Committee: Economic Matters Committee
Testimony on: HB040 - "Maryland Energy Administration Study on Geothermal Heating and Cooling Systems and Geothermal Energy Workgroup"

Organization: Climate Parents of Prince George's
Person Submitting: Joseph Jakuta, Lead Volunteer
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: January 26, 2021

Climate Parents of Prince George's County, supports HB 40, "Maryland Energy Administration Study on Geothermal Heating and Cooling Systems and Geothermal Energy Workgroup".

On September 21, 2020, The Building Subgroup to the Maryland Commission on Climate Change chaired by Maryland Department of Environment Secretary, Ben Grumbles released a report on decarbonizing buildings.[1] While the report focused on air source heat pumps as a cleaner alternative, there was some data presented on geothermal heat source pumps, which were found to be more efficient and produce less emissions than all of the options available. This is a technology that has potential to produce cost effective low carbon building heating and cooling and we need to understand it more.

Recently, in the policy focused news source vox.com, an article was published titled "Geothermal energy is poised for a big breakout."[2] It discussed a variety of potential benefits and changes coming in the geothermal industry. The potential uses for geothermal are vast and important to understand for use in Maryland's future energy mix. In particular, there are potential benefits for stabilizing baseload power generation to offset some of the variability issues with wind and solar. There is also the potential to have a lower carbon alternative for other industrial operations. There is also the potential for the workers in our region to put their unique drilling skills gained in the fracking industry to work throughout our state working on clean energy. Getting out ahead of this has the potential to be a boon to our state and kickstart a new low carbon industry in Maryland.

We are particularly interested in Maryland understanding the uses and benefits of geothermal energy, because use of geothermal for heating and cooling in new school construction, as costs go down and knowledge of the systems goes up, could provide a more cost effective long term decarbonization strategy for heating and cooling of Maryland schools.

At this point, we need to understand it and explore what is possible. That is why we support HB 40. This legislation will get out in front of the issue and make sure that Maryland can take advantage of this potentially lucrative low-carbon energy technology.

We encourage a FAVORABLE report for this important legislation.

---

[1] https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/Air/ClimateChange/MCCC/MWG/Decarbonizing%20Buildings%20in%20Maryland.pdf
[2] https://www.vox.com/energy-and-environment/2020/10/21/21515461/renewable-energy-geothermal-egs-ags-supercritical