



AIA
Maryland

Promoting Maryland Architecture Since 1965

14 February 2021

The Honorable Shane Pendergrass, Chair
Health and Government Operations Committee
Room 241
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Letter of Support for HB 0469
State-Funded Construction and Major Renovation Projects-Solar Panels-Requirement

Dear Chairwoman Pendergrass:

On behalf of AIA Maryland and the nearly 2,000 Architects we represent, we fully support sustainable strategies in building design and construction as we collectively work to lessen our impact on the natural world. We support the intent of this bill, however we believe aspects of the bill may benefit from adopting elements of existing building codes that are not currently part of Maryland's energy code, such as adopting appendix CA (Solar-Ready Zone – Commercial) of the International Energy Conservation Code. This appendix is intended to encourage the installation of renewable energy systems by preparing buildings for future installation of future equipment, piping and wiring.

Senate Bill 245 enacted in 2013 requires new and major renovation school projects to evaluate the feasibility of the use of solar technology on the project. This bill allows a waiver that is often submitted subsequent to the analysis done in design development and rooftop solar collection is not implemented and capacity for accommodating pipes, wires or rooftop arrays may have been precluded as elements of the design advanced. While we recognize that solar panels do have a limited cost, planning for and implementing them as part of the initial design is much easier than a later retrofit. The fiscal note clearly indicates the cost is a small fraction of total project costs and if cost is the primary deterrent, there are paths such as a power purchase agreement that would eliminate first cost for school districts and enable them to save in lower rates and move our state toward our renewable energy goals.

We support the state leading by example and considering how to make state funded construction more sustainable. We support the planning and use of rooftop panels as a means of providing renewable energy for state funded buildings. We support HBO469 to implement solar arrays on publicly funded buildings and we encourage the use of a cross-disciplinary and vetted regulation such as IECC for establishing criteria for solar roof arrays through a public regulatory process.

Sincerely,

Chris Parts, AIA
Director, Past President, AIA Maryland

cc: Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee:

Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair
Alfred C. Carr, Jr.
Steve Johnson
Robbyn Lewis
Sheree Sample-Hughes

Heather Bagnall
Nick Charles
Ariana B. Kelly
Matthew Morgan
Kathy Szeliga

Erek L. Barron
Brian Chisholm
Ken Kerr
Teresa E. Reilly
Karen Lewis Young

Lisa Belcastro
Bonnie Cullison
Nicholaus R. Kipke
Samuel I. Rosenberg

Harry Bhandari
Terri L. Hill
Susan W. Krebs
Sid Saab

AIA Maryland Board of Directors

The American Institute of Architects

AIA Maryland
86 Maryland Avenue
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

T (410) 263 0916

www.aiaMaryland.org