

Delegate Kumar Barve
Chair of the Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Letter of Support for HB 0831
Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions – Commercial and Residential Buildings

Dear Chairman Barve and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

I am writing to voice AIA Maryland's support of House Bill 0831. AIA Maryland represents nearly 2,000 architects in the state of Maryland and advocates for the profession and the quality of the built environment. We, as architects, recognize the impact of greenhouse gas emissions and climate change as we study building sites, the interaction with the natural and built environment around a project and the people who occupy and live or work near buildings we design.

This bill is important because it takes steps now to make an impact on climate change. Buildings are a source of nearly 40% of energy consumed in the US. It is clear that designing buildings to use less energy and moving buildings away from carbon-based fuel systems can both reduce energy demand and emit less carbon into our atmosphere.

- This bill establishes the key metrics of benchmarking to understand current or designed energy consumption and progress toward reduction goals.
- The building energy performance standards establish clear expectations of efficiency that also drive toward a stronger grid interaction and enable greater capacity for engaging in renewable energy sourcing
- Building electrification goals enable us to use highly efficient equipment and simply move us toward cleaner sourcing and distribution of power.

What this bill means is that our many architect members who already work with teams to design projects this way, will continue working with design teams, to plan efficient and all-electric residences, commercial spaces, and institutional projects. This bill will raise the bar and it means that not some, but all our members will design to comply with the proposed measures. We know we can design these projects because they exist, and many are currently being designed and built to such standards. We will all benefit from knowing more about how buildings are performing so we can better assess peak performers and understand why. On our board alone, we have members who are designing zero energy homes, and school buildings, we have affordable and market rate housing projects being designed to be all electric and we have commercial properties being designed to be all-electric with renewable energy sources on-site.

We believe that you should support this bill for two main reasons. First, the time to act is now. Pushing such regulations further down the road will mean that it will take longer to diminish energy needs and carbon consumption because we failed to act and it increases the likelihood that money will need to be spent to repair catastrophic events, vs money spent proactively to diminish the chance of potential crises. Second, this bill is the result of a consensus approach that is built upon the Maryland Climate Change Commission recommendations that is founded on sound research and a cross-section of representatives that have considered costs and merits of decisions.

Maryland is not acting alone in adopting guidelines like these, New York City, and Seattle have adopted similar guidelines and Washington State is nearing passage of similar legislation. We encourage you to support this legislation that aims to limit the impact the built environment on greenhouse gas emissions in Maryland and drives design to further enhance the health and well-being of our residents. We encourage you to vote with our future in mind and cast your vote in favor of HB 0831 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in commercial and residential buildings.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Parts', with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

Chris Parts, AIA
Director, Past President, AIA Maryland

cc: Environment and Transportation Committee: