



Mission: *To improve public health in Maryland through education and advocacy*

Vision: *Healthy Marylanders living in Healthy Communities*

SB0689 Public Utilities - Energy Efficiency and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions - Alterations and Requirements

Hearing Date: 02/28/23

Committee: Education, Energy and Environment

Position: SUPPORT

Chairperson Feldman and members of the Education, Energy and Environment committee: The Maryland Public Health Association (MdPHA) would like to express support for Senate Bill 689.

Energy efficiency matters to public health. Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions is associated with health benefits such as improved air quality, reduction in cases of heat-related illness and infectious disease, and improved mental health.¹ Many fossil fuel dependent indoor appliances pose exposure risks to carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, and particulate matter (PM 2.5).² These pollutants can lead to a variety of health problems including respiratory disease, cardiovascular diseases and cancer. By increasing access to electric appliances through rebates and promoting fuel switching, we can reduce indoor air pollution.

Further, this bill is an important step to improve health equity in Maryland. Ensuring that the impact of the EmPOWER program is directed at and evaluated for low-income communities helps to improve access to energy efficient appliances across all communities in our state. Additionally, this bill ensures that transition costs are not a financial burden on low-to-moderate income households by expanding access to state and federal funds for whole-home retrofits and weatherization, and by aiming to deliver a majority of savings directly to Maryland households by reducing their utility bills.

In summary, MdPHA strongly supports the proposed bill and believes it will have a significant positive impact on public health in our state. By reducing greenhouse gas emissions, promoting energy efficiency, and improving air quality, we can help to create a healthier, more sustainable future for all Maryland communities. Thank you for your attention to this critical issue, and we urge a favorable report of SB0689.

¹ *Lancet policy brief for the United States of America*. LANCET COUNTDOWN: (2022, November 14). Retrieved February 15, 2023, from <https://www.lancetcountdownus.org/2022-lancet-countdown-u-s-brief/>

² *California Air Resources Board*. Indoor Air Pollution from Cooking | California Air Resources Board. (n.d.). Retrieved February 15, 2023, from <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/resources/documents/indoor-air-pollution-cooking#:~:text=Natural%20gas%20and%20propane%20stoves,air%20pollution%20from%20wood%20smoke.>

The Maryland Public Health Association (MdPHA) is a nonprofit, statewide organization of public health professionals dedicated to improving the lives of all Marylanders through education, advocacy, and collaboration. We support public policies consistent with our vision of healthy Marylanders living in healthy, equitable, communities. MdPHA is the state affiliate of the American Public Health Association, a nearly 145-year-old professional organization dedicated to improving population health and reducing the health disparities that plague our state and our nation.

Maryland Public Health Association (MdPHA)
PO Box 7045 · 6801 Oak Hall Ln · Columbia, MD 21045-9998
GetInfo@MdPHA.org www.mdpha.org 443.475.0242