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February 27, 2023

Senator Young
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

Re: SB 689, Public Utilities - Energy Efficiency and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions - Alterations and Requirements (Energy Savings Act)

Position: Favorable

Dear Senator Young and members of the EHEA Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 689, the Energy Savings Act. I am currently a Sustainability Director and Architect and am a member of both the AIA, American Institute of Architects, as well as USGBC, the U.S. Green Building Council. I am a representative on the AIA Large Firm Sustainable roundtable collaborating with other large architecture firms across the country to lead the way to carbon neutrality. I have served as a member of the MD Green Building Council (MDGBC) for three years and am currently serving as a Commissioner for Baltimore City's Commission on Sustainability.

Senate Bill 689 aligns the EmPOWER program to our Maryland Climate Goals and updates the program to ensure greater energy savings for all. In addition to the existing great offerings in the program (free or discounted energy audits, weatherization, rebates, etc.), the bill adds a home readiness evaluation for electrification in the energy audits and provide rebates to support fuel switching and home electrification. It clarifies the "behind the meter" programs and expands access for low-income households.

The Maryland General Assembly notes that "energy efficiency is among the least expensive ways to meet the growing electricity demands of the State" (Maryland.gov). And the American Council for an Energy Efficiency Economy (ACEEE) reports that "Energy Efficiency Can Cut Energy Use and Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Half by 2050" (ACEEE, 2019). Energy efficiency is simply our lowest hanging fruit and has many benefits.

Reducing energy:

- Reduces greenhouse gases
 - Providing cleaner healthier air for all
- Reduces demand on electric grid
 - Allowing the switch from fossil fuel to electricity without increasing demand on the grid
- Reduces operating costs – saving money over the life of the building
- Can help to address energy equity and energy burdens
 - The median energy burden of low-income households in Baltimore is over 3 times higher than non-low-income households. And weatherization is estimated to reduce energy burden by 25% (ACEEE, 2020).
- Will make adding renewable energy like Solar PV in the future easier as the overall demand is reduced

As a sustainability architect and advocate, I look forward to the favorable passing of this bill and the positive impact this bill will have. It ensures Maryland is doing its part to meet our climate goals and ensures greater energy efficiency with its multitude of benefits to our environment and our residents.

Sincerely;



Lisa M. Ferretto, AIA, LEED AP BD+C, WELL AP, Eco-Districts AP, GGP