

Public Hearing
Senate Bill 224 – Clean Energy Jobs – Workforce Development
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My name is Kurt Snyder and I am the Marketing & Communication Manager of the Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors Association; Mid-Atlantic Chapter (SMACNA) located in Greenbelt, Maryland. This afternoon I am representing a number of Maryland companies within our association. These companies are performing work throughout Maryland and the metropolitan area.

Our member companies perform work at Maryland universities, the National Security Agency, data centers, laboratories and more.

Various products, services and fabrication within the technical and skilled trade profession directly support the clean energy industry.

The vast majority of technical skilled professions have been struggling for years to recruit and train the next generation of a highly skilled professional workforce.

This workforce shortfall directly impacts maintaining a sound infrastructure and continuing economic development within Maryland.

To support the clean energy industry, the sheet metal/HVAC industry needs an estimated 65,000 skilled professionals by 2025 across the country. Locally, our Maryland companies cannot find enough qualified and trained professionals. This gap of retiring professionals out paces new incoming industry workers and grows wider every month.

Apprenticeships and training programs are the keystone to leveraging infrastructure improvement.

On the flip side, Senate Bill 224 will offer new career opportunities to current unemployed and underemployed Marylanders.

Additionally, this Bill allows for the development of pre-apprenticeship job training and youth apprenticeship training. This Bill will allow the clean energy industry to begin building a “pipeline” of career opportunities available.

Over the last nine months some of the best sheet metal / HVAC apprentices were simply unaware of the industry. Once they were introduced to the career options, via a 2019 pre-apprenticeship state grant, they have flourished and have truly begun a career.

Reliable transportation to work for some remains difficult. Perhaps this Bill can also fund some facet of transportation for the first 3-6 months until workers can establish themselves.

However, the recruit of such individuals remains challenging. Many Marylanders are simply unaware of the opportunities available. Our office has been working with schools, elected officials, state officials and others to unveil a viable career path.

As a former engineering officer on naval warships, I can attest to the importance of investing in a highly trained and technical workforce. This Bill is paramount.

The investment into Bill 224 is not an expense but rather an investment into every community within Maryland. Training the Maryland workforce today will bring future clean energy projects on time and on budget in the future.

I urge your support of Bill 224 and to bolster Maryland's skilled trade professionals into the future.

Thank you.