Maryland Energy Administration

TO: Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee
FROM: MEA
SUBJECT: SB 479 - Environment - Building Energy Performance Standards and Energy Use Intensity Targets - Exemptions
DATE: February 19, 2026

MEA Position: LETTER OF INFORMATION

The Maryland Energy Administration respectfully submits this letter of information for Senate Bill 479.

Senate Bill 479 would exempt certain covered buildings that received a use and occupancy permit prior to June 1, 2022, from complying with Maryland's Building Energy Performance Standards (BEPS) and associated energy use intensity (EUI) targets until major building systems reach the end of their useful life or require replacement due to failure.

Maryland's BEPS framework serves as a key component of Maryland's climate strategy under the Climate Solutions Now Act (CNSA). Buildings represent a significant source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Maryland, and reducing emissions from the building sector plays an essential role in achieving the State's climate goals. Since the enactment of the original GGRA in 2009, Maryland has positioned itself as a national leader in emissions reductions while supporting economic growth and innovation.

Beyond emissions reductions, the EUI targets embedded within BEPS are designed to drive measurable improvements in energy performance. Improved energy efficiency can reduce costs over time, lower energy consumption, and ease demand on the electric grid.

Maintaining a workable BEPS framework supports Maryland's broader climate and economic objectives. The building sector plays a central role in meeting statutory GHG reduction targets, and changes to the timing or structure of building decarbonization can influence the State's overall emissions trajectory. Clear performance standards provide regulatory certainty for building owners, developers, utilities, and clean energy providers, supporting long-term planning and investment decisions. Building electrification and efficiency improvements also intersect with grid modernization efforts, distributed energy deployment, and infrastructure planning. Over time, phased performance standards that align with equipment life cycles can help manage costs and provide predictability.

HB 479 introduces an equipment life-cycle trigger for compliance for certain pre-2022 buildings. As the Committee evaluates this proposal, it may wish to consider how this approach interacts with existing emissions reduction timelines, alternative compliance mechanisms, and the broader statutory framework established under the CNSA.

Maryland has developed its climate policies through sustained bipartisan collaboration, stakeholder engagement, and detailed modeling designed to balance environmental goals with economic impacts. The State's experience demonstrates that carefully structured policies can support both emissions reductions and continued economic growth. MEA respectfully provides this information to assist the Committee in its deliberations.

Our sincere thanks for your consideration of this testimony. For questions or additional information, please contact Megan Outten at megan.outten@maryland.gov or 443.842.1780.