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January 14, 2022

Senator Guy Gazzone
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Miller Senate Office Building
3 West, Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: **SUPPORT** – SB45 – Income Tax – Credit for Energy Efficiency Upgrades – Passive Houses

Dear Chairman Guzzone:

My name is Ruth Ann Norton, and I am the President & CEO of the Green & Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI), the nation's largest healthy homes organization. GHHI is dedicated to addressing the social determinants of health and advancing racial and health equity through the creation of healthy, safe, and energy efficient homes. By delivering a standard of excellence, GHHI aims to eradicate the negative health impacts of unhealthy housing and unjust policies for children, seniors, and families to ensure better health, economic, and social outcomes with an emphasis on black and brown and low-income communities. The Green & Healthy Homes Initiative has been at the frontline of holistic healthy housing for over three decades.

Under my leadership, GHHI developed the holistic energy efficiency, health and housing service delivery model that is implemented in our nationally recognized, Maryland-based direct service program as well in 75 partner jurisdictions nationwide and whose model was adopted by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. GHHI is a member of Energy Efficient Maryland and has served on the New York State Climate Action Council Housing and Energy Efficiency Advisory Panel. I am a member of the EPA Children's Health Protection Advisory Committee and the Maryland Lead Poisoning Prevention Commission.

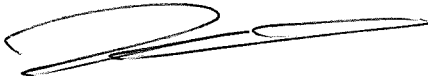
Through our own research and evidence-based practice, GHHI has found that a healthy and energy efficient home yields a multitude of energy and non-energy benefits for residents, particularly low-income residents who can benefit the most from such energy efficiency improvements in terms of economic mobility, housing stability and wealth attainment over the long-term. We are deeply committed to advancing racial, health and energy equity, economic mobility and climate resiliency through improved energy efficiency standards for low-income housing, and thus write in SUPPORT of SB45 which would provide additional financial resources to property owners to make energy efficiency upgrades to their property.

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Providing financial resources to property owners to invest in energy efficiency upgrades is an important component in a comprehensive strategy to reduce energy consumption, greenhouse gases and other climate impacts in Maryland. Many owners lack the resources to complete weatherization and energy efficiency interventions without financial assistance. Tax credits provide another financial tool to incentivize owners to afford and make energy efficiency investments. Reducing energy consumption can alleviate energy burdens and financial stressors through the reduction in monthly energy costs. Lastly, research has shown that energy efficiency and weatherization measures can improve housing conditions relating to thermal comfort, indoor air quality, pest management, and fire safety and provide other non-energy benefits for occupants in the home.

SB45 is an investment Maryland should make and we request a favorable report.

Respectfully Submitted,



Ruth Ann Norton
President and CEO