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Appropriations Committee



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The Maryland House of Delegates

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of HB 1165 Capital Projects - High Performance and Green Buildings

Testimony of Delegate Cathi Forbes
Hearing February 22, 2022 at 1:00 pm
Appropriations

What this bill does

This bill would ensure that schools and other state funded capital projects meet high performance building requirements. It would also reinstitute a third-party verification process, to make certain the goals are being met.

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 the verification provision the state previously mandated, and all projects would require a certification by LEED, or a similar program including 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 costs associated with certification and 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. Where standard buildings waste and use tons of material each year, green buildings minimize waste and use fewer resources. 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. A 2018 study by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) found that high performance buildings save energy, save water, cost less to operate, produce less waste, and have more satisfied occupants when compared with typical buildings.

Why you should vote for this bill

It has never been more affordable to build high performance buildings. It has never been more important to address climate change from every possible solution. We have unprecedented state capital funding going into schools and public construction, we should ensure that those buildings are high performance buildings.

I ask for a favorable report.

Thank you.