



**Testimony Supporting HB0049  
Environment - Building Energy Performance Standards - Compliance and Reporting  
February 2025**

**Position:** Favorable

Dear Chair Korman, and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

I'm Maddie Smith, and as the full-time "Clean Energy Shepherd" at Interfaith Power & Light, I'm here to say that with good support, buildings can comply with Building Energy Performance Standards, and that taking stock of energy use builds a foundation for making the buildings more efficient and healthier.

I know this from personal experience because for the last year, I've worked directly with houses of worship across Montgomery County (and in Washington DC) where BEPS is already in place. I've coached about fifty houses of worship through the process of measuring their energy use and then using the information they measured to go green.

The faith sector of buildings is ready and willing to participate, and we invite every other building sector in Maryland to follow our lead. In fact, when the Climate Solutions Now Act was being debated on the floor in 2022, there was a last-minute amendment introduced to exempt houses of worship from the Building Energy Performance Standards – and our faith communities *fought back* to insist that we be included! No one is exempt from the responsibility to do our part to address the climate crisis, so no category of buildings should be exempted from these standards.

In the case of multi-family buildings in particular, remember to listen not only to landlords but to tenants. We're working with colleagues at Action in Montgomery and the Maryland Just Power Alliance, who are helping tenants take stock of the harms of gas-burning by measuring nitrogen dioxide levels in their gas-burning kitchens while the stoves are on. Over and over, they've documented unhealthy levels of nitrogen dioxide, sometimes two or three or four times the EPA's outdoor standard. Tenants also understand that in some cases, moisture from the radiators is causing mold, so electrification would make their apartments dramatically healthier. These Maryland families have limited options for providing healthier housing for their families, and they are clamoring for their landlords to electrify their buildings and shift off of gas-burning. We need to make sure that building owners understand the many resources available to them to meet these standards, but we also need to balance their worries with the urgent needs of their tenants, who are entitled to raise their families in healthy homes. Remember your constituents, the many families who live in these buildings, who are counting on you to hold the buildings where they live to the highest standards.

There's been a lot of discussion about the Energy Use Intensity Standard, so I want to end by affirming that our congregations insist that BEPS maintain a strong standard that takes account of EUI. Our communities understand that burning gas indoors in Maryland is not only damaging our climate and endangering our families, but also polluting the air we breathe at home. To us, the fact that EUI forces all of us to internalize the harms of gas-burning in making decisions for the buildings where we live, work, and pray, is a *feature*, not a bug.

For the owner of a multifamily building that is replacing a gas boiler to comply with BEPS, resistance heating might be cheaper for the landlord to install, but it would impose higher electricity bills on the tenants compared to a heat pump, bills that the building owner won't have to pay. An Energy Use Intensity Standard ensures that buildings will be decarbonized in a way that protects and cares for all of the communities we serve.