Create a healthier, more affordable, and more climate-friendly Maryland with the Better Buildings Act SB1023 and HB1279

The more than thirty groups working for the Better Buildings Act believe that we all deserve affordable energy bills, clean air, and to stay safe and comfortable at home, school, and work – even amid extreme weather and unpredictable spikes in energy costs. It is time that Maryland's buildings go beyond today's minimum building codes to stop directly emitting carbon pollution from combustion and indirectly creating more pollution by being inefficient. By building Smart from the Start, we can provide **cost savings**, **health benefits**, and **climate resilience** to generations of residents at the same cost or less to build.

IMPROVED AFFORDABILITY

We can build better buildings equipped with the latest efficiency measures and clean energy technologies for the same price - if not less - than older building methods.

- A lot of research proves that with today's technology, units built to the highest energy efficiency standards can be built at no extra cost, or with minimal extra cost, compared to conventional buildings that will end up costing their residents thousands of dollars more to heat and cool.
- Adopting the latest, most efficient codes makes up 2% of the average cost of a new home, a cost which pays for itself within three years thanks to energy savings.

The Better Buildings Act will stabilize energy bills even amid increasingly unpredictable energy prices.

- Heat pumps are an essential tool to lowering monthly energy bills and keeping electricity demand low year-round. These highly efficient systems use 29% less electricity on average during periods of peak demand than central ACs, and remain 2-3x more efficient than gas furnaces in winter weather.

- Across Maryland, 98% of households can save money on their monthly energy bills by adopting high-efficiency electric appliances in place of fossil fuel heating equipment. The median low-income household in Maryland would save $373 per year by replacing a gas furnace with a heat pump.

BETTER HEALTH

The Better Buildings Act will provide cleaner air indoor and out, boosting public health and saving lives.

- A large 2022 Harvard study showed that gas appliances in homes and buildings constantly leak 296 unique chemical compounds, 21 of which are federally designated as hazardous air pollutants, including benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, xylene, and hexane.

- Buildings emit more than three times as much health-harming nitrogen oxides (NO_x) as Maryland's power plants thanks to fossil fuel HVAC equipment. NO_x pollution from burning fossil fuels in residential, commercial, and institutional buildings has increased 3.7% from 2017 to 2023.

LIFE-SAVING

Homes that utilize advanced energy efficiency can maintain safer, more habitable conditions during extended blackouts or interruptions in fuel deliveries.

- Extreme heat is becoming increasingly common in Maryland. In Baltimore, the average number of days over 90° F could more than double by the 2060s.

- In nearly every situation, improving efficiency in residential buildings can save lives during extreme heat and cold events. Installing passive measures in existing single-family buildings to meet code requirements extends habitability by as much as 120% during extreme cold and by up to 140% during extreme heat.

SMART FROM THE START