



HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL  
AFFIDAVIT OF AUTHORIZATION  
TO TESTIFY ON BEHALF OF AN ORGANIZATION

I, Doug Siglin, have been duly authorized by  
*(name of individual)*

Chesapeake Climate Action Network to deliver testimony to the  
*(name of nonprofit organization or government board, commission, or task force)*

County Council regarding CB5-2023 to express the organization's  
*(bill or resolution number)*

support for / opposition to / request to amend this legislation.  
*(Please circle one.)*

Printed Name: Doug Siglin

Signature: Douglas V. Siglin

Date: 2/21/2023

Organization: Chesapeake Climate Action Network

Organization Address: 6930 Carroll Ave Takoma Park MD 20912

6930 Carroll Ave Takoma Park MD 20912

Number of Members: 106743 total, 24289 in MD, 1021 in HoCo

Name of Chair/President: Mike Tidwell

*This form can be submitted electronically via email to [councilmail@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:councilmail@howardcountymd.gov) no later than 5pm the day of the Public Hearing or delivered in person the night of the Public Hearing before testifying.*

Chairperson Rigby and Councilmembers, I am Doug Siglin, and am representing the CCAN Action Fund here tonight. I thank you for this opportunity to speak. It is late and you heard a lot from me last month, so I want to make two very brief comments about two of the amendments that were added to the bill since the work session, and then make one point about costs.

First, Councilwoman Rigby's amendment to "offer net-zero energy standards for county government-owned buildings." Asking the County Executive to detail what it will take to enact an all-electric building code for new buildings, as CB5 does, will be important if the recommendations are actually enacted. Electric use is better for the planet than combusting coal, gas, or oil: as of 2:00 this afternoon, just under 43% of the fuel mix generating electricity for Howard County is NOT producing any carbon emissions, and that percentage will constantly get better. But asking the County Executive to offer net zero standards, starting with government buildings, is a significantly bigger step. Net zero buildings typically do not use as much energy, and all the energy that they do use has to be renewable, either on site or off site. That means NO carbon emissions. Howard County should be striving for as many net zero new buildings as possible.

Second, Councilwoman Walsh's amendment to "maximize resident investment in climate infrastructure, including appliance replacement and retrofit programs for low and middle income residents." We need to begin to make plans for helping Howard County residents to voluntarily take advantage of incentives to switch away from major gas appliances. This is where we are going to get real reductions in carbon emissions. Residents can already take advantage of generous federal tax incentives to switch out their gas appliances – but only if they know about them. Within a few months, the IRA's grants programs should become available for many of our residents. Other jurisdictions are beginning to move aggressively to

educate their residents and offer incentives above and beyond the federal tax credits and IRA programs. Just as one example, there is now a bill pending in Washington DC with eight of the thirteen Councilmembers signed on as original cosponsors that will require cost-free swap outs of major appliances for 10,000 households under 50% of area median income by the end of 2030, and 30,000 by the end of 2040.

I want to make one final point about costs that I don't think has really captured people's attention. In its supplemental testimony, BGE focuses again on statewide electrification and the costs that it will incur to build out electric distribution across the state. These costs are significant, and will be reflected in consumer electric rates. However, there is another critical side to the equation – gas prices. The Maryland Office of People's Counsel has done an exquisitely detailed study predicting what will happen to the price of gas service in Maryland, not because of the underlying commodity prices, which are volatile and quite unpredictable, but because of the way that the gas company's capital expenditures are reflected in their rates. The OPC noted that if the company's plans to transition towards refined biogas and/or hydrogen are approved, current gas distribution rates are likely to go up by 800%. The efficiencies of modern, heat-pump based cooling, heating and hot water are such that consumers use far less power. I for one would be willing to take my chances with much higher electric efficiencies, even when electric rates go up, rather than sustain an eight-fold increase in gas rates. You would do Howard County residents a favor by helping them to see this, too.

