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Baltimore and Howard Counties

Health and Government Operations
Committee

Subcommittees

Government Operations
and Health Facilities

Public Health and
Minority Health Disparities



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House Bill 236
Department of General Services – Energy – Conserving Standards
(Maryland Sustainable Buildings Act of 2021)

March 21, 2021

Dear Chairman Pinsky, Vice-Chair Kagan, and Committee Members,

HB236 presents us with the rare opportunity to save money while addressing a significant problem by requiring the Maryland Department of General Services to develop Green Building Council LEED Pilot Credit 55 architectural standards for application “to the extent practicable and within budgetary constraints” in newly constructed, acquired, or substantially altered state buildings, and “considering the physical health and mental health of building occupants” in development of operational standards for conservation of energy and minimization of adverse impacts on migratory birds. Allowable and aesthetically pleasing designs and materials include ultraviolet patterned, matte, opaque, etched, stained, or frosted glass/Plexiglas®. The current bill does not require monitoring of bird-building collisions.

Incorporation of LEED 55 architectural elements in the design and planning stage is cost-neutral and will reduce energy consumption substantially, making State buildings more sustainable. Compliance with the architectural and operational standards is consistent with the State’s mandate under the High Performance Building Act of 2008 and Governor Hogan’s 2019 “Maryland Leads by Example” initiative. The bill puts into statute and accelerates the initiative’s goal of achieving a 10% reduction in energy consumption of State-owned buildings by 2029, over FY 2018. (I like to think that the initiative was a direct outgrowth of our work with the Department in our efforts to get the 2019 version of this legislation through the General Assembly.)

The economic contribution of birding and other avian-related industries and activities to Maryland’s Total Industrial Output is calculated by the Maryland Ornithological Society as over \$909 million annually, generating 10,807 full and part-time jobs, and producing \$88.4 million in state and local revenue. Birds enhance our quality of life, control insect and other vermin populations, are key players in seed dispersal and pollination, serve as nourishment, and provide comfort, companionship, entertainment, protection and employment.

Passing HB236: The Maryland Sustainable Buildings Act of 2021, is a win-win-win-win. By requiring the incorporation of LEED 55 standards in the planning, design, and construction of new and renovated State buildings and being more responsible about the use of outside and externally transmitted light from dusk to dawn, we can save taxpayer dollars, support our ecological sustainability goals, sustain Maryland’s multi-million dollar avian-related activities and industries, AND meet our obligations as a signatory to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918.

I respectfully request you return a favorable report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Hill'.