



**Testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 831 – Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions –  
Commercial and Residential Buildings  
Environment and Transportation Committee  
February 25, 2022**

The Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington (JCRC) serves as the public affairs and community relations arm of the Jewish community. We represent over 100 Jewish organizations and synagogues throughout Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. The JCRC is strongly committed to cultivating a society based on freedom, justice, and pluralism. We work tirelessly throughout the entire Greater Washington area to advocate for our agencies that serve the most vulnerable residents, support our Jewish day schools and community centers, and to campaign for important policy interests on behalf of the entire Jewish community.

The JCRC has a long history of favoring policies which promote climate justice, protect the environment, and reverse climate change. Our agency is committed to addressing the detrimental effects of climate change, which is accelerating due to human behaviors, many of which are within our power to change.

House Bill 831 requires the Department of the Environment to establish building emissions standards for commercial and residential buildings and to set up the Building Energy Transition Implementation Task Force to develop a plan for funding the retrofit of certain buildings. The goal of the State is for these holistic retrofits, including weatherization measures and heat pump installation, to be done with minimal or no upfront costs for all low-income households by January 2030. The Bill also requires adoption of standards on or before January 2023 requiring that new residential or commercial construction meet all water and space heating demand without the use of fossil fuels and that electric-ready standards are ready for the installation of solar energy systems.

The JCRC is committed to addressing the deleterious impact of climate change on our community and to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. However, given that the JCRC represents more than 50 houses of worship in the state, we would like to ask for clarification in HB 831 regarding the establishment of building emissions standards, specifically about the definition of “commercial building.” While we support HB 831, we also ask for clarification from the committee.