

4 February 2022

The Honorable Maggie McIntosh
Chair of the Appropriations Committee
House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Letter of Support for HB 365 – Public School Construction-Fossil Fuel-Based Energy System Costs-Prohibition (Green School Construction act of 2022)

Dear Chairwoman McIntosh and members of the Appropriations Committee:

I am writing to voice AIA Maryland's support for House Bill 365. AIA Maryland represents nearly 2,000 architects in the state of Maryland and advocates for the profession and the quality of the built environment. We fully support sustainable strategies in building design and construction as we collectively work to realize environmental, economic and social sustainability for the citizens of Maryland.

We recognize that buildings alone are responsible for approximately 39% of the global greenhouse gas emissions and we need to reduce our appetite for energy consumption. The AIA 2030 challenge is driving many of our members to strive for carbon neutral new buildings, and major renovations by 2030. We are fully in support of the move away from fossil fuels and as we continue to design our buildings to be more efficient, a switch from fossil fuels to electrification and renewable sources. This is a very sensible path that should not add additional cost to a project when it is initially planned as part of new construction or major renovation where the building envelope and the building systems are being considered together.

Most school buildings have an anticipated useful life of about 50 years, and within that lifespan most will have a major system change at least once within that lifetime. A building designed in 1970 may have had requirements for half of the insulation or less than what is required today. Many buildings of that age had limited air and moisture barrier systems to manage and control the passage of outdoor air and moisture into the building. Mechanical systems used to condition these buildings were far less efficient and could present challenges if switching to full electrification is required. We understand that there may be some amendments or exceptions that may accommodate existing schools when assessed with a full life cycle cost analysis. We encourage consideration of such amendments to make sure that both capital and operational costs are considered in the equation for systemic replacements.

Ultimately, we need to reduce our buildings appetites for energy and move toward electrification. We believe the first priority should be designing energy efficient and healthy schools and funding prioritized toward electrification in this bill makes sense. We encourage you to make a commitment to the built environment and the citizens of Maryland by supporting this bill. Further, we encourage you to consider friendly amendments that examine the lifecycle costs and consider the unique conditions of working with existing structures. AIA Maryland is glad to support this bill and we ask for your vote.

Sincerely,



Chris Parts, AIA
Director, Past President