

SB144

January 30, 2023

Committee | Education, Energy, and the Environment

Title | Public Utilities- Energy Efficiency and Conservation Programs -
Energy Performance Targets and Low-Income Housing

Position | Support

Dear Distinguished Chair and Committee Members,

My name is Staci Hartwell, Chair of the Environmental and Climate Justice Committee for the NAACP Maryland State Conference. We support SB0144.

Energy efficiency is an energy justice issue as well as an environmental justice issue. The unfortunate legacy of racist housing policies and financial lending practices have negatively impacted housing quality in Black and Brown communities¹ creating energy issues that run the gamut- from bad insulation, to outdated heating and air conditioning equipment, advanced age of appliances, and *building envelope* failures. These conditions lead to a disproportionate burden of energy insecurity² as well as deadly health issues.

This issue plagues our communities, and we share this burden with Hispanic households, Native Americans, older adults (65+) on fixed incomes, renters, and low-income, multi-family building residents.

To put this issue in numbers, a household's energy burden is the percentage of income spent on energy bills. A high energy burden is reported at above 6%. In Baltimore, almost a quarter of low-income households have an energy burden above 22%.³ This means, for every 100 dollars a family brings in, 22 of those dollars are unwaveringly committed to basic heating and cooling needs.

Energy efficiency is the low-hanging fruit in energy policy. "Using energy more efficiently is one of the fastest, most cost-effective ways" to lower utility bills and stabilize electricity prices for vulnerable houses.⁴

¹ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2214629621004552>

² [Green & Healthy Homes Initiative](#)

³ https://www.aceee.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/aceee-01_energy_burden_-_baltimore.pdf

⁴ <https://www.epa.gov/statelocalenergy/local-energy-efficiency-benefits-and-opportunities>

For these reasons, the NAACP Maryland State Conference requests a favorable report on SB 144.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Staci Hartwell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Staci" and last name "Hartwell" clearly legible.

Staci Hartwell, Chair
Environmental and Climate Justice Committee
NAACP Maryland State Conference
action@naacpmscecj.org
Phone: 617 257 8893 t/v