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TO: Maggie McIntosh, Chair of the House Appropriations Committee and Committee Members
FROM: Michelle Dietz, The Nature Conservancy, Director of Government Relations; and Cait Kerr, The Nature Conservancy, Conservation & Climate Policy Analyst
POSITION: Support HB 806 Building Standards and Emissions Reductions – High Performance, State, and Local Government Buildings, State Operations, and Eligible Projects

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) supports HB 806 offered by Delegates Stein and Barve. In Maryland, TNC's work focuses on delivering science-based, on-the-ground solutions that secure clean water and healthy living environments for our communities, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing resilience in the face of a changing climate. TNC has an institutional goal to help to reduce emissions by avoiding or sequestering 3 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide per year by 2030. We are dedicated to a future where people and nature thrive together.

The buildings sector is one of the largest carbon emitting sectors in Maryland, contributing 13 percent of the state's total greenhouse gas emissions in 2017. HB 806 seeks to address this by establishing clear targets and goals to achieve emissions reductions from direct and indirect sources as well as from materials used within the government buildings. This past year, TNC participated in the Mitigation Working Group's Buildings Sub-Group to inform recommendations in the Maryland Commission on Climate Change's (MCCC) Building Energy Transition Plan, which aims to decarbonize buildings across the state. Along with our participation in the Buildings Sub-Group, TNC also provided funding to support the Maryland Building Decarbonization Study, conducted by Energy + Environmental Economics (E3), which provided the foundation for the MCCC's Plan. Within its recommendations, the MCCC asserts that "contributing to Maryland's greenhouse gas reduction goals should be demonstrably central [to] design goals in any building construction or renovation procured with any funds, loans, grants, tax or other benefit from the State of Maryland."

HB 806 puts into action the Building Energy Transition Plan's recommendations in order to set Maryland on a clear path toward significant buildings sector emissions reductions. Under this proposed legislation, government buildings lead by example through standards to achieve 50% reductions by 2030 and meet net-zero requirements by 2035. New construction will be required to comply with an all-electric construction code and building emissions standard. In every net-zero emissions scenario E3 modeled, all-electric new buildings had the lowest annual costs – including equipment, maintenance and energy. Renewable energy sources and a clean energy economy are essential parts of reaching state, national, and global low-carbon energy goals and combatting the negative health and environmental impacts caused by fossil fuels.

TNC commends Delegates Stein and Barve for continuing to raise the bar for Maryland's climate commitments and advancing climate solutions that can provide valuable environmental, economic, and public health co-benefits for years to come.

Therefore, we urge a favorable report on HB 806.