

Senator Paul G. Pinsky
Chairman Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

February 19, 2021

*Testimony in support of **Bill SB636** Housing and Community Development - Neighborhood Revitalization – ‘Passive House Pilot Program’, Sponsored by Senator Hayes*

Dear Chairman Pinsky, and Members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee:

I am a Registered Architect, Certified Passive House Consultant and since 2007 a full-time faculty member at Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, MD (MICA) at the Department of Architectural Design. I am passionate about engaging the neighborhoods of Baltimore in my teaching and practice.

In 2018 I began an initiative at MICA called the ‘Sustainable Reuse of Baltimore’s Vacant Buildings’. I invited many experts, activists, City Planners and others to speak at MICA and taught three courses with students from MICA and from Johns Hopkins University. Together we studied various design scenarios of rehabilitating vacant row-homes as Affordable Housing and studied the social and environmental impact of these energy efficient designs.

It may seem counter-intuitive that High Performance building design particularly Passive House design, is well suited for Affordable Housing. One seems to belong to the high-end market of construction while the other usually to the cheapest. But in cities like New York City, Philadelphia and Pittsburg this unlikely marriage is taking place much to the benefit of the residents’ financial and physical health and the environment.

The Passive House design methodology is all about applying science to our buildings and doing right by the residents of these projects. It offers ‘energy security’ to resident families - a chance to diminish utility bills by up to 90% in order to free up resources for their home mortgage or other essential needs. It also makes for a healthy home with a carefully balanced environment, constant filtered fresh air. The elimination of asthma triggers like mold and VOCs is particularly

relevant to Baltimore City where children suffer more than two times the national rate of asthma incidents. Passive House is also a building design method that is highly sustainable. These buildings will last much longer than normal construction and be more resilient to power outages, by taking a long time to heat up or cool down if grid power fails.

The Passive House Pilot program that Michael Rosenband, myself and others are developing aims to provide such benefits to the residents of the Greater Rosemont neighborhood but more ambitiously leverage these projects to teach young people how to build for the future, and improve their job prospects. We are partnering with the Baltimore City Public Schools and Carver Vocational Technical High School in order to teach and train youth - not only their students but soon draw upon other city youths who can benefit from our program.

The Affordable Housing we seek is permanent and to this end we have partnered with the South Baltimore Community Land Trust (CLT) that will help to steward our finished projects into the future as Affordable Housing. CLTs are shown to reduce foreclosures and evictions and provide social support to the resident families when in financial difficulty.

Last but not least as a pilot our project looks forward to future iterations of developing vacant building into energy efficient Affordable Housing. The Passive House Pilot project is a pathway for Baltimore City to Passive House designed Affordable Housing that cities in New York and Pennsylvania are enjoying and a pathway for its youth to a brighter future. Our project will have multiple positive impacts on the city's neighborhoods, residents and environment. For all these reasons we ask that you support Bill 636 sponsored by Senator Hayes.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have. I can be reached by email at taziz@mica.edu or phone at 443.525.7375. Thank you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Timmy Aziz". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Timmy Aziz R.A., CPHC

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