



**Testimony in SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS of HB831**  
Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Commercial and Residential Buildings  
Environment and Transportation Committee

February 25, 2022

Dear Chairman Barve, Vice-Chair Stein, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

CASA offers favorable with amendment testimony for House Bill 831, Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Commercial and Residential Buildings. CASA is the largest membership-based immigrant services and advocacy organization in the mid-Atlantic region, with a membership of over 120,000 Black and Latino immigrants and working families. Thank you for this opportunity to testify today in support of SB662.

HB831 is a good step forward in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and CASA supports the overall intent of the bill. CASA believes that this legislation must be strengthened with the following amendments:

**Amendment #1**

Pg. 3 under “Regulations adopted under this section shall.” add “Allow owners of covered buildings to submit an Alternative Compliance Action Plan to the Department if the building owner cannot meet the interim or final emissions standards by the required date or cannot meet the interim or final emissions standards due to economic infeasibility or other circumstances beyond the owner’s control. The Plan shall include: (a) documentation of economic infeasibility or other circumstances beyond the owner’s control such that the interim or final emissions standards cannot be met; (b) if applicable, new proposed interim or final emissions standard; (c) a list of actions the owner will take to achieve the proposed interim or final emissions standard; (d) the timeline for achieving the proposed interim or final emissions standard; and (e) other requirements determined by the Department.

The criteria for evaluating an Alternative Compliance Action Plan submitted by owners of affordable housing shall include, at a minimum, whether: (a) there is a plan to refinance or recapitalize their property; or (b) there are cash flow constraints, including, but not limited to, restrictions on the usage of net cash flow, or prohibition from utilizing a portion of existing cash reserves for implementing improvements to the building that would reduce emissions.”

## **Amendment #2**

Pg. 3, add to the Building Energy Transition Implementation Task Force: “One representative who is a tenant of an apartment building or is an advocate for the rights of tenants of apartment buildings.”

## **Amendment #3**

Pg. 5, under “The Task Force Shall” add “Study the costs of complying with building emissions standards for different building types including, but not limited to, affordable housing.”

## **Amendment #4**

Pg. 5, under the "Task Force Shall" add "Study and make recommendations regarding the development of complementary programs and policies that protect renters from increased rents and energy burdens and risk of displacement."

## **Amendment #5**

Pg. 5, line 20, under the "Task Force Shall" add at the end of the sentence "that shall prioritize recommendations for funding the retrofit of affordable housing."

As an organization dedicated to tenants' rights, CASA stands with members to support HB 831 with the above amendments to benefit renters and move towards climate justice. We stand with our members in asking for safer apartments. Members of Flower branch apartments where a fire killed seven know all too well the dangers of leaking gas. In Bedford/Victoria Station and other apartment complexes around Langley Park and Riverdale Park, Maryland, members often complain about the smell of gas in their old apartments.

We stand with our members in asking for more affordable utilities. Apartment complexes like Montgomery White Oak and Villas of Langley and others have stopped paying the utilities only to charge the individual tenants the cost because of the increasing rates. We stand with our members in not passing on the costs of the retrofitted buildings with cleaner and safer appliances. We stand with our members in asking that in the case of market-rate, multi-unit apartment complexes where thousands of CASA members in Maryland live; that those buildings that cannot afford to pay for the retrofits that are preserved so that CASA members are not displaced or gentrified such is happening in complexes like Laurel24 and Westgate in Laurel. We stand with our members to make sure that we achieve climate justice, including the important retrofitting of the appliances from gas to electric.

We ask that you move a favorable report with amendments on HB 831.

Trent Leon-Lierman, CASA