

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS - LOCAL UNION No. 24



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Baltimore Port Council
Baltimore Metro Council - AFL-CIO
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Written Testimony of
Michael McHale, Business Agent, IBEW LOCAL 24
Before the House Economic Matters Committee On
HB 397 Public Utilities – Thermal Energy Network Systems – Authorization and
Establishment

Support

February 20, 2024

Chairman Wilson and Committee Members,

My name is Michael McHale, Business Manager and 39-year member of IBEW Local 24. I am writing to express my strong **support** of **HB 397**. By promoting the adoption of geothermal heating and cooling systems, this legislation aligns with our state's aggressive climate action plans to reduce emissions. It provides a tangible pathway towards achieving our targets and transitioning to a net-zero status by 2045.

The WARMTH Act protects the livelihoods of existing workers, while creating opportunities for a new workforce. By requiring gas companies to collaborate with community organizations and local governments, this legislation creates family-sustaining jobs in the transition to clean thermal energy systems. The bill's emphasis on maintaining work for those employed in gas infrastructure and ensuring prevailing wages for construction projects demonstrates a commitment to protecting workers' rights and fostering job security in a rapidly evolving energy landscape.

HB 397 represents a forward-thinking approach to energy policy that balances environmental stewardship, social equity, and economic prosperity. By piloting networked geothermal systems this legislation offers a blueprint for a more sustainable and inclusive future for Maryland. I respectfully request that you vote **favorably** on **House Bill 397**.

Sincerely,

Michael McHale
Business Manager
IBEW Local 24