

Wednesday, February 25, 2026

TO: Delegate Marc Korman, Chair of the House Environment and Transportation Committee, and Committee Members

FROM: Cait Kerr, State Policy Manager, The Nature Conservancy; Michelle Dietz, Director of Government Relations, The Nature Conservancy

POSITION: Support HB 870 Maryland Building Performance Standards - Energy Conservation Requirements (Large Buildings for Tomorrow Act)

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) supports HB 870 offered by Delegates Korman and Boaf. TNC's mission is to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. We work in more than 70 countries and all 50 states in the United States. With the support of more than one million members globally, TNC has been working to conserve, protect, and restore ecosystems and species for nearly 75 years around the world. Climate change threatens to undo decades of our successful conservation work and fundamentally alter our future. TNC is committed to helping reduce global greenhouse gas emissions to limit global warming to no more than 1.5° Celsius above pre-industrial temperatures. This goal cannot be achieved without a rapid transition to a clean energy economy. A clean energy future will require a different approach to energy planning and procurement. Updating the current approach is essential to the well-being of nature, our economy, our communities, and our planet.

HB 870 is consistent with Maryland's Building Energy Transition Plan developed by the Maryland Commission on Climate Change (MCCC). One of the four core recommendations in this plan is that, "The General Assembly should require the Maryland Building Code Administration to adopt a code that ensures that new buildings meet all water and space heating demand without the use of fossil fuels,"¹ and further, "This code shall apply to all new residential, commercial, and state-funded buildings beginning as early as possible but no later than 2024."² We are already behind on implementing this recommendation and need to take action now to meet our economy-wide emissions reduction commitments. HB 870 is also aligned with Climate Pollution Reduction Plan implementation goals. This bill furthers the Maryland Department of the Environment's (MDE) "process of adopting Building Energy Performance Standards (BEPS) for covered buildings to achieve a 20% reduction in net direct [greenhouse gas] emissions on or before January 1, 2030, as compared with 2025 levels for average buildings of similar construction, net-zero direct GHG emissions on or before January 1, 2040, and

¹ [Building Energy Transition Plan - MCCC approved.pdf](#)

² [Building Energy Transition Plan - MCCC approved.pdf](#)

improve overall energy efficiency.”³ Our state has committed to economy-wide emissions reductions and is on a path away from fossil fuels. New construction needs to be built sustainably for the future.

TNC, as a member of the Mitigation Working Group and the Buildings Sub-Group, provided funding for the Maryland Building Decarbonization Study,⁴ which supported the MCCC’s Building Energy Transition Plan. This study modeled potential building decarbonization scenarios and made recommendations for Maryland to achieve deep decarbonization of building end-uses by mid-century, while also analyzing the costs and benefits of each potential pathway. The study highlighted the cost-effectiveness of energy efficiency measures for new and existing buildings.

According to the state’s Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory, buildings sector emissions accounted for approximately 16.6 percent of the state’s total greenhouse gas emissions in 2020. This is the third largest emissions source in our state. The Building Energy Transition Plan is intended to serve as a roadmap for reaching net-zero emissions from residential and commercial buildings by 2045, consistent with the state’s commitments under the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022. HB 870 seeks to bring new construction into alignment with regulations on existing buildings with regard to energy conservation requirements.

Applying energy conservation requirements to new construction advances development that is more resilient to increasing energy demands and resource adequacy challenges, while also furthering Maryland’s progress toward a net-zero economy. We commend Delegates Korman and Boafu for introducing this forward-looking legislation to advance Maryland’s emissions reduction commitments. **Therefore, we urge a favorable report on HB 870.**

³ [Maryland's Climate Pollution Reduction Plan - Final - Dec 28 2023.pdf](#)

⁴ [Maryland Building Decarbonization Study.](#)