



## **CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND**

### **HB 982 Support**

#### **Economic Matters Committee**

**Hearing: February 27, 2020**

#### **HB 982 Public Utilities—Low- and Middle-Income Housing—Energy Performance Targets**

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The City of Takoma Park supports, and urges favorable consideration of, this bill.

Lower-income Marylanders who rent, including those in our community, face higher energy burdens than other Marylanders, and must use a much greater portion of their limited income for energy services. Current energy efficiency programs largely benefit homeowners, and those with greater incomes and ability to take advantage of incentives. This bill would address these glaring inequities. It would set targets for energy use reductions in low- and moderate-income housing, to be achieved through existing weatherization and energy efficiency programs. This would directly benefit these residents, improve their home comfort and safety, reduce their energy costs, and contribute to the state's goal of reducing climate-changing greenhouse gas emissions.

This bill would apply to a significant number of residents in our community. The City of Takoma Park is a densely developed, largely residential municipality of almost 18,000 people living within 2.4 square miles in Montgomery County, Maryland. Nearly 40% of Takoma Park residents are housing cost burdened in some way, and utilities are part of this housing cost burden. The City's residential housing stock is about half multi-family rental buildings, and 70% of residential buildings are older structures built before 1940 with a strong need for energy efficiency improvements.

This bill supports our city's climate change, housing and equity priorities. The City has committed to aggressive measures to dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2035, and to an aggressive housing and economic development plan that prioritizes protecting affordable housing in our community. Achieving these goals requires attention to multifamily residents and their housing, and few tools are available to do this. This bill would provide an effective mechanism to deliver energy efficiency services to this difficult to reach group and reduce their inequitable energy burden.

In sum, the City of Takoma Park supports HB 982, and encourages a favorable vote.