



## Senate Bill 479

Date: February 19, 2026

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

**Position: Favorable**

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Founded in 1968, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce (the Chamber) is the leading voice for business in Maryland. We are a statewide coalition of more than 7,000 members and federated partners, and we work to develop and promote strong public policy that ensures sustained economic growth for Maryland businesses, employees, and families.

Senate Bill 479 (SB 479) provides a reasonable and necessary adjustment to Maryland's Building Energy Performance Standards (BEPS) by recognizing that covered buildings should not be required to meet performance mandates until they are already undertaking major mechanical upgrades. This bill reflects a more practical understanding of how buildings operate and how capital investments are planned, while still supporting long-term energy efficiency goals.

The Chamber has long raised concerns with BEPS as enacted and implemented. While we support efforts to improve energy efficiency and reduce emissions, BEPS relies on a rigid, one-size-fits-all framework that does not adequately account for the diversity of Maryland's building stock. Many covered buildings are older, serve specialized functions, or are occupied by tenants whose energy use is largely outside the control of property owners. In these situations, compliance obligations are placed on parties who lack the authority or practical ability to achieve the required outcomes.

BEPS also imposes significant financial burdens on building owners by effectively requiring premature replacement of major building systems, often before the end of their useful life. These costs can be substantial and are frequently passed through to tenants, reflected in higher rents, or absorbed through reduced reinvestment in properties. Over time, this approach risks discouraging redevelopment, limiting housing and commercial availability, and placing Maryland at a competitive disadvantage.

SB 479 takes a more balanced approach by aligning compliance expectations with natural capital planning cycles. Allowing exemptions until major mechanical upgrades are required encourages meaningful improvements when they are most feasible and cost-effective, without forcing unnecessary expenditures that undermine economic stability. This approach supports environmental progress while recognizing the operational and financial realities facing Maryland businesses.

For these reasons, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce respectfully requests a **favorable report** on **SB 479**.