



TESTIMONY FOR HB0397

Public Utilities - Thermal Energy Network Systems - Authorization and Establishment (Working for Accessible Renewable Maryland Thermal Heat (WARMTH) Act)

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Charkoudian

Committee: Economic Matters

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Aileen Alex, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0397 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Maryland needs a variety of energy sources to achieve its ambitious statutory requirement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 60% of 2006 levels by 2031. Geothermal systems offer a super-efficient, inflation resistant, reliable way to heat and cool buildings. These systems can be constructed today. They are a proven, carbon-free technology that can minimize additional electric demand on the grid.

However, individual geothermal heat pumps are significantly more expensive than other choices, with a 5 to 10 years payback. By networking a neighborhood, savings result from sharing the costs of the boreholes and also sharing the waste heat generated in local businesses. HB0397 would create pilot projects and gather experience and data to assess how well networked geothermal systems will work in different areas in Maryland.

Our members strongly support clean, renewable energy and we believe that putting geothermal in the energy mix is a positive step in reducing Maryland's reliance on dirty energy.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.