



TESTIMONY FOR SB0588 CAPITAL PROJECTS HIGH PERFORMANCE AND GREEN BUILDINGS

Bill Sponsor: Senator Hettleman

Committee: Education, Health, and Environmental Justice

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0588 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Our members are happy to see that we have a bill this session focused on ensuring that the Built to Learn monies that are providing a massive infusion of funds for construction and renovation of our schools, will be well-spent. This bill restores the intent of Maryland's High Performance Building Act which was designed to create green and healthy K-12 public schools and public buildings. Those standards were substantially weakened in 2018 in legislation that had been primarily focused on creating the Interagency Commission on School Construction.

First, although the Education Article (at Section 5-312) seemingly requires K-12 schools to be built to High Performance Building Standards, Maryland's current High Performance Building Act only applies those standards to K-12 schools and other public buildings if they are "solely funded" with State monies. This means most schools are no longer required to meet the High-Performance Buildings Standards. This bill changes that requirement to 25% of the funding from the State, which restores the intent of State responsibility and ensures that schools are again covered under the High-Performance Building Standards.

Second, the remaining buildings subject to the High-Performance Buildings Standards are no longer required to be certified that they meet those standards. This has had the predictable result that many public buildings do not meet the High-Performance Buildings Standards and that exclusion is resolved with this legislation.

Our members are strong advocates of schools being required to be net-zero or net-zero ready because we believe in not literally building more dependence on fossil fuels into our schools. We also know that it is no more expensive to build net zero or net zero ready schools than to construct conventional schools, as has demonstrated with the two new Baltimore schools that are net-zero, and that net zero schools are vastly cheaper to operate. We must embrace a net zero future for our children, and what better way to start than with the places that they learn.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.