



Environment Committee

Committee: Economic Matters Committee
Testimony on: HB040 - “Maryland Energy Administration Study on Geothermal Heating and Cooling Systems and Geothermal Energy Workgroup”
Organization: Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee
Person Submitting: Laurie McGilvray, Co-Chair
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: January 26, 2021

Dear Mr. Chairman and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of HB040. The Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee strongly urges you to vote favorably on this bill. The bill will require the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) to conduct a technical study of geothermal heating and cooling systems, establish a Geothermal Energy Workgroup, and direct the MEA, in consultation with the Workgroup, to develop recommendations for geothermal incentives in the state.

City of Takoma Park Climate Resolution: On March 4, 2020, the Takoma Park City Council passed the 2020 Climate Emergency Response Framework Resolution. The resolution adopts a climate action framework of priority strategies and potential policy changes for buildings, transportation, and renewable energy. The resolution outlines strategies to lead the community to achieve net zero emissions city-wide by 2035 and be fossil fuel-free by 2045. The priority strategies include provisions to improve the efficiency of all types of buildings and accelerate the transition to 100% renewable electricity and phase-out fossil fuels. Currently, many buildings in the City use natural gas for heating and cooling. Electric heat pumps provide the greatest opportunity to move off fossil fuels for heating and cooling. Geothermal technology must play a big part, both for new construction and for replacing heating and cooling systems at the end of their lifecycle.

Geothermal as a Solution: Geothermal technology is more efficient than an air heat pump and much less expensive to run. Geothermal also is healthier and better for indoor air quality because there is no combustion of fossil fuels. In fact, some localities like Westchester County, NY have banned new natural gas installations and the use of ground source geothermal heat pumps has grown. A great first step for Maryland is to conduct a study to determine the status and potential of geothermal heating and cooling systems and to develop recommendations for incentivizing greater use of geothermal systems.

For these reasons, we urge you to vote favorably for HB040.