

Testimony in favor of Bill 13-22

Good afternoon, councilmembers. My name is Bill Mascioli and I've been a voting resident of Montgomery County for 37 years. I am grateful for this opportunity to lend my support to Bill 13-22, which would require that by January 1, 2024, the County Executive issue *all-electric* building standards for new construction, major renovations, and additions. This would significantly move the county towards phasing out the burning of natural gas – that is, methane, a potent and dangerous greenhouse gas – for residential and commercial space heating, water heating, and cooking.

I can't think of a more important issue for the county. All my life, I've been guided by a sense that each of our lives derives meaning from working towards the betterment of others. I have, as we all have, weathered political vicissitudes, but there was always an animating sense of hope that the future would continually improve on the present in terms of justice and the quality of life. Climate change has existentially undermined that sense of hope. That we could be irrevocably altering the physical basis of our very existence – including that of future generations and indeed of all other species – is nothing short of dreadful. I am distressed beyond words that our national government cannot rise above parochial politics to address this issue but heartened that Maryland has passed the Climate Solutions Now Act and that Montgomery County, with this bill, now has the opportunity to play an essential part in making the aspirations expressed in that Act a reality.

About a third of Maryland's CO2 emissions come from burning methane, and more than half of that comes from residential and commercial buildings. By promptly reducing those uses, Montgomery County can take a large chunk out of the state's GHG emissions. And in doing so, we will also be removing the health risks associated from burning methane in our homes, not to mention the devastating effect explosions associated with natural gas. Bill 13-22 is thus crucial both on its own merits and because tangible actions like this are necessary to meet the state targets set by the Climate Solutions Now Act.

In addition, while 58% of Maryland's electricity is now generated by burning fossil fuels, our electricity sources are getting cleaner every day with the increased availability of solar and wind generation, which will be tremendously improved as Maryland advances with the Skipjack offshore wind development.

Thank you for this opportunity to express my views.

William Mascioli