

Committee: Environment and Transportation

Testimony on: HB0870-Maryland Building Performance Standards – Energy Conservation Requirements (Large Buildings for Tomorrow Act)

Submitting: Deborah A. Cohn

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: February 25, 2026

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

As a Montgomery County resident who strongly supported creation of its Building Energy Performance Standards (BEPS), I appreciate that constructing new buildings that will, once operating, immediately be subject to the County's BEPS regulations makes no sense. It is much less expensive to build to BEPS standards initially than to retrofit a new building to comply with known standards that will apply in future years. Nonetheless, given the potentially higher construction costs of energy efficient buildings, particularly until builders become more familiar with the available techniques, there is no assurance that builders and owners of new buildings that will be subject to the law necessarily will build to future standards.

The same reasoning applies to Maryland BEPS; thus the need for HB0870.

In 2022 Maryland passed the [Climate Solutions Now Act](#) (CSNA) requiring buildings over 35,000 square feet to comply with Building Energy Performance Standards. Under Maryland BEPS, covered buildings need to document and analyze building energy usage through benchmarking and reach zero net direct GHG emissions by 2040. To achieve zero net direct GHG emissions, an existing building will need to invest in retrofits to improve energy efficiency and reduce energy usage. While these upgrades reduce energy heating and cooling costs over the long term, as retrofits they are much more expensive and time consuming than if addressed during construction.

HB0870 directs the Department of Labor to adopt by regulation the International Building Code, including the International Energy Conservation Code, for new construction of buildings 35,000sq feet or over beginning October 1, 2028. This gives builders time to adjust designs for new construction. Adoption of these codes into Maryland BEPS ensures that future buildings avoid expensive retrofits because they will comply with energy efficiency standards when constructed. Even if more expensive to construct, they will immediately be less expensive to operate and may be easier to lease.

The Large Buildings of Tomorrow Act HB0870 is a sensible and pragmatic way to reduce peak energy demand and skyrocketing energy costs. For these reasons I urge a FAVORABLE report on HB0870.