

January 18, 2022

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky
Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee
Miller Senate Office Building,
2 West Wing 11 Bladen St.,
Annapolis, MD, 21401

RE: Support SB 171 Environment – Public Participation Modernization Act

Dear Chairman Pinsky:

The Maryland Building Industry Association, representing 100,000 employees statewide, appreciates the opportunity to participate in the discussion surrounding **SB 171 Environment – Public Participation Modernization Act**. MBIA **Supports** the Act in its current version.

This bill would allow for the use of virtual meetings by the Department of the Environment to meet requirements for licensing or permitting applications. MBIA respectfully supports this measure. The use of virtual meetings is significantly more efficient than in-person meetings allowing for cost and time savings on behalf of both the Maryland Department of Energy and the applicant. Additionally, during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially when we are experiencing new variant spikes such as the Omicron variant, it is important to provide people with tools to comply with the recommended social distancing and public health and safety guidelines.

For these reasons, MBIA respectfully requests the Committee give this measure a favorable report. Thank you for your consideration.

For more information about this position, please contact Lori Graf at 410-800-7327 or lgraf@marylandbuilders.org.

cc: Members of the Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee