



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony in Support of HB1490  
Clean Buildings Jobs Act of 2020**

Testimony by Delegate Vaughn Stewart

March 4, 2020 | Environment & Transportation Committee

What the Bill Does

**HB1490 would require owners of large buildings to retrofit those buildings to reduce carbon emissions at certain target levels by certain dates.** First, the bill would require these large buildings to undergo a benchmark analysis to establish a baseline for current median greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions levels. Second, the Department of the Environment (MDE), in consultation with the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA), would use these benchmarks to establish five-year GHG emissions reduction targets for different sizes and categories of buildings. Third, the agencies would set building energy performance standards in order to achieve those targets. The GHG emissions reduction targets must be set with a goal of achieving a 40% reduction in GHG emissions from covered buildings from 2006 levels by 2030 and an 80% reduction in GHG emissions from covered buildings from 2006 levels by 2050.

Fourth, MEA, in consultation with MDE, would establish a program to provide incentives and financial assistance to qualifying building owners in order to meet the standards established by the bill. Finally, the bill creates the Building Energy Performance Force to advise MDE on the creation and implementation of the bill's provisions, and to study and make recommendations regarding regulations, amendments, and additional programs.

Why the Committee Should Vote Favorably

The climate crisis represents an existential threat that will disproportionately harm the most vulnerable. And it's already here. Climate change is already imperiling the Bay, flooding our historic cities, destroying our homes, and amplifying deadly heat waves. Scientists tell us that unless we act boldly and decisively, it will get much worse. We must close the gap between what we know about the urgency of the climate crisis, and how we behave.

Maryland now has a historic opportunity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, rebuild our infrastructure, and create thousands of good, union jobs in the process. While the House of Delegates has heard many other bills that would reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the electricity and transportation sectors, this bill specifically targets the building sector. Buildings represent 40% of emissions in the country, and are the largest source of emissions in Maryland's most populous jurisdictions. And while much attention is paid to standards for new buildings, the largest problem in most places is existing buildings and their already installed equipment.

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New York City, Washington State, and Washington, DC have recently passed laws to establish building emissions performance standards along the same lines of this bill. This idea holds tremendous potential for dramatically reducing carbon pollution while creating good-paying, union jobs. I urge a favorable report.