

Testimony in Support of HB 86
High Performance and Green Buildings – Alterations
(Green Building Restoration Act)
Testimony of Delegate Cathi Forbes
Hearing January 27, 2021 at 1:30 pm
Appropriations

What this bill does

This bill would restore the requirement that schools and other public safety buildings constructed with state tax dollars are abiding by best-practice green building standards. It would also install a third-party verification process.

Why this bill matters

In 2016, the General Assembly created the Knott Commission to study comprehensive reforms to our school construction process. As a result of its work, the 21st Century School Facilities Act was passed into law in 2018 ([HB1783, 2018](#)).

One of the provisions in that legislation undermines an important part of what the state had previously legislated with the 2008 High Performance Building Act ([HB376, 2008](#)).

The 21st Century School Facilities Act changed the requirement that school buildings meet the standards set by the current version of the LEED Silver Rating or a comparable system. Instead, school systems are only “encouraged” to design and construct buildings that are energy efficient. Without that requirement, we have lost the intent of the High Performance Building Act.

This bill would restore both the requirement and the verification provision the state previously mandated, and all projects would require a certification by LEED, the International Green Construction Code, or Green Globes. These options allow for more flexibility in the third-party verification requirement, so it is mindful of the geographic differences in the state.

Who benefits from this bill

All state residents benefit from a healthier environment brought about by the construction of green buildings. In this case, saving the environment also saves the taxpayers money, as green buildings have lower operating and maintenance costs throughout the life of the building.

Why you should vote for this bill

This bill maintains the integrity and intent of the High Performance Building Act.

I ask for a favorable report.

Thank you.