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Chair
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 870: Large Buildings for Tomorrow Act

Testimony of Delegate Marc Korman – Favorable

Thank you, Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee. I come before you today to present HB 870, the Large Buildings for Tomorrow Act.

HB 870 in its current form will require a county or municipality to provide notice of a permit application to the Maryland Department of the Environment, beginning July 1, 2026, within 10 business days after it accepts a permit application for a new building. I have worked with the Maryland Department of the Environment and the Maryland Department of Labor to bring before you the bill in its current state today.

In 2022, Governor Hogan allowed BEPS to become law without his signature. Under that law, certain buildings over 35,000 square feet must be net-zero direct greenhouse gas emissions by 2040. I understand that not everyone likes that requirement, but it is current law and new buildings should be prepared to comply with it. Unfortunately, the market does not seem to be responding to our legal requirements, and buildings that will have to comply with BEPS in the not too distant future are not being built to comply today. That means they will require costly renovations in just a short period of time. It is more cost effective to build the buildings to comply today than to have to retrofit them in just a few years.

This notification requirement will ensure that the Maryland Department of the Environment and building owners have the information needed to avoid costly and avoidable retrofitting in the future. The bill specifically applies to new buildings that have a proposed gross floor area of 35,000 square feet or more, not counting the parking garage area. The notice of the permit application must include the address of the proposed building, the building permit application number, the total square footage, the building type, the energy sources planned for use, and the owner's contact information.

Thank you for your consideration. I urge a favorable report.