An Act requiring the Department of Inspections, Licenses, and Permits 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, requiring the Department to consider specified exemptions and considerations; setting a certain deadline, and generally relating to the Howard County Building Code.
WHEREAS, communities across the world are facing impacts from the ever-growing threat of global climate change, which includes rising temperatures, increased heat waves and droughts, more frequent severe weather events, sea level rise, and environmental degradation;

WHEREAS, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recently published its Sixth Assessment Report on August 7, 2021, which highlights that climate change has occurred at an “unprecedented” pace and notes that “it is unequivocal that human influence has warmed the atmosphere, ocean and land.”;

WHEREAS, the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report firmly establishes that “limiting human-induced global warming to a specific level requires limiting cumulative CO2 emissions, reaching at least net zero CO2 emissions, along with strong reductions in other greenhouse gas emissions.”;

WHEREAS, in 2023, the Maryland General Assembly passed the Climate Solutions Now Act, which requires the state of Maryland to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 60% from 2006 levels by 2031 and achieve net-zero emissions by 2045;

WHEREAS, the preliminary report of Howard County’s Climate Action and Resiliency Plan (CARP) has determined that buildings account for roughly 40% of Howard County’s local greenhouse gas emissions, of which 11% of emissions are directly from on-site fuel combustion in buildings;

WHEREAS, the United States Green Building Council (USGBC) has identified that building decarbonization and electrification is an important policy tool to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the building sector by shifting energy reliance to electricity instead of fossil fuel combustion;

WHEREAS, all-electric buildings provide Howard County residents with a multitude of benefits, including a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, improved air quality, better health outcomes, and energy affordability;

WHEREAS, Howard County must phase out the use of fossil fuels in new building construction in order to meet the emission reduction goals set forth by the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2023; and

WHEREAS, it is in the interest of the Howard County Council to address the effects of climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, including through efforts to eliminate the
use of fossil fuels in new buildings and promote a clean and renewable energy future;

Section 1. Be It Enacted by the County Council of Howard County, Maryland, that the Howard County Code is amended as follows:

By adding:

Title 3. Buildings.
Subtitle 11. Miscellaneous.

Section 3.1101. Comprehensive Building Decarbonization.

HOWARD COUNTY CODE
Title 3. Buildings.
Subtitle 11. Miscellaneous

SEC. 3-1101. COMPREHENSIVE BUILDING DECARBONIZATION.

(A) Definitions.

(1) In this section, the following words have the meanings indicated:

(2) “Addition” means construction of any new walled or roofed expansion to the perimeter of a building in which the addition is connected.

(3) “All-electric building” means a public or private building that contains no combustion equipment, or plumbing for combustion equipment, installed within the building or building site.

(4) “Combustion equipment” means any equipment or appliance used for space heating, service water heating, cooking, clothes drying or lighting that uses fuel gas or fuel oil.

(5) “Major renovation” means any renovation where the work area exceeds 50% or more of major structural components, including exterior walls, interior walls, floor area, roof structure, or foundation, or has an increase of 50% or more of floor area.
“New construction” means the construction of any new stand-alone building, with no remnants of any prior structure or physical connection to existing structures or outbuildings on the property.

(B) **Recommendations and Report.**

In accordance with subsections (c) and (d) of this section, the Department of Inspections, Licenses, and Permits shall:

1. Recommend changes to the Building Code necessary to enact all-electric building standards for all new construction, major renovations, and additions; and
2. Submit those recommendations in a report to the County Council that specifies the changes that would be needed in the Howard County Building Code to implement the recommendations.

(c) **Exemptions.**

The Department’s recommendations shall include an evaluation of:

1. Exemptions for a project if the application for a building permit was submitted to the Department of Inspections, Licenses and Permits before the effective date of the all-electric building standards; and
2. Exemptions for new construction, major renovations, or additions:
   (i) to the following buildings:
   1. Hospitals;
   2. Manufacturing and production facilities;
   3. Crematories;
   4. Life sciences facilities;
   5. Commercial kitchens, restaurants, and food service establishments;
   6. Breweries and distilleries and
   7. Farming and agricultural structures;
   (ii) to buildings to the extent that systems in the buildings involve
EMERGENCY BACKUP EQUIPMENT;

(III) TO AN ELECTRIC POWER OR STEAM GENERATING UTILITY REGULATED BY
THE MARYLAND PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION; AND

(IV) TO DISTRICT ENERGY SYSTEMS OR COMBINED HEAT AND POWER FACILITIES.

(D) CONSIDERATIONS.

TO THE MAXIMUM DEGREE POSSIBLE, THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND EXEMPTIONS SHALL BE
FORMULATED TO REQUIRE THE WIDESPREAD UTILIZATION, PARTICULARLY IN AFFORDABLE
HOUSING, OF APPLIANCES AND TECHNOLOGIES THAT PROMOTE ENERGY EFFICIENCY, MINIMIZE
ELECTRIC CONSUMPTION, AND PRIORITIZE A REDUCTION IN GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS.

Section 2. Be it further enacted by the County Council of Howard County, Maryland, that the
Department of Inspections, Licenses and Permits shall submit the Report required by Section 1
of this Act not later than December 29, 2023, so that the recommendations in the Report may be
appropriately included in the Building Code.

Section 3. Be it further enacted by the County Council of Howard County, Maryland, that this Act
shall become effective 61 days after its enactment.