

House Bill 1532 B'nai Israel Congregation/MJPA_Levine

Dear Chair Feldman and Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee,

As a member of B'nai Israel Congregation and the Maryland Just Power Alliance, I emphatically support HB1532, the Utility Relief Act. This consolidated energy bill will help reduce energy bills, encourage renewable energy investment and address utility rate reform. We appreciate the specific provisions designed to protect low-income households. We are specifically interested in maintaining funding for induction stoves, heat pump systems and window heat pumps and heat pump hot water heaters. I testified before the Budget and Tax Committee on February 26 on the MEA Budget in support of these programs (before HB1532 was introduced). Heat pump and induction stove pilot programs can save low-income families up to \$1500 per year. Emissions per household can be reduced by 1-2 **TONS** a year. Further, the payback for the incremental cost of heat pumps is only 7 years.

Two Jewish values are ***Tikvah***: hope, faith in the ever-present possibility of renewal and growth and ***Tzedek***, the obligation to build a just society and pursue justice and fairness for all. These values guide me and all of us to protect the health and security of all our citizens for now and the future. While I am fortunate to live in a single-family home where I was able to vent my gas stove directly to the outside, my neighbors and friends in apartment buildings cannot do that. I have seen the NO2 and CO2 testing results that show the dangers of natural gas stoves in multi-family buildings. They cause asthma and other respiratory illnesses in children and vulnerable adults. We must change that.

At the same time, we encourage you to maintain EmPOWER funding that is directed at energy efficiency and helping renters. We need to be expanding this investment, not reducing it. We also strongly support efforts to keep and protect utility rate reform.

Please support House Bill 1532 with amendments to direct funding to induction stoves and heat pumps for renters and low-income homeowners, maintain EmPOWER funds and press utilities with rate reform.

Sincerely,

Mona Levine

Rockville, Maryland, District 17

