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**Friday, February 25, 2022**

**TO:** Kumar Barve, Chair of the House Environment and Transportation Committee and Committee Members  
**FROM:** Michelle Dietz, The Nature Conservancy, Director of Government Relations; and Cait Kerr, The Nature Conservancy, Conservation & Climate Policy Analyst  
**POSITION:** Support HB 831 Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions – Commercial and Residential Buildings

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) supports HB 831 offered by Delegates Stein and Barve. In Maryland, TNC's work focuses on delivering science-based, on-the-ground solutions that secure clean water and healthy living environments for our communities, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing resilience in the face of a changing climate. TNC has an institutional goal to help to reduce emissions by avoiding or sequestering 3 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide per year by 2030. We are dedicated to a future where people and nature thrive together.

HB 831 seeks to address a major carbon emitting sector in Maryland through establishing clear targets and goals to achieve emissions reductions within the buildings sector. This past year, TNC participated in the Mitigation Working Group's Buildings Sub-Group to inform recommendations in the Maryland Commission on Climate Change's (MCCC) Building Energy Transition Plan, which aims to decarbonize residential and commercial buildings across the state. Along with our participation in the Buildings Sub-Group, TNC also provided funding to support the Maryland Building Decarbonization Study, conducted by Energy + Environmental Economics (E3), which provided the foundation for the MCCC's Plan.

According to this Plan, buildings sector emissions accounted for 13 percent of the state's total greenhouse gas emissions in 2017. Maryland's 2030 Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act (GGRA) Plan calls for electrifying fossil fuel end-uses in buildings, such as through energy efficiency advancements and through converting fossil fuel powered heating systems to electric heat pumps. One way in which HB 831 advances GGRA goals is through setting Maryland's sights on implementing holistic retrofits, including weatherization measures and heat pump installations, in 100 percent of low-income households by 2030.

HB 831 puts into action the Building Energy Transition Plan's recommendations in order to set Maryland on a clear path toward significant buildings sector emissions reductions. Under this proposed legislation, standards would be set for covered buildings to achieve 20% reductions by 2030 and meet net-zero requirements by 2040. Establishing the Building Energy Transition Implementation Task Force will make meeting these targets possible; this Task Force will study and make recommendations on how best to retrofit buildings and reduce buildings' emissions. New construction will be required to include electric-ready standards to support renewable energy systems. Renewable energy sources and a clean energy economy are essential parts of reaching state, national, and global low-carbon energy goals and combatting the negative health and environmental impacts caused by fossil fuels.

TNC commends Delegates Stein and Barve for continuing to raise the bar for Maryland's climate commitments and advancing climate solutions that can provide valuable environmental, economic, and public health co-benefits for years to come.

**Therefore, we urge a favorable report on HB 831.**