



# Montgomery County

## Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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HB 870

DATE: February 25, 2025

SPONSOR: Delegate Korman

ASSIGNED TO: Environment and Transportation

CONTACT PERSON: Bryan Howard (bryan.howard@montgomerycountymd.gov)

POSITION: Support (Department of Environmental Protection)

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### **Maryland Building Performance Standards - Energy Conservation Requirements (Large Buildings for Tomorrow Act)**

House Bill 870 would require the Department of Labor to adopt energy conservation requirements for the new construction of buildings covered by the Maryland Building Energy Performance Standards (BEPS).

Montgomery County strongly supports the intent of this legislation. Buildings have long life spans, and because renovations can be costly and logistically challenging, it is important that long-term factors be incorporated at the beginning of new construction projects. The process of designing and constructing a new building offers the most logical time to make choices that would enable the building to operate efficiently with low direct greenhouse gas emissions and site energy use intensity. For example, while not a requirement under the State's flexible approach to BEPS, choosing to design all-electric buildings may enable developers to save costs associated with avoidable gas utility infrastructure and systems, and may enable building owners to avoid needing to spend money on future building retrofits to achieve direct emissions reductions.

We recognize that there may be opportunities to further evolve this legislation to simplify and improve the design and construction process to the benefit of building owners and code enforcement agencies. As introduced, the bill effectively requires that new construction code enforcement integrate consideration of waivers and verification of BEPS compliance, functions to be generally carried out by the Maryland Department of the Environment for the State's BEPS program. While perhaps ideal, this type of state and local coordination may be challenging to implement. We look forward to collaborating with other stakeholders to further explore these challenges and identify potential adjustments to ensure that developers are well-supported in making informed choices as they construct Maryland's buildings of the future.

We respectfully request that the Environment and Transportation Committee issue a favorable report on House Bill 870.