

Testimony to the House Economic Matters Committee

SB 0418: Maryland Energy Administration – Energy and Water Efficiency Standards – Alterations Position: Favorable

March , 2021

Delegate Dereck Davis, Chair
House Economic Matters Committee
Room 231, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
Cc: Members, House Economic Matters Committee

Honorable Chair Davis and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition (MCRC) is a statewide coalition of individuals and organizations that advances financial inclusion and economic justice for Maryland consumers through research, education, direct service, and advocacy. Our 8,500 supporters include consumer advocates, practitioners, and low-income and working families throughout Maryland.

We are writing in support of SB 0418, a bill relating to energy and water standards.

Considered the “best energy, water, climate policy you’ve never heard of,” appliance efficiency standards work by removing the least efficient options from the market. As your committee considers legislative proposals to rebuild the local economy and address the impacts of climate change this session, we hope that you prioritize the passage of this standards legislation that will eliminate energy waste, save consumers and businesses money, conserve water, and reduce greenhouse gases and other pollutants.

More efficient appliances reduce consumer and business energy costs. For consumers, this means more money that can be saved or spent on local goods and services. For businesses, energy savings allow for reinvestment in their facilities and workforce.

SB 0418 includes common household appliances such as showerheads, faucets and air purifiers as well as commercial dishwashers and water coolers. With a 2023 compliance date, the bill would save Marylanders \$72 million annually by 2025 and \$329 million annually by 2035.

Appliance standards make residential and commercial products more efficient. This saves energy, which reduces climate-changing emissions and other environmental impacts associated with the production, distribution, and use of electricity, natural gas, and other fuels. It also mitigates the effects of short- and long-term droughts by helping to conserve fresh water supplies.

We support federal action to update standards and respond to the urgency of the climate crisis. In the interim, states have historically led the nation in the development of new appliance standards and should continue to pursue ambitious proposals. Since 2017, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Nevada, New York, Vermont, Washington and Washington, DC, have updated their standards on a bipartisan basis. This year, 13 states are considering legislation to update their standards, and Maryland has an opportunity to demonstrate leadership.

At a time when state budgets, economic well-being, and public health are threatened due to the COVID-19 pandemic, legislative leaders and advocates can drive climate action and save families and businesses money by updating appliance efficiency standards. This is a low-cost, high-impact legislative proposal perfect for this precarious moment.

We strongly support the adoption of the most up to date standards for energy and water efficiency.

Best,
Marceline White
Executive Director
Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition