



July 26, 2022

The Honorable Gabe Albornoz
Montgomery County Council
Council Office Building
100 Maryland Ave.
Rockville, MD 20850

The Honorable Evan Glass
Montgomery County Council
Council Office Building
100 Maryland Ave.
Rockville, MD 20850

Re: Bill 13-22 — Buildings – Comprehensive Building Decarbonization – Favorable with Amendments.

Dear Chairman Albornoz and Vice Chair Glass:

This bill, which establishes a goal of county-wide reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, requires aims to accelerate the Montgomery County building sector moving towards 100% electric-powered systems.

The Pool and Hot Tub Alliance (PHTA) favors clean air, requiring gas utilities to develop an infrastructure, supply, and alternatives plan that will not negatively impact consumers and businesses utility bill. Taking away the choice of natural gas use significantly raises costs and changes the way we use our homes. The cost of electricity from both traditional and renewable sources is significantly higher than natural gas and not as efficient.

Our backyard swimming pools, BBQs and firepits have become much more important since COVID-19 and will continue to be in the future. Having natural gas infrastructure in place is pivotal and the discontinuation would not only effect backyard amenities such as grills and fireplaces but would also have negative impacts on the consumer's swimming pool and spa. As such, practical alternatives to natural gas are currently unavailable to the swimming pool and hot tub industry. Additionally a change at this time would result in a higher-priced and less efficient product, thus making it more difficult for homeowners, schools, recreational and commercial facilities to be able to afford it.



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PHTA is in support of balanced approaches to the inevitable climate issue and ultimately reducing carbon emissions. This includes the usage of solar, electric, and natural gas utilities as well as the implementation of these wherever they are the most efficient, logical, and least financially burdening for the consumer. Implementing electricity for pool heating and other applications can be achieved, however it would cause wide implications if it were the only option. We support a balanced and consumer-driven approach to building decarbonization which includes the usage of natural gas, solar, and electricity as they pertain to pools and spas.

The goal of eliminating the use of natural gas, or otherwise phasing out the use of natural gas, will undermine the swimming pool and hot tub business, resulting in a significant economic blow to the County, as well as depriving the citizens of Montgomery County a backyard place for staycations that they so desire. Without natural gas hookups in new residential and commercial construction, citizens of this County that reside in these areas will be deprived of all the benefits associated with access to swimming pools and hot tubs.

On behalf of the many Maryland pool and spa professionals represented by PHTA, as well as those states that do business in Maryland, we respectfully request that you do not move this legislation.

Sincerely,



Jason Davidson

PHTA, Director of Government Relations

jdavidson@phta.org

About the Pool & Hot Tub Alliance

The Pool & Hot Tub Alliance (PHTA), a non-profit organization with over 3,600 members from around the world, was established in 1956 to support, promote, and protect the common interests of the \$36.5B pool, hot tub and spa industry. PHTA provides education, advocacy, standards development, research, and market growth to increase our members' professionalism, knowledge and profitability. Additionally, PHTA facilitates the expansion of swimming, water safety and related research and outreach activities aimed at introducing more people to swimming, making swimming environments safer and keeping pools open to serve communities. For more information, visit www.phta.org.



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