimony. For questions or additional information, please contact Megan Outten at [megan.outten@maryland.gov](mailto:megan.outten@maryland.gov) or 443.842.1780.