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Economic Matters Committee

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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB1029
CLEAN ENERGY JOBS-WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT-SCOPE**

Economic Matters Committee
February 27, 2020

Chair Davis, Vice-Chair Dumais and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you on HB1029, Clean Energy Jobs-Workforce Development-Scope. The purpose of this bill, as amended, alters the definition of “clean energy industry” by expanding the list of included professions that are eligible for funds from the Maryland Strategic Energy Investment Fund. Further, as amended, the bill requires certain funds be reallocated for the recruitment of veterans and formerly incarcerated individuals into those apprenticeship programs.

Chapter 757 of 2019 (Clean Energy Jobs Act) requires the Maryland Energy Administration to use the Strategic Energy Investment Fund to invest in pre-apprenticeship, youth apprenticeship programs to establish career paths in the clean energy industry under the EARN programs. Starting in FY 2021, \$1.5 million is allocated for available grants to pre-apprenticeship jobs training and \$6.5 million is allocated for grants to youth and registered apprenticeship jobs training programs.

This bill, as amended, merely expands the professions eligible for the grant to include geothermal and re-allocates the funds. First, it establishes the youth apprenticeship jobs training programs and the registered apprenticeship jobs training programs must prepare workers for careers in the geothermal, solar and wind sectors of the clean energy industry. Second, it defines Clean Energy Industry as a group of employers and building and trade associations that are associated by their promotion of: products and services that improve energy efficiency and conservation including products and services provided by: electricians; heating, ventilation, and air- conditioning installers; plumbers; and energy auditors; carpenters; pile-driver operators; millwrights; insulation workers; well drillers; and renewable and clean energy resources.

Lastly, the bill reallocates funds available as follows:

\$1.25 Million for grants to pre-apprenticeship job training; \$6 million allocated for grants to youth and registered apprenticeship jobs training programs; and allows \$750,000 for the recruitment of individuals, including veterans and formerly incarcerated individuals, to pre-apprenticeship jobs training programs and the registered apprenticeship jobs training programs beginning in FY21.

Grant programs under the Clean Energy Jobs Act and issued through the Strategic Energy Investment Fund did not begin until FY21; therefore, the changes in allocation have no impact as the funds have not yet been allocated.

The Clean Energy Jobs Act established and helps Maryland meet our clean energy goals with increased renewables. This bill merely allows us to meet the demand but including professions such as the heating & air conditioning (HVAC). HVAC is a large part of energy efficiency and investing in this field is vital to meeting our renewable and clean energy goals.

For these reasons, I am requesting a favorable report.

With kindest regards,

Benjamin Brooks