



25 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 806
Building Standards and Emissions Reductions – High Performance, State and Local Government
Buildings

Dear Chairman McIntosh and members of the Appropriations Committee:

I am writing to voice AIA Maryland's support of House Bill 0806. 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, as architects, recognize the impact of greenhouse gas emissions and climate change as we study building sites, the interaction with the natural and built environment around a project and the people who occupy and live or work near buildings we design.

This bill is important because it takes steps now to make an impact on climate change and it asks the state to lead by example. Buildings are a source of nearly 40% of energy consumed in the US. It is clear that designing buildings to use less energy and moving buildings away from carbon-based fuel systems can both reduce energy demand and emit less carbon into our atmosphere.

Section 1 of the bill addressing High Performance Building contains recommended adjustments from some of our members that were suggested to restore the intent of the original 2008 High Performance Building Bill and to consider the way the LEED rating system works it suggests accommodations for equity of investment in rural jurisdictions that do not benefit from site-based credits of the rating system that favor a more urban building. This language has also been considered in SB0588/HB1165 and the key aspects desired are to restore the need for third party certification of LEED or Green Globes projects that was removed with 2018 legislation and the importance of accounting for location of projects that does not penalize more rural projects to spend more money on a project to achieve a level of credits because they do not benefit from being in a location of greater density and amenities.

Section 2 of the bill addresses moving the state funded building to full electrification. Many architect members are already designing projects that are all electric and we believe that there are two main reasons to support this legislation. First, the time to act is now. Pushing such regulations further down the road will mean that it will take longer to diminish energy needs and carbon consumption because we failed to act. It means that buildings that do not move toward electrification now will likely incur higher costs to convert to all electric systems in the future because it was not initially planned for and it increases the likelihood that money will need to be spent to repair catastrophic events, vs money spent proactively to diminish the chance of potential crises. Second, this bill is the result of a consensus approach that is built upon the Maryland Climate Change Commission addressing recommendations about building infrastructure that is founded on sound research and a cross-section of representatives that have considered costs and merits of decisions.

This bill ties the state funded projects to the benchmarking standards and the Building Emissions Performance Standards established in HB831. This is important as we ask the state to lead by example the information provided

from this data will enable a better understanding of successes and challenges in implementing measures. This should also help us continue to improve on efficiency of state funded construction through greater knowledge of results and it may also help in understanding best practices in building operation when similar systems are used but may have different energy use results.

Drawing parallels to the Benchmarking and BEPS systems proposed, when we look at the AIA 2030 Commitment (our membership who have signed on to the commitment to design toward Carbon Neutral buildings by 2030), we see the value of data that we have collected. It reflects the importance of modeling buildings to meet energy performance standards. This provides the opportunity to make changes in design rather than wishing we had done something different once a project is built. We can see building energy use intensity by building types to assess how our projects are performing as compared to others. We are also able to see many more all electric projects, 669 projects in the 2020 report were done with an energy model where fuel sources were identified, but nearly half of those were 100% electric buildings.

Maryland is not acting alone in moving toward electrification and adopting guidelines like these, New York City, and Seattle have adopted similar guidelines and Washington State is nearing passage of similar legislation. We encourage you to support this legislation that aims to limit the impact the built environment on greenhouse gas emissions in Maryland and drives design to further enhance the health and well-being of our residents. We encourage you to vote with our future in mind and cast your vote in favor of HB806 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in commercial and residential buildings.

AIA Maryland and its membership encourages steps to improve the quality of Maryland's built environment, this bill puts the states finances in support of these ends. AIA Maryland is glad to support this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. R.' followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Chris Parts, AIA
Director, Past President, AIA Maryland