



## Environment Committee

### **Committee: Environment & Transportation**

**Testimony on: HB0061 - Charter Counties-Enforcement of Local Building Performance Laws (Building Energy Performance Standards Act of 2022)**

**Organization: Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee**

**Submitting: Diana Younts, Co-Chair**

**Position: Favorable**

**Hearing Date: January 19, 2022**

Dear Mr. Chairman and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of HB0061. Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee is a grassroots organization in Montgomery County that advocates for both local and state level climate and climate justice legislation.

Montgomery County has created an ambitious Climate Action Plan that is striving to achieve an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2027 and 100% reduction by 2035. Buildings, through direct and indirect emissions, are 50% of Montgomery County's greenhouse gas emissions. Ultimately reducing those emissions and having them be carbon neutral is critical to Montgomery County reaching its climate goals.

Building Energy Performance Standards are a foundational tool that provide a flexible pathway for building owners for reducing emissions from existing buildings. They achieve that goal by setting energy usage targets (or alternatively, greenhouse gas reduction targets) that transition buildings to be energy efficient and to all electric HVAC and water heating systems.

Montgomery County is moving towards enacting Building Energy Performance Standards legislation. However, it is currently hamstrung in enforcing any energy performance regulations by the ceiling allowed by the State of Maryland for penalties for building owners who refuse to comply with the regulations. HB0061 fixes that problem.

Currently in Maryland, charter county penalties are limited to a civil penalty of no more than \$1,000 or a criminal penalty of \$1,000 and six months imprisonment. HB0061 fixes that by allowing up to a \$10 per square foot penalty for owners who fail to comply with local regulations governing building energy performance standards. The bill also requires the counties to consider the assessed value of the property for any offense.

Maryland needs to support Montgomery County and other counties that are working hard to help Maryland have a greener future. We are in a crisis. If we do not act quickly, we are paving the path to our own extinction.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.