



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

Position: Unfavorable

The Maryland REALTORS® oppose HB 973 which requires new buildings to meet all laundry, water and space heating demands without the use of fossil fuels by October 1, 2025 or receive a waiver and meet an electric-ready standard. The bill's provisions would permit stricter standards than those under the current Building Energy Performance (BEP) standards. At a time when recent polling shows Marylander's top concern is housing affordability, the REALTORS® believe our transition to cleaner buildings must balance both environment and affordability concerns.

The REALTORS® note concerns with the following provisions:

- The change to non-fossil fuel equipment kicks in upon a significant improvement (50% of the replacement cost or the original structure) which appears to require the building to meet "all" laundry, water and space heating demands and not just the addition. This can add significant costs particularly if existing equipment must be replaced in the existing portion of the building.
- The solar ready requirement for roofs adds additional costs to multi-unit buildings that already face many requirements making it difficult to construct affordable units. As the electric grid's energy sources become more green, additional costs for solar-ready presumes on-site energy conservation that may not be needed.

The Maryland REALTORS® recognizes that the housing industry along with other industries will be moving to electric standards but is concerned about the time frames and requirements in this bill that will impact housing affordability. For these reasons, the Maryland REALTORS® recommend an unfavorable report.

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