



Committee: House Environment and Transportation

Testimony on: House Bill 973 – Better Buildings Act of 2025

Organization: Mobilize Frederick

Submitting: Karen Cannon, Executive Director

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: February 26, 2025

Dear Chair Korman, Vice-Chair Boyce, and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on House Bill 973 – the Better Buildings Act of 2025. Mobilize Frederick urges the Committee to issue a **favorable** report on this bill.

Mobilize Frederick is a nonprofit community climate advocacy organization formed to assist with implementing the recommendations of the 2021 Climate Response and Resilience Report (CRRR). The CRRR is a comprehensive climate action plan chartered by the City of Frederick and Frederick County designed to put Frederick City and County on the path to safer, healthier, and more resilient communities through innovative and effective local solutions to address climate change.

House Bill 973 is a vitally important step toward decarbonization of our building inventory, which accounts for 13% of economy-wide greenhouse gas emissions. HB 973 has three key components. First, the bill would require new and significantly improved buildings to meet space and water heating needs without the use of fossil fuels. Those limited number of buildings that are eligible for and receive a waiver from electric heating requirements under the bill based on feasibility must meet electric-ready standards. Second, the bill would require new buildings 20 stories or less in height with 20,000 or more square feet of roof space to be solar-ready. Finally, starting in 2027, the bill sets increasingly more stringent building energy efficiency standards through 2033 and beyond.

The energy efficiency of heat pumps has been continuously improving. Today, heat pumps are three to four times more efficient than fossil fuel fired heating equipment, even in the winter months when they are two to three times more efficient. Because they use significantly less energy, they save homeowners and renters money on their monthly utility bills.

We cannot achieve Maryland's commitment to net-zero carbon pollution by 2045 without transitioning to all-electric buildings and significantly expanding use of rooftop solar energy. Allowing new construction to use natural gas for space and water heating needs means a continuing investment in infrastructure that will need to be retired over the course of the next two decades before the end of its useful life. The cost of this continuing investment will ultimately fall on ratepayers.

All-electric energy efficient solar-ready buildings reduce carbon pollution, improve air quality and public health, and lower consumer utility bills. For all the foregoing reasons, we urge the Committee to issue a **favorable** report on House Bill 973.

Karen Cannon
Executive Director

cc: Kathy Kinsey
Chair, Government Affairs and Policy Committee