Finally, I would urge you to pass this bill without triggering the substantial change provisions again. I think that the Administration understands that there is strong public support for building electrification and in general will do a good job on the required report. I understand that the Administration is finishing up its revised Climate Action Plan and that we will see it in a couple of weeks, and of course there will be overlap between that plan and the report that will be required in December. As I have testified before, I hope that the Council will give the Administration all the legislative and budget support it needs to fully implement a strong climate plan and truly make Howard County a real climate leader. Thank you.





**Testimony in SUPPORT of CB5**  
**The Clean New Buildings Climate Act**  
Howard County Council  
Jose Coronado-Flores , On Behalf of CASA

February 21, 2023

Dear Honorable Chair Rigby and Members of the County Council,

CASA is pleased to offer **favorable testimony in support of CB5 - The Clean New Buildings Climate Act**. CASA is the largest immigrant services and advocacy organization in Maryland, and in the Mid-Atlantic region, with a membership of over 120,000 Black and Latino immigrants and working families.

CB5 is important legislation that will begin the process of addressing the health hazards and negative environmental effects of burning fossil fuels in buildings. In particular, CASA is invested in seeing this bill pass, because our organization sees the benefits of reducing fossil fuel consumption and abating the long-term health risks and immediate dangers that gas consumption and leaks can cause.

Maryland is moving towards becoming a zero-emission state by 2045. These goals have been set by the state government in order to mitigate the effects of climate change. Howard County needs to act now, so that the study can be conducted and proper recommendations can be made on how to begin the process of electrification: first starting with new construction and moving to retrofitting homes. Waiting is adding additional months of fossil fuel consumption, which should have been on the path to decreasing a long time ago.

In addition to the harmful effects on the environment, natural gas use and exposure can lead to long-term health risks as well. Without proper ventilation to circulate air, gas stoves produce similar emissions quantities to an idle vehicle. Homes with gas stoves have also been linked to higher cases of childhood asthma. The low-income immigrant community already has worse health outcomes, and reducing another harmful component of their daily life will serve to improve our community's overall health. Lastly, reducing the amount of buildings that use natural gas will reduce the danger potential that gas leaks pose in specific regards to building explosions.

CASA urges for the prompt passing of CB5.

Jose Coronado-Flores  
Research and Policy Analyst  
jcoronado@wearecasa.org, 240-393-7840



HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL  
AFFIDAVIT OF AUTHORIZATION  
TO TESTIFY ON BEHALF OF AN ORGANIZATION

I, STEVE MILLER, have been duly authorized by  
(name of individual)

HOWARD COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED to deliver testimony to the  
(name of nonprofit organization or government board, commission, or task force)

County Council regarding CBS-2023 to express the organization's  
(bill or resolution number)

support for / opposition to / request to amend this legislation.  
(Please circle one.)

Printed Name: STEVE MILLER

Signature: [Handwritten Signature]

Date: 2/21/23

Organization: HOWARD COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED

Organization Address: 5100 SNOWDEN RIVER BLVD SUITE 109  
COLUMBIA, MD, 21045

Number of Members: 2100 +

Name of Chair/President: ROBBYN AMOS - PRESIDENT  
SARAH RHYNE - CEO

This form can be submitted electronically via email to  
[councilmail@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:councilmail@howardcountymd.gov) no later than 2 hours prior to the start of the  
Public Hearing.



Main 410-715-1437  
Fax 410-715-1489  
Web www.hcar.org

Howard County Association of REALTORS® - Testimony  
To: Council Chair Rigby and Honorable Members of the County Council  
Date: February 21, 2023  
RE: Enrolled Council Bill 5-2023

Good Evening Chairperson Rigby and Members of the Howard County Council,

On the behalf of the Howard County Association of Realtors (HCAR), an organization of over 2,100 real estate professionals, HCAR supports and will continue to support efforts to ensure a cleaner environment and sustainable, equitable practices for the future.

HCAR supports initiatives that will preserve resources, especially our naturally occurring ones as well as the resource most critical to the function of the government- taxpayer dollars.

Make no mistake- in the push for electrification, our most vulnerable citizens will be affected the most. The upfront cost of conversion aside, statistics from our utility providers indicate that should the natural gas infrastructure be limited, the cost of capital improvements, operations, delivery, and per unit cost will increase and be spread out amongst the fewer customers utilizing the system.

