



**HB0973 – SUPPORT**

Jeff Mauk

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## **TESTIMONY SUPPORTING HOUSE BILL 973: The Better Buildings Act of 2025**

House Environment and Transportation Committee

February 26th, 2025

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

I write today on behalf of Ceres to urge a favorable report from the Committee on HB0973, the Better Buildings Act of 2025. Ceres works with investors, companies, and financial leaders to promote sustainability solutions. Through our Business for Innovative Climate and Energy Policy Network ([BICEP](#)), we mobilize over 85 major employers, including several companies with operations and business interests in Maryland, to advocate for more effective climate and clean energy policies.

HB0973 creates a forward-looking framework that will drive business innovation, reduce operating costs, and position Maryland as a leader in sustainable construction while providing clear guidelines and reasonable timelines for implementation.

### **Cost Savings and Market Predictability**

1. Lower Operating Costs: All-electric buildings typically have lower operating costs than mixed-fuel buildings. Modern heat pumps and electric appliances achieve superior efficiency ratings compared to fossil fuel alternatives, reducing energy consumption and costs.
2. Protection from Fuel Price Volatility: By transitioning away from fossil fuels for space and water heating, businesses can better predict and control their energy costs, as electricity prices have historically been more stable than natural gas and oil prices.
3. Phased Implementation: The bill's graduated efficiency requirements provide businesses with flexibility and a clear roadmap for planning and investment.

### **Construction and Real Estate Benefits**

1. Reduced Construction Costs: Electric-ready and solar-ready requirements eliminate the need for costly retrofits when buildings later convert to electric systems or add solar installations. Building it right the first time saves money.

2. Higher Property Values: High-performance buildings command premium rents and sales prices. Studies consistently show that efficient, sustainable buildings have higher occupancy rates and better resale values.
3. Future-Proofed Assets: As carbon regulations tighten, all-electric buildings will maintain their value better than those requiring costly fossil fuel retrofits.

## **Economic Development Opportunities**

The Better Buildings Act will:

- Create jobs in clean energy installation and manufacturing, developing Maryland's clean energy workforce
- Attract businesses seeking sustainable facilities
- Position Maryland companies competitively in the growing green building market

## **Flexible Implementation**

The bill provides important flexibility through:

- Clear exemption processes for specific building types with unique energy needs
- Local jurisdiction authority to adopt more stringent requirements
- Allowances for emergency backup power systems
- Reasonable waiver provisions where electrification is not technically feasible

## **Conclusion**

The Better Buildings Act represents a balanced approach to building decarbonization that will benefit Maryland's business community while addressing climate change. The bill's clear standards, reasonable timelines, and flexible implementation framework provide businesses the certainty needed for long-term planning while driving innovation and economic growth.

I strongly encourage a favorable report on House Bill 973.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Mauk  
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