



Chair Senator Pinsky
Vice-Chair Senator Kagan
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
Maryland State House, Annapolis MD

February 15, 2022

Dear Chair Pinsky, Vice-Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Natural Resources Defense Council, a leading environmental advocacy organization, and its more than 3 million members and activists, including approximately 9,492 Maryland residents, we offer our support for SB 494, concerning energy and water efficiency standards.

Stronger energy efficiency standards for appliances and equipment are a cost-effective and common-sense way to use less energy while maintaining the same – or even better – performance. According to analysis from the Appliance Standards Awareness Project (ASAP), the standards in this bill will help save Maryland residents more than \$200 million annually, savings which subsequently will grow to \$347 million in annual savings by 2040. That is money that can be reinvested into the local economy to encourage job creation. Of these 13 standards, eight have no incremental cost, meaning consumers and businesses will begin saving money right away. Of the other five standards under consideration, one pays back for itself in 1.8 years, and four have a payback period of a year or less.

These standards will not only help Maryland consumers and businesses save on their utility bills, but they will also offer public health benefits through reduced emissions of carbon dioxide and other harmful pollutants. Enacting the standards in this bill will lead the state to annually reduce its electricity consumption by an amount equivalent to the electricity used by 15,000 average households. Likewise, these standards will reduce carbon emissions by an amount equivalent to annually taking 27,000 cars off the road for a

NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL

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year. Cutting down on carbon will additionally help Maryland to meet or even exceed its Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Act goals.

However, if new standards are not enacted in 2022 then Maryland consumers and businesses will lose out on hundreds of millions of dollars in savings every year. This bill does not require consumers and businesses to shell out the money to replace the products they're currently using; these standards merely raise the bar for new appliances. In fact, many products currently on the market in these appliance categories already meet the proposed standards and often cost no more than their less-efficient counterparts.

Improved efficiency standards will ensure that the new products we purchase consume less energy and water while still preserving quality and affordability – which is an essential equity concern for low-income consumers and renters. This will also spur innovation from manufacturers to improve less efficient models over the next two years. Consumers and businesses have nothing to lose, and they will benefit immensely from their lower utility bills.

For years, Maryland has been a national leader in the push to improve appliance standards. A dozen states have already taken recent action to continue that push, and Maryland should join them in this effort, or it will be left behind.

We strongly encourage you to support this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lauren Urbanek". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lauren Urbanek
Deputy Director, Clean Buildings
Climate and Clean Energy Program