



February 25, 2025

The Honorable Brian Feldman, Chair  
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
2 West Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: SB0479 - Environment - Building Energy Performance Standards and Energy Use Intensity Targets – Exemptions – Favorable Support**

Chairman Guzzone and Members of the Committee,  
My name is Matt Libber, and I am the Legislative Committee Chair for the Maryland Tourism Coalition (MTC). Maryland Tourism Coalition is a trade organization with members representing all areas of tourism in the State of Maryland. Our mission is to support businesses and organizations that cater to the tourism industry through education, networking, and advocacy. I am pleased to offer testimony in support of **Senate Bill 479**, and I write today specifically to highlight its importance for Maryland’s tourism sector and the many small and medium businesses that depend on the State’s built environment.

**SB 479 creates a practical and strategic exemption** for existing buildings that received use and occupancy permits before June 1, 2022, from the newest building energy performance standards and energy use intensity targets until major building systems—such as lighting, HVAC, or other core components—reach the end of their useful life or require replacement.

**Tourism depends on existing visitor accommodations, historic venues, event facilities, and attractions.** Many such facilities in Maryland—including historic inns, waterfront resorts, convention halls, performing arts venues, and cultural sites—were constructed well before recent energy performance mandates and would face substantial upfront expenses to achieve new compliance even though major energy-related renovations are not currently imminent. The exemption in SB 479 allows these businesses to preserve capital for immediate operations, guest services, and enhancements that directly influence visitor satisfaction and competitiveness.

From a tourism impact perspective:

- **Economic Stability for Small Businesses:** Hotels, restaurants, museums, and attractions typically operate with narrow margins. Requiring full compliance with new performance standards on buildings that are structurally sound but simply aging could divert funds from tourism marketing, staffing, and customer-facing improvements.
- **Phased Capital Investment:** The bill aligns energy performance compliance with natural equipment replacement cycles. This allows tourism-related property owners to plan capital investment more efficiently, reducing the risk of sudden cost shocks that can ripple throughout local economies reliant on visitor spending.



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- **Preservation of Maryland's Historic Places:** Maryland's tourism brand is rooted in its historic and cultural assets. Many landmark properties are managed by small nonprofits and family-owned businesses with limited access to capital. Exempting these older structures from immediate standards until major systems are replaced helps ensure their viability as tourism destinations while still preserving a pathway toward long-term energy efficiency improvements.
- **Climate and Economic Balance:** SB 479 supports Maryland's broader energy goals while recognizing the unique economic realities facing tourism infrastructure. By easing near-term regulatory burdens on existing buildings, the State can maintain economic activity that attracts visitors, supports jobs, and generates tax revenue, without undermining long-term environmental progress.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to **report SB 479 favorably**. Doing so helps safeguard the economic health of Maryland's tourism industry while still supporting smart, phased energy performance improvements across the State's building stock.

**Thank you for your consideration.**

Respectfully submitted,

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