

**SB 479 – Environment - Building Energy Performance Standards  
and Energy Use Intensity Targets – Exemptions**

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

February 19, 2026

**Position: SUPPORT**

*MHLA is the sole statewide organization dedicated to advocacy on behalf of Maryland's lodging industry. Our industry is a powerful economic engine - **765 hotels** support more than **115,000 jobs** statewide, generate **\$7.2 billion in wages and salaries**, contribute **\$2.4 billion in state and local tax revenue**, and drive **\$10.6 billion in guest spending** that strengthens communities across Maryland.*

The Maryland Hotel Lodging Association (MHLA) supports Senate Bill 479, which provides a targeted, implementation-focused refinement to Maryland's Building Energy Performance Standards (BEPS). The bill would permit covered buildings issued a use and occupancy permit before June 1, 2022, to align compliance with the natural replacement cycle of major building systems—such as lighting, heating, ventilating, and HVAC equipment—when those systems reach end of useful life.

**SB 479 maintains the integrity of BEPS' emissions-reduction framework while improving workability, predictability, and economic feasibility for building owners.** Rather than altering performance standards or long-term climate goals, the bill adjusts the timing of compliance to better reflect how buildings are actually operated, financed, and maintained. This refinement reduces the likelihood of premature retrofits that can impose significant costs while delivering comparatively limited environmental benefit.

By tying compliance to end-of-life system replacement, SB 479 avoids the forced early retirement of functioning equipment. Coordinating required upgrades with planned capital improvements ensures that investments produce meaningful, cost-effective emissions reductions at the point when systems are already scheduled for replacement. **This approach minimizes unnecessary material waste, preserves embedded capital, and improves lifecycle efficiency—outcomes that advance both economic and environmental objectives.**

Importantly, the bill preserves accountability. SB 479 does not eliminate benchmarking, reporting, or performance requirements under BEPS. Instead, it establishes a clear and objective compliance trigger—major system replacement—rather than a rigid, calendar-based deadline that may not correspond to actual building conditions. This clarity enhances regulatory certainty, supports capital planning, and promotes more efficient program administration.

Maryland's building stock varies significantly in age, configuration, use, and technical constraints. Aligning compliance with planned capital upgrades maintains uniform performance expectations while acknowledging these operational differences. **Providing this structured flexibility will encourage broader participation and sustained cooperation—both of which are critical to the long-term success of BEPS statewide.**

For these reasons, MHLA respectfully requests a favorable report on SB 479.

**For more information, contact:**

Amy Rohrer, President & CEO

Maryland Hotel Lodging Association

amy@MDLodging.org