



February 8, 2022

The Honorable C. T. Wilson
Chair
Economic Matters Committee

The Honorable Brian M. Crosby
Vice-Chair
Economic Matters Committee

RE: Favorable with an Amendment to HB 108 - Public Utilities - Energy Efficiency and Conservation Programs - Energy Performance Targets and Low-Income Housing

Dear Delegate Wilson, and Delegate Crosby,

The American Chemistry Council’s Center for the Polyurethanes Industry and Spray Foam Coalition, Building Performance Association, De Vere Weatherization and Construction Services, the Insulation Contractors Association of America, the Polyisocyanurate Insulation Manufacturers Association and the Spray Polyurethane Foam Alliance support efforts to fight climate change by improving the energy efficiency and climate resilience of homes. Spray polyurethane foam (spray foam) and polyisocyanurate insulation (polyiso) are key tools needed to increase the [energy efficiency](#) and [climate resilience](#) of both new construction and existing buildings. Insulation and roofing products based upon polyurethane technology, such as spray foam, are multifunctional, highly [effective insulators](#) and [air barriers](#). Polyiso R-values range from 5.7-6.5 per inch with spray foam R-values reaching as high as 7.4 per inch. Both products are widely used throughout construction and provide effective solutions for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and fighting climate change.

Largely, we support HB 108 and the goal of increasing energy efficiency in low-income housing. To accomplish this goal, the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) should have access to the most efficient products on the market. We strongly urge reconsideration of the provisions in Section (B)(5), which seek to ban products that are used to increase the energy efficiency of new and existing buildings. Section (B)(5) is intended to ban the use of spray foam and polyiso insulation from use in low-income housing. This will negatively impact residents of Maryland who could benefit most from energy efficiency upgrades.

Building occupants are not exposed to respiratory sensitizers from polyurethane products like spray foam and polyiso insulation. Manufacturers’ instructions for the application of spray foam include the requirement that only trained, professional contractors wearing appropriate PPE are to be onsite during application. Each manufacturer has specific re-entry and re-occupancy time frames they establish to protect building occupants. Further, once polyurethane products are applied and cured, according to the U.S. EPA, they are “[inert and non-toxic](#).” Generally, spray

foam products are cured less than 24 hours after application. For polyiso products, the insulation boards are fully cured within the manufacturing plant prior to delivery to project sites.

One of the key benefits of spray foam insulation is its unique application method. Spray foam is installed onsite allowing it to form and adhere to the surface where it is applied. This ensures the spray foam is fully insulating and air-sealing the thermal envelope of the building. The material lasts the lifetime of the building and provides benefits year after year. Polyiso is produced in a manufacturing plant that combines the raw materials to form rigid insulation boards that are fully cured prior to delivery to project sites.

Proponents of the legislation suggest the proposed ban is necessary to address concerns about worker safety and occupant safety. However, existing industry safety practices provide a comprehensive approach to worker training and protection. The concerns related to occupant safety are unfounded based on how the products perform once manufactured and installed.

Both the spray foam and polyiso industries are committed to ensuring occupational safety standards are front and center of operations. Specifically, the spray foam industry has developed robust worker safety training and product stewardship tools for spray foam applicators. The polyurethanes industry's commitment to product stewardship is demonstrated by the widely available information on safe handling and use practices. For example, the SFC has developed a free online spray foam Chemical Health and Safety Training Program available at www.spraypolyurethane.com. The website includes the training and guidance documents on safe handling for spray foam. The program includes training for spray foam workers, weatherization professionals, and DIY users. To date, over 38,300 people have completed the program. Efforts like this, along with those of our partners in the value chain, have contributed to decreasing rates of [occupational asthma](#) associated with these polyurethane products. More information on spray foam health and safety is available [here](#).

We believe the WAP and other low-income energy efficiency programs should have access to the most efficient insulation and air barrier products to improve the energy efficiency of buildings and reduce the monthly energy usage and homeowners' energy costs. This is particularly key for low-income households who spend a significantly higher percentage of their income on home energy bills. For example, in Baltimore, 25% of low-income households experience an energy burden of above 21.7% which is seven times the national median burden.¹

According to the [U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics](#), the average cost of electricity in the Baltimore area was 13 cents per kWh in September of 2021. Over a year, the average Baltimore home insulated with spray foam could save \$326 on energy bills.²

Spray foam and polyiso products increase the energy efficiency of buildings and, in turn, reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions – mainly those associated with the energy used to heat and cool homes. These insulation products also increase the resiliency of buildings. For example, buildings insulated with spray foam are stronger, which mitigates post-climate disaster repairs and helps the structure withstand damage from dangerous weather events. We support efforts to

¹ <https://www.aceee.org/energy-burden>

² [Counting Carbon: Demand Better Insulation in Your Next Home](#)

fight climate change, reduce GHG emissions and provide clean energy. Ensuring that low-income populations have access to the most energy efficient products will maximize the benefits of the WAP and other low-income energy efficiency programs.

Workers are protected from exposure to respiratory sensitizers through federally mandated personal protection equipment and engineering controls and homeowners are not exposed to respiratory sensitizers because cured polyurethane products, like spray foam and polyiso insulation are inert and nontoxic. Accordingly, we offer the following amendment to HB 108:

(B)(5) (I) SUBJECT TO SUBPARAGRAPH (II) OF THIS PARAGRAPH, THE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES PROVIDED UNDER PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION MAY NOT USE THERMAL INSULATING MATERIALS FOR BUILDING ELEMENTS, INCLUDING WALLS, FLOORS, CEILINGS, ATTICS, AND ROOF INSULATION, THAT IN THEIR FINAL FORM CONTAIN AND CAN EXPOSE RESIDENCES TO:

1. FORMALDEHYDE; OR

~~2. ANY SUBSTANCE THAT IS A CATEGORY 1 RESPIRATORY SENSITIZER AS DEFINED IN 29 C.F.R. PART 1910 (APPENDIX A).~~

Sincerely,

Stephen Wieroniey
Spray Foam Coalition

Justin Koscher
Polyisocyanurate Insulation Manufacturers
Association

Rick Duncan
Spray Polyurethane Foam Alliance

Michael Kwart
Insulation Contractors Association of
America

Michelle Griffith
DeVere Weatherization and Construction
Services

Steve Skodak
Building Performance Association

CC: Delegate Lorig Charkoudian