

**HB 973 - FAVORABLE**

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**HB 973 - Maryland Building Performance Standards -  
Fossil Fuel Use, Energy Conservation, and Electric- and Solar-Ready Standards  
(Better Buildings Act of 2025)**

Environment and Transportation Committee

February 26, 2025

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee.

I live in the Carole Highlands neighborhood of Prince George's County, in Legislative District 47B. My address is 7219 16th Ave, Takoma Park.

When my wife and I got married we rented our first house together, here in Carole Highlands. Little did we know, our landlord was making one crucial mistake: They hadn't put a cap on the flue – the chimney that vented our gas boiler.

As rain fell straight down the flue, it pooled in our boiler and within a few years rusted it full of holes. The boiler died in the middle of the cold January of 2022, and the price tag to repair it was in the thousands.

Natural gas heaters, appliances, and flues are fragile, rickety, dangerous devices. Flues have to be capped and brought up to code to prevent chimney fires. Gas leaks so much that utilities add a scent so we can find the leak before there's an explosion. We have carbon-monoxide detectors so a single mistake doesn't kill us in our sleep. We suffer and die from respiratory diseases and cancer because of the pollutants created by burning gas in our homes.

When our gas boiler died, the technician that came to diagnose it said the carbon monoxide in our utility closet was at very dangerous levels.

Another contractor smelled gas in our attic. We had a gas leak inside our house! That was a \$400 emergency repair bill.

Our chimney company said the bricks on our flue chimney were so loose they could fall off and hit us on the head as we walked out the front door. Another \$800 repair bill.

Having several ongoing fires to burn natural gas in our homes, then trying to vent out the pollutants, is a “last generation” technology. And it’s driving climate change that will bring droughts to our farmers and harm our kids’ futures.

Electricity – solar panels, heat pumps, batteries – is the growing technology of the 21st century. Our new heat pump cost less than buying a new gas boiler. Solar power is growing quickly and the advances in battery technology is astounding. I volunteer with the Chesapeake Climate Action Network because together we are bringing this good news from other states so Maryland can also be a leader in protecting our homes and health, rather than lagging behind.

New buildings in Maryland should be required to be heated with energy-efficient technology, as proposed by the Better Buildings Act. In the long run this will be cheaper for our state, reducing poverty. And as a matter of consumer protection, Marylanders deserve protection from the many dangers of natural gas.