



Testimony in SUPPORT of HB973

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

House - Environment and Transportation

Jose Coronado-Flores , On Behalf of CASA

February 26th, 2025

Dear Honorable Chair Korman and Members of the Committee,

CASA is pleased to offer **favorable testimony in support of HB973**, because it is important legislation that will address **local pollution reduction and a guarantee that future affordable housing stock will be safe and emissionless**. In particular, CASA is invested in seeing this bill pass, because our members want clean new affordable housing stock that will imminently develop across the state. A new transit system like the Purple Line will hopefully spur the development of new affordable housing in the vicinity. It is critical that these new multi-family housing communities come with minimal or no on-site emission.

Following this example of development on the Purple Line, consider the neighborhood Quebec Terrace in Silver Spring, which will be right next to the anticipated Piney Branch stop. According to a mapping tool developed by the Washington Post, over 75% of the households in the two census tracts in this neighborhood use gas for heat and cooking. Combine this with the immense amount of daily traffic pollution from University Boulevard, Piney Branch, and New Hampshire, this neighborhood has one of the highest pollution exposure scores in the state, according to data from MDE, without any active air-emission industrial facilities nearby. This is due to the emissions generated by traffic and residential gas usage. This same community, specifically on Long Branch, even experienced a catastrophic gas explosion that claimed the lives of 7 people in 2016. The new buildings that replaced the obliterated exploded buildings are all electric - this means something.

My last point is the current issue of consumer choice. From Baltimore City to Montgomery and Prince Georges, in our communities with older housing stock of any kind, they are overwhelmingly gas-utilizing buildings. We must guarantee that families that want the choice between gas and electric buildings have that choice.

We cannot add more polluting buildings to this community or any other in the state. Our neighborhoods desperately need clean new buildings for families to live in and feel safe. For these reasons, CASA urges a favorable report.

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