



Protecting nature. Preserving life.

The Nature Conservancy
Maryland/DC Chapter
425 Barlow Pl., Ste 100
Bethesda, MD 20814

tel (301) 897-8570
fax (301) 897-0858
nature.org

Wednesday, January 31, 2024

TO: Brian Feldman, Chair of the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee, and Committee Members

FROM: Mariana Rosales, The Nature Conservancy, Director of Climate; Michelle Dietz, The Nature Conservancy, Director of Government Relations; Cait Kerr, The Nature Conservancy, State Policy Manager

POSITION: Support SB 258 Department of General Services – Energy Conservation and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) supports SB 258 offered by the Administration. SB 258 will change the State's goals for reducing energy consumption in State buildings and requires the Maryland Green Building Council to update the High Performance Green Building Program. This bill is consistent with the Maryland Commission on Climate Change's (MCCC) recommendations in the Building Energy Transition Plan, which aims to decarbonize buildings across the state, and with the recommendations in the Climate Pollution Reduction Plan issued last year.

TNC, as a member of the Mitigation Working Group and the Buildings Sub-Group, provided funding for the Maryland Building Decarbonization Study, which supported the MCCC's Building Energy Transition Plan. According to the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory, buildings sector emissions accounted for approximately 16.6 percent of the state's total greenhouse gas emissions in 2020. This is the third largest emissions source in the state. The Building Energy Transition Plan calls on the state to lead by example through electrifying and decarbonizing state buildings, including requiring that all new state-owned buildings and major renovations to existing state-owned buildings use efficient electric systems. Maryland's 2030 Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act (GGRA) Plan calls for electrifying fossil fuel end-uses in buildings.

SB 258 puts into action the MCCC's recommendations in order to set Maryland on a clear path toward significant buildings sector emissions reductions. Under this proposed legislation, government buildings will better align with the administration's goals to achieve 50% reductions by 2030 and reach net-zero by 2035.

Renewable energy sources and a clean energy economy are essential to reaching state, national, and global low-carbon energy goals and combatting the negative health and environmental impacts caused by fossil fuels.

TNC commends the Administration and the Department of General Services for continuing to raise the bar for Maryland's climate commitments and advancing climate solutions that can provide valuable environmental, economic, and public health co-benefits for years to come.

Therefore, we urge a favorable report on SB 258.