



## Maryland Soccer Foundation

18031 Central Park Circle

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[www.mdsoccerplex.org](http://www.mdsoccerplex.org)



March 8, 2026

Maryland House of Delegates  
Del. Marc Korman, Chair  
Environment and Transportation Committee  
250 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

### **RE: Support for HB1217 – Environment - Building Energy Performance Standards and Energy Use Intensity Targets – Exemptions**

Chairman Korman and Members of the Committee,

My name is Matt Libber, and I am the Executive Director of the Maryland SoccerPlex and Adventist HealthCare Fieldhouse in Montgomery County. On behalf of the Maryland SoccerPlex, I respectfully submit this written testimony in support of **House Bill 1217**.

As one of the region's premier youth and amateur sports destinations, the SoccerPlex plays a vital role in Maryland's tourism economy, hosting thousands of athletes and families each year for tournaments, leagues, and special events that generate significant economic activity for local hotels, restaurants, and small businesses.

We strongly support environmental sustainability and responsible energy management. However, the current Building Energy Performance Standards (BEPS) framework presents serious financial and operational challenges that threaten our long-term stability and our ability to continue serving Maryland families and visitors.

#### **Impact of BEPS on the Maryland SoccerPlex**

Under the current BEPS compliance timelines, the Maryland SoccerPlex would be required to replace an HVAC system that was installed in 2021—valued at approximately \$1 million—more than 10 years before the end of its expected useful life. This system was installed as part of a long-term capital improvement plan designed to:

- Improve energy efficiency
- Enhance indoor air quality
- Provide reliable climate control for year-round programming
- Support tournament and event hosting

The equipment is modern, high-performing, and functioning as designed. Forcing premature replacement would:

- Strain substantial capital investment
- Create avoidable financial strain
- Divert funds away from youth programming and facility improvements
- Potentially increase user fees for Maryland families



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As a nonprofit, community-focused sports facility, our capital dollars are limited and carefully allocated. Replacing a \$1 million system more than a decade early is not simply a budget adjustment—it is a fundamental disruption to our long-term financial planning. House Bill 1217 addresses this challenge by allowing buildings to comply with BEPS requirements **when major systems reach the end of their useful life or fail**, rather than requiring premature replacement of functioning equipment.

### **Ripple Effects on Tourism and Local Business**

The Maryland SoccerPlex hosts regional and national tournaments that bring visitors from across the country. These events:

- Fill nearby hotels
- Generate restaurant and retail spending
- Support local service providers
- Create seasonal employment opportunities

When facilities like ours are forced to absorb large, unplanned capital expenditures, those costs ultimately affect the broader ecosystem. Increased facility fees, rental rates, or event costs can make Maryland less competitive as a tournament destination compared to neighboring states.

### **Increased Electrical Demand and Infrastructure Costs**

Compliance with BEPS standards would also require greater electrification of building systems. For a facility that already experiences peak demand during tournaments and large indoor events, electrification presents additional challenges:

- Increased peak electrical load
- Higher demand charges
- Potential need for transformer and service upgrades
- Added infrastructure costs separate from equipment replacement

Grid capacity and reliability are critical during large-scale events. Any disruption affects not only our operations but also visiting teams, families, and the businesses that depend on these events. A transition that does not align with infrastructure readiness risks placing both financial and operational burdens on community facilities like ours.

### **Our Commitment to Environmental Sustainability**

While we support House Bill 1217 to address timing and flexibility concerns, we want to be clear: the Maryland SoccerPlex is deeply committed to environmental stewardship.

We have already made significant investments, including:

- Installation of approximately 1,400 solar panels generating renewable energy on-site
- Conversion to LED lighting throughout our facilities and fields
- Ongoing energy management best practices
- Sustainable maintenance and operational protocols
- Strategic infrastructure upgrades to reduce long-term environmental impact

These investments reflect our belief that sustainability and community recreation go hand in hand. We are not seeking to avoid environmental responsibility, we are seeking a realistic, economically sound path forward.



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### Why House Bill 1217 Matters

House Bill 1217 provides necessary flexibility by aligning BEPS compliance timelines with the natural lifecycle of major building systems. This approach will:

- Recognize equipment life-cycle realities
- Allow compliance timelines that align with responsible capital planning
- Prevent premature replacement of functioning systems
- Protect nonprofit and tourism-related facilities from destabilizing financial impacts

This bill does not undermine environmental progress. Rather, it ensures that progress is achieved in a way that is fiscally responsible, operationally practical, and supportive of Maryland's community institutions.

### Conclusion

The Maryland SoccerPlex is proud to be a statewide destination for youth sports and a contributor to Maryland's tourism economy. We stand firmly behind sustainability initiatives and have demonstrated commitment through significant private investment in renewable energy and efficiency improvements. However, requiring the premature replacement of a \$1 million HVAC system more than a decade before the end of its useful life is not sound environmental or economic policy. We respectfully urge a **favorable report on House Bill 1217**.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

Matthew Libber

Executive Director

Maryland Soccer Foundation

Maryland SoccerPlex and Adventist HealthCare Fieldhouse