



Electrical Workers

Insulators

Boilermakers

United Association

Plumbers & Gas Fitters

Sprinkler Fitters

Steam Fitters

Roofers

Cement Masons

Teamsters

Laborers

Bricklayers

Ironworkers

Sheet Metal Workers

Elevator Constructors

Painters

Operating Engineers

Carpenters

February 22, 2024

The Honorable CT Wilson, Chair
The Honorable Brian Crosby, Vice Chair
House Economic Matters Committee
House Office Building Room 231
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**HB 397: Public Utilities - Thermal Energy Network Systems - Authorization and Establishment (Working for Accessible Renewable Maryland Thermal Heat (WARMTH) Act
Position - Support**

Thank you Chair Wilson and Vice Chair Crosby and members of the House Economic Matters Committee for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of HB 397.

The BDCBT represents 28 construction trade unions across Maryland, Northern Virginia, and the District of Columbia. Combined, our trade unions represent more than 30,000 skilled craft professionals in the construction industry.

BDCBT supports HB 397. HB 397 establishes a pilot for networked geothermal systems in Maryland. Networked geothermal systems is a proven technology that Maryland can use to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Networked geothermal systems are an efficient, inflation resistant, reliable way to heat and cool buildings. They also minimize additional electric demand on the grid.

One of the key features of HB 397 that BDCBT supports are its labor standards. Specifically, HB 397 prioritizes the payment of prevailing wages on pilot projects and maintaining employment for those who work on gas infrastructure.

Maryland has a statutory requirement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 60% of 2006 levels by 2031. Once this milestone is achieved, the state must transition to a net-zero economy by 2045. Meeting these targets is urgent and imperative. The transition to a carbon-free economy provides benefits to public health and opportunities to invest in Maryland's overburdened and underserved communities. Networked geothermal systems should be part of the solution.

We urge the committee to issue a favorable report on HB 397.

Sincerely,
Greg Akerman