

Committees: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
Testimony on: SB0077 Energy Efficiency - Net-Zero Homes - Contract Preferences
Submitted by: Donald M. Goldberg, Executive Director
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: February 9, 2021

Dear Chairman and Committee Members:

Climate Law & Policy Project urges a favorable report on SB77

SB77 requires the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to give preference to applications for funding for a net-zero home from the Energy-Efficient Homes Construction Fund that will use the services of small and minority-, women-, and veteran-owned businesses in the State in the clean energy industry, particularly businesses that provide employment for individuals trained through specified workforce development programs.

Whenever State money is used for projects and programs intended to benefit the citizens of the state, it is critically important that all State residents have an equal opportunity to receive those benefits. The Energy-Efficient Homes Construction Fund is no exception.

Maryland has a long standing commitment to assisting small, minority and women-owned firms in gaining greater access to government contracting opportunities. Indeed, Maryland's Minority Business Enterprise Program, established within the Department of Transportation in 1978, is the oldest in the country. The MBE/DBE program was established to ensure that small, minority- and women-owned firms had the opportunity to participate fully and fairly in both State and U.S. DOT federally funded projects.¹

Energy efficient and net zero homes are becoming increasingly popular and are a vital part of the plan to achieve Maryland's greenhouse gas reduction targets under its Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act. Hence, the Energy-Efficient Homes Construction Fund will play an ever more important role in the State's future, and we anticipate that the size and scope of the fund will expand accordingly.

HB77 is an important next step to continue to meet Maryland's commitment to provide equal access to all its citizens to the benefits of the State's resources.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge a favorable report on SB77.

¹ <https://www.mdot.maryland.gov/tso/pages/index.aspx?pageid=114>