



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

GEORGE LEVENTHAL  
COUNCILMEMBER  
AT-LARGE

January 8, 2016

Diane Schwartz-Jones, Director  
Department of Permitting Services  
255 Rockville Pike, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Rockville, Maryland 20850-4166

*Diane*  
Dear Ms. Schwartz-Jones:

When the Council passed Bill 17-06, Buildings – Energy Efficiency and Environmental Design, which I sponsored almost a decade ago, Montgomery County was moving quickly into uncharted territory. At that time, the County mandated that commercial and multi-family residential buildings achieve certain standards in energy efficiency and environmental design. What many initially perceived as obstacles, ultimately became selling points as environmental sustainability became a critical factor in determining where people worked and lived. After nearly a decade, it is time that the County move beyond the now antiquated LEED certified for commercial and LEED Silver for residential and mandate higher levels of environmental sustainability.

As the Council awaits Executive Regulation 21-15, I am concerned that the County has fallen behind our neighboring jurisdictions like Fairfax and the District of Columbia when it comes to sustainability. Last August, Montgomery County began enforcing the 2015 Edition of the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC). While an important first step, the County must not lose momentum.

Executive Regulation 21-15 offers a unique opportunity for the County to reassert its leadership role in the area of sustainable building and construction practices. That is why it is imperative that the Department of Permitting Services transmits to the Council the strongest regulation possible.

Some areas of concern are the weakening of the code's baseline of minimum sustainability requirements and reinstating many of the elements that were deleted or downgraded to "electives" from Chapter 6, the chapter that deals with energy conservation, efficiency and CO<sub>2</sub>e emission reduction. Environmentalist as well as representatives from the building industry have acknowledged that the proposed new code is less demanding than the current one. This regulation needs to start from a position of strength.

Thank you in advance for considering my views on this issue which will help shape our County's future. I look forward to reviewing Executive Regulation 21-15 when it is transmitted to the Council.

Best wishes,

George L. Leventhal  
Montgomery County Councilmember