



House Economic Matters Committee

To: Delegate CT Wilson, Chair; Delegate Brian Crosby, Vice-Chair; and Members of the Committee.
From: Jason Ascher, Political Director, Mid-Atlantic Pipe Trades Association.

SUPPORT HB 397 – Public Utilities – Thermal Energy Network Systems – Authorization and Establishment

On behalf of the Mid-Atlantic Pipe Trades Association and our five United Association of Plumbers and Steamfitters Locals, which represent 10,000+ Plumbers, Steamfitter, Welders, HVAC Techs, and Sprinkler Fitters across Maryland, I ask you to **SUPPORT HB 397**.

The United Association, as an organization, believes in an “all of the above” energy policy. We must ensure energy is available for public consumption regardless of outside conditions. In a time when most items we use daily, like computers and cell phones, need constant power, limiting the type of energy we can create would be foolish. But that is precisely what is happening across Maryland and the country. While trying to push people to use electric cars and fully electric homes, we are also telling them we will only allow electricity from wind and solar. No Gas, No Nuclear, and certainly no coal or oil. All these types of energy production would create the biggest baseload we are told we cannot use. While we disagree with the complete elimination of the use of fossil fuels in energy production, Geothermal would be an excellent tool to add to the toolbox.

This transition away from fossil fuels also creates a different problem because the Fossil Fuels and Nuclear industries create good-paying careers, while wind and solar typically do not. Workers in the fossil fuel sector usually work in some form of pipe fitting, which doesn't translate to the wind and solar industry. **HB 397** adds another energy source to the tool kit by creating a pilot project on community geothermal energy. Geothermal piping systems are built and maintained like gas piping systems and would provide some work for fossil fuel workers whose jobs are disappearing. The labor protections will ensure that workers on these geothermal projects get trained for a good career building these and other piping systems.

For the reason stated above, please **SUPPORT HB 397**.

Sincerely,

Jason Ascher
Political Director
Mid-Atlantic Pipe Trades Association

MID-ATLANTIC PIPE TRADES ASSOCIATION



PLUMBERS - STEAMFITTERS - SPRINKLER FITTERS
PIPE FITTERS - PIPE WELDERS - HVAC SERVICE TECH

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Plumbers and Gasfitter Local 5 – Camp Springs, MD
Plumbers and Steamfitters Local 10 – Richmond, VA/Roanoke, VA
Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 110 – Norfolk, VA
Road Sprinkler Fitters Local 669 – Columbia, MD

Plumbers and Steamfitters Local 486 – Baltimore, MD
Plumbers and Steamfitters Local 489 – Cumberland, MD
Steamfitters Local 602 – Capitol Heights, MD