



TO: Members, House Health and Environment and Transportation Committee
FROM: Mary Beth Tung – Director, MEA
SUBJECT: HB 706 - Maryland Department of Emergency Management - Office of Resilience
DATE: February 18, 2022

MEA POSITION: Letter of Information

House Bill 706 requires a new Office of Resilience to coordinate strategies with several state entities. Unfortunately, the **assignments in the legislation do not align with the current functions of state agencies.**

14-1204(b)(5)(i) recruits the Maryland Clean Energy Center (MCEC) to update building codes. This is contrary to existing statute and not in keeping with the legislative mission of MCEC. **The Maryland Department of Labor is the appropriate agency to address building codes.**

During the 2018 session the Maryland General Assembly adopted House Bill 694. The law authorized the transfer of the Maryland Building Codes Administration to the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, effective July 1, 2018. To ensure that buildings meet the applicable standards for health and safety, Building Codes Administration fulfills the following mandates of Maryland statutes; the adoption of state building codes and Maryland Building Rehabilitation Code; the administration of Maryland Industrialized Building and Manufactured Homes Program, Maryland Accessibility Code, and Minimum Livability Code; and the provision of trainings on building codes for local government employees.

Additionally 14-1204(b)(5)(ii) recruits MCEC to address energy usage, including use in appliances. Existing law in SG § 9-2003(9) clearly puts this in the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) portfolio, requiring MEA to “coordinate and direct integrated energy planning for State agencies and the public that recognizes the benefits and costs of energy conservation and improved efficiency.” Additionally, **appliance efficiency is specifically under MEA’s umbrella** in the Maryland Efficiency Standards Act (SG § 9-2006). Expanding MCEC’s role beyond their legislative directive will diminish the effectiveness of their program and duplicate efforts of other existing agencies.

MEA asks the committee to consider this information when rendering its report.