

1. My name is Alexandra Bell. I am a member of Action in Montgomery (AIM). AIM is a network of 38 congregations, schools and non-profit organizations that have been working on issues of equity and justice for over 20 years. Our sister organizations in Maryland are PATH in Howard County and ACT in Anne Arundel County. I live in Rockville, in District 17, and I worship with Bethesda Friends Meeting.

2. We support SB 689.

3. I and other members of AIM have been measuring methane leaks in our communities and Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) levels in our homes. I am working with Safe Places, the tenants' union for Cider Mills Apartments in Gaithersburg, which has more than 800 units. Many people have measured NO<sub>2</sub> levels above the EPA recommended outdoor limits when their gas stoves are running. (There are no recommended indoor limits.) NO<sub>2</sub> causes respiratory illness, can harm brain development in children and contributes to asthma. It is hurting our community's health. We have measured methane leaks around gas meters and even indoors around gas hookups that show how faulty our natural gas infrastructure is, and methane is a much worse greenhouse gas than CO<sub>2</sub>. My compatriots are worried about the danger of an explosion and fires, of which there have been a number in our community. We want clean air both inside and outside our homes.

4. AIM supports SB 689 because we know that lower-income communities are disproportionately affected by high energy bills and the bad effects of natural gas use. I personally am a home owner who has benefited from the many tax incentives available to me. My friends at Cider Mill also want efficient, low cost, environmentally friendly utilities. We know we have a long way to go to ensure low income Marylanders and renters aren't left behind on the shift to efficient electric homes, and we are eager to work with the committee on additional policies to help support these communities. The Energy Savings Act will create new incentives for multifamily rental owners to improve efficiency in their units, reduce pollution, and improve indoor air quality to the direct benefit of renters.

Last year, this committee passed new Building Performance Standards for large buildings (as part of the Climate Solutions Now Act), including multi-family units over 35,000 square feet. That new law requires them to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel use 20% by 2030. This bill will help building owners meet that goal by providing financial incentives for electrification and efficient electric heating and appliances, which will lower tenants monthly bills and improve indoor air quality.

Thank you.