

BILL: House Bill 1414
TITLE: Building Energy Performance Standards – Public Safety, Emergency, and Public Utility Buildings – Exclusion (Safe Solutions Now Act of 2025)
HEARING DATE: March 5, 2025
POSITION: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENT
COMMITTEE: Environment & Transportation
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The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all the state’s local boards of education, requests a favorable report with amendments to House Bill 1414 - **Building Energy Performance Standards – Public Safety, Emergency, and Public Utility Buildings – Exclusion (Safe Solutions Now Act of 2025)**.

MABE respectfully requests an expansion of the exclusion in Section 2-1601(e)(2)(ii) of the Environment Article to include not just public or nonpublic elementary or secondary school buildings, but all facilities owned by local school systems, to including, for example, central administrative offices, warehouses, or other facilities that would otherwise meet the definition of “Covered Building” in the statute.

The existing law has set forth an excellent framework requiring a reduction in emissions and a path to net-zero emissions by 2040. MABE supports continuous improvement in reducing the environmental impact of buildings and in a robust, incremental improvement in the requirements for building energy performance standards. MABE and Maryland’s school boards share a commitment to sustainability. As a matter of practice, newly constructed school buildings and facilities are built to meet the latest energy efficiency standards.

For the same reasons that House Bill 1414—which MABE supports—seeks to include public safety buildings, emergency shelters, and public utility buildings in the exemptions from “Covered building,” MABE believes that all school system facilities should be included in the exemption in addition to school buildings themselves. Public school systems across Maryland face mounting resource constraints, including aging infrastructure, and the need to prioritize direct investments in student learning and safety. While MABE supports the reduction of greenhouse gases emissions, potentially requiring costly upgrades to older buildings owned and used by school systems, if those facilities are not covered by the exemptions, would divert limited resources away from classrooms and critical student services. While we fully support energy efficiency in new construction, a mandate for efficiency upgrades could place undue strain on school budgets and inevitably lead to difficult trade-offs in educational funding.

For these reasons, MABE respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE REPORT WITH AMENDMENT for House Bill 1414** to ensure all school system-owned facilities are included in the exemption.