



Senate Bill 479

Building Energy Performance Standards- Public Safety, Emergency and Public Utility Buildings- Exclusion

Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

Date: Feb. 25, 2025

From: Chip Bertino, Worcester County Commissioner

I am Worcester County Commissioner Chip Bertino and I am writing to support Senate Bill 479, which would exclude public safety, emergency and public utility buildings from Building Energy Performance Standard requirements.

With Worcester County's vulnerable position as a coastal county, prone to hurricanes and flooding, we must consider the impact of Building Energy Performance Standards on public safety buildings and emergency shelters. While the majority of the large buildings in the county will still be required to meet energy performance standards, this bill would create an exemption for buildings like our government center, which houses the Sheriff's Office and the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). It's the team at the EOC that provides updates during storms and coordinates the response to the array of emergency situations –ranging from medical waste washing up on beaches to fires in grain bins—that Worcester County faces any given year. It only makes sense for facilities like the government center, which need to operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to maintain diversified energy portfolios so power is never a problem.

We urge you to support Senate Bill 479, a practical way to balance environmental goals with the need to ensure local jurisdictions are able to provide essential public safety services. Thank you for your service, your time and your consideration.