If it costs more to heat your home, the logical result will be to lower the thermostat.

With this in mind, HCAR supports electrification efforts that utilize incentives to allow consumers who are of means to convert from fossil fuels to electricity as opposed to governmental mandates.

HCAR welcomes the results of the report CB5 will generate and requests that it be made available for public discussion well in advance of any discussion of the implementation of recommendations therein.

HCAR looks forward to continuing to work with our elected officials in any capacity to represent not only the interests of our industry but also to continue to advocate for the protection of private property rights for all of Howard County.

Sincerely,

Steve Miller, GRI, C2EX  
Chair, Legislative Committee  
Howard County Association of REALTORS®

Opposition to Council Bill 5-2023  
2/21/2023

Good evening, County Council Members,

My name is Daniel G. Merson, and I reside at 5820 Harman Ave in Elkridge. I also own a small business that is located at 5844 Washington Blvd, in Elkridge, that currently employees ten people. In both facilities, I utilize multiple sources of energy to heat my home and business.

As a resident and business owner, I have serious concerns with the implications of moving to a single source energy policy. Natural gas, propane, and heating oil are required in many facilities, as they provide a preferred fuel choice for space heating, water heating and cooking for households throughout Howard County.

While I strongly support climate change actions, and have taken many measures to conserve, eliminate waste, recycle, and apply reusable material to our home and business, I'm opposed to this legislation. Forced electrification jeopardizes my business, my employees, and the consumers ability to choose affordable, reliable heating options. This bill would leave your constituents without any choice but electrifying. Today's electric heating technology, such as heat pumps, underperforms on cold days. Ten years ago, I made a major addition to my home in Elkridge, and I am very satisfied with my highly efficient warm gas heat.

Electrification will also cost residents more money. Just a couple months ago BGE increased our KW cost by 21% (from .07643 to .09644) and I foresee this significantly increasing if this movement continues. Whole home electrifying could cost \$4,000 to \$15,000, while monthly energy bills would increase significantly.

A friend of mine did his own unofficial query on social media, asking those that live in the County if they are in favor of this legislation. Almost fifty people responded with very adamite noes, and only one that was somewhat supportive. Over the last couple months, BGE is replacing all the natural gas lines (including mine) in my community, which I'm sure comes with a significant cost at improving the infrastructure.

As the Howard County Council considers this legislation, please consider the impact it will have on small businesses, jobs, and consumer choice. I'm asking that you please oppose CB5-2023.

Thank You

Daniel G. Merson

Residence is located at:

5820 Harman Ave.

Elkridge, MD 21075

CEO/Owner

Trinity Chimney Service

5844 Washington Blvd.

Elkridge, MD 21075





HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL  
AFFIDAVIT OF AUTHORIZATION  
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I, Eddy Zepp, have been duly authorized by  
(name of individual)  
Maryland Plumbing Heating Cooling (MPHCC)  
(name of nonprofit organization or government board, commission, or task force) CONTRACTORS to deliver testimony to the  
County Council regarding CB-5 to express the organization's  
(bill or resolution number)  
support for opposition to request to amend this legislation.  
(Please circle one.)

Printed Name: Eddy Zepp

Signature: Edgar W. Zepp, IV

Date: February 20, 2023

Organization: MPHCC

Organization Address: 10176 Baltimore National Pike STE 205  
Ellicott City, MD 21042

Number of Members: 250

Name of Chair/President: Steve Schaeffer

***This form can be submitted electronically via email to [councilmail@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:councilmail@howardcountymd.gov) no later than 2 hours prior to the start of the Public Hearing.***

February 21, 2023

Testimony In Support of CB5-2023

From: Laura Mettle

3320 Daisy Road, Woodbine, MD 21797

To: Howard County Council Members Walsh, Jones, Rigby, Jung and Yungmann

On June 22, 1973 I attended a party celebrating the end of the school year and the start of Summer. The next morning I went on an errand, and when I returned home my mother told me that my friend Jim's house had exploded and burned. I was stunned and denied the news. I had seen Jim at the party not 12 hours earlier.

