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Maryland Launches Ambitious New Initiative to Build Net Zero Energy Capacity in Public Schools

Pilot Program Developed by the Maryland Energy Administration and Interagency Commission on School Construction

Baltimore, MD — The Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) is pleased to announce the launch of the Decarbonizing Public Schools Pilot Program. This program will serve to expand the capacity of local education agencies (LEA) for managing energy data, reducing operating costs, and for inserting energy performance criteria into capital improvement planning. The new program was developed by MEA and the Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC) to foster LEAs' long-term capacities for energy management and net zero energy (NZE) school design and construction, where the total amount of energy used is equal to or less than the amount of renewable energy created.

The program seeks to prepare LEAs, also known as school districts, to expand the capacity to manage energy data to reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions while designing for high-performance schools. The program provides \$2 million in funding from the Strategic Energy Investment Fund to help LEAs develop and expand their capacity to address ongoing energy challenges and opportunities for controlling costs through data management as well as adopting cost-effective net zero energy design considerations for public school portfolio planning.

"MEA has been helping make Net Zero Energy schools a reality, having recently supported three projects, including the Holabird and Graceland Park/O'Donnell Heights schools in Baltimore City and Wilde Lake Middle School in Howard County," said Dr. Mary Beth Tung, Director of MEA. "Early lessons from these projects indicate lifecycle operating costs can be greatly reduced when sound energy management and design principles are incorporated early in project identification and design."

Energy Data Management Support for K-12 School Districts:

Funding for approximately one year of technical support to establish or expand the use of ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager to build an LEA's capacity for energy data analytics. Program grants can defray costs of implementing the tool, as well as the cost of consultants and other resources to initiate the collection, analysis, and dissemination of performance metrics.

Support for Implementing NZE Elements into Facility Construction:

As an emerging design concept, NZE construction will challenge the business-as-usual approach to school construction planning. The intent of this grant is to allow LEAs to identify NZE opportunities on a portfolio scale. Grants can be used to cover the costs of consultative services or additional staff for tasks specific to the integration of portfolio-wide considerations into long-range plans.

Please click [here](#) to learn more about the program and apply.