



## Talking points for advocates

### Better Buildings Act, SB1023 and HB1279

- 2023 was the hottest year that human beings have ever experienced. It's not a fluke: the past 10 years have been the hottest 10 years in human history.
- With more than 3,000 miles of coastline, Maryland has a huge stake in slowing down greenhouse gas emissions. In fact, Maryland has the highest ratio of coastline to area of any state.
- Maryland can't solve the climate crisis by itself, but it can set an example for the nation and improve Marylanders' health and savings with the right policy.
- The Better Buildings Act stops making Maryland's greenhouse gas emissions worse while we work to reduce what we are already emitting. If we don't do it, buildings that install fossil fuel heat and hot water in the next few years will still be emitting greenhouse gases long after the state is required to achieve net zero emissions.
- The BBA would make significant progress towards climate and health goals without any substantial cost to the Maryland state government.
- The BBA would significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions in almost all new buildings after October 2026 by disallowing direct fossil fuel combustion for space heat and domestic hot water.
- The BBA would significantly reduce overall energy use in new buildings by requiring better energy conservation. This would reduce indirect emissions from electric power generation and pave the way for 100% clean energy use in most buildings.
- The BBA would facilitate greater EV adoption by ensuring that all new residential and commercial building parking lots are capable of installing charging stations.
- The BBA would facilitate greater solar PV adoption by ensuring that new buildings with at least 20,000 sf of roof space are solar-ready unless granted a waiver.
- People living in well insulated, electric homes will save hundreds of dollars in fuel costs every year. This is particularly important for many Marylanders who currently pay far too much of their income in gas, heating oil, or propane costs.

- With better building energy conservation and the use of highly efficient heat pumps, consumers would pay far less for heat and hot water than they do now. The Governor's Climate Pollution Reduction Plan estimates that the average Maryland family would save \$2600 each year by adopting heat pumps and EVs, which doesn't even take into account energy saving and less fuel use through better insulation. This is particularly important for lower-income households, which are often overburdened both by housing costs and energy costs.
- Buildings that do not combust fossil fuels reduce indoor and outdoor air pollution and are far better for people's health. Fossil fuel combustion is strongly linked to childhood asthma and other respiratory diseases. Avoiding fossil fuels is particularly important for households with smaller, poorly ventilated fossil fuel cooking equipment and urban populations subject to greater outdoor air pollution.
- Heat pumps function to provide both heat and air conditioning. Cold climate heat pumps work normally down to about zero degrees Fahrenheit, and some can provide reliable heat without any backup down to -13°F. There are between 25,000 and 30,000 models of heat pumps currently available in the US, and more coming every day.
- Commercial and industrial heat pumps are widely available and increasingly used for new buildings because the marginal upfront cost increase is quickly offset by energy savings. Most new multifamily buildings are already being built with heat pumps for space heat and electric hot water, including a 44 story, 440 unit building about to open in New York City.
- Study after study has shown that additional costs, if any, are small and decrease rapidly with experience and the availability of materials. Passive House tracking of new electric, highly efficient multifamily buildings in New York, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania showed incremental costs to be 4.1%, 2.21% and 1.6% respectively, before any incentives, to meet that very high standard. Some studies show substantial savings over conventional construction through avoidance of parallel electrical and fossil fuel systems.
- Generous incentives are available through the IRA for builders, solar installations, and EV infrastructure. Tax incentives are available as direct payments for the first time for nonprofits, including churches.