At around 8:00 on the morning of June 23rd, Jim's mother had gotten up, and perhaps lit a cigarette or her slippers struck a spark on the carpet as she walked to the kitchen. At any rate, she caught fire. A damaged gas pipe, in the street 100 feet from the house, had filled the home with odorless natural gas. That spark ignited the air inside and blew out the back wall of the house. Jim ran outside; he was later taken to the hospital. His father, burned over 90 percent of his body, passed away the next day. His older sister's body was found on the floor next to her bedroom window. She had been trapped in her room. Jim's mother's body was found in the hallway outside her bedroom.

Jim had not healed enough to start school with the rest of us in the fall; he came about a month later. The only survivor from his family at 17, he experienced all the milestones of Senior year and heading to college alone, without their support and encouragement. A minor, he wasn't even old enough to sue Washington Gas and Electric on his own.

Jim's mother had been a secretary at my junior high school. At least 2000 teens in town knew her and were affected by the news. His sister Jeanne was studying to be a doctor.

This happened in a seven year old neighborhood in Bowie. These were not old gas lines. Six months later a propane tank exploded in the garage of another Bowie house and damaged 30 other houses in the neighborhood, but this time no one died.

Unfortunately, this tragedy 50 years ago wasn't an isolated incident. In recent years gas explosions have occurred in Baltimore City twice, Pikesville, Silver Spring, Gaithersburg, and Columbia, killing and injuring people and destroying millions of dollars worth of property.

We know that natural gas is neither safe nor healthy. It contains chemicals linked to asthma, cancer, heart disease and neurological problems. Natural gas is only economical if one ignores the costs of related health issues and the deaths, injuries and property damage caused by explosions. Natural gas is clean only in comparison to coal and oil; it is much dirtier than solar and wind power. The industry spends a lot of money on advertising trying to convince us that natural gas is clean, economical, safe, and the best way to heat one's home. We know better. If it really was better, they wouldn't have to spend so much on ads.

Advances in solar energy, battery capacity, and heat transfer technology are bringing down the cost and increasing the efficiency of renewable energy. There is no cleaner or safer energy source than that derived from the radiant heat of the sun and the earth, and the movement of wind and water on our planet.


Please don't let marketing executives from fossil fuel utility companies distract you from the simple truth we all know: Fossil fuels like natural gas are the energy of the 19th and 20th centuries. This century will belong to the people who invest in mastering the technology that makes renewable, clean energy efficient, effective, and economical for everyone, all over the world.

Please put Howard County on the path to full electrification. Thank you.

# MARYLAND RETAILERS ASSOCIATION

*The Voice of Retailing in Maryland*

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**CB5-2023 AN ACT** requiring the County Executive to report to the County Council with recommendations about changes to the Howard County Building Code that would be needed to require all-electric buildings and ways the County can achieve certain climate goals and ways the County can maximize use of certain funds and ways the County can maximize certain investments, requiring the County Executive to consider specified exemptions and considerations and specific matters regarding system capacity; setting a certain deadline, defining certain terms, requiring the County Executive to offer net zero energy standards for County government-owned buildings, requesting the County Executive to provide an inventory of County buildings and their current energy sources, and generally relating to the Howard County Building Code.

**Howard County Council**

**February 21, 2023**

**Position:** Against

**Background:** CB5-2023 would require the Howard County Executive to develop electrification standards for future construction and other buildings in the County.

**Comments:** The Maryland Retailers Association would urge against the establishment of a local electrification plan in Howard County. The State has already taken steps to establish a plan in Maryland to address and offset the effects of climate change, and the addition of local plans would create a patchwork of policies with a variety of standards and compliance deadlines. The lack of consistent statewide policies creates burdens and confusion for multijurisdictional businesses. Additionally, a County-wide transition away from non-electric energy sources could have a negative effect on energy costs and business operations in the area. As the State moves forward with its own actions to reduce emissions, we would encourage local jurisdictions to unite under statewide standards in order to reduce confusion for businesses and citizens and to streamline efforts to develop alternative energy sources.

For these reasons, we would urge the Council to reject this proposal. Thank you for your consideration.