SIERRA
CLUB

7338 Baltimore Ave
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Committee: Economic Matters

Testimony on: HB40 "Maryland Energy Administration Study on Geothermal Heating and Cooling Systems and Geothermal Energy Workgroup"

Position: Support

Hearing Date: January 26, 2021

The Maryland Sierra Club urges a favorable report on HB40. This bill would set in motion a comprehensive state study aimed at increasing reliance on geothermal heating and cooling systems in Maryland, with study results reported by October 1 of this year.

There is broad agreement in Maryland that the state needs to expand its reliance on geothermal energy. Both the Maryland Department of the Environment in its Draft Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan and the Maryland Commission on Climate Change in its 2020 Annual Report explicitly found that the state needs to install more clean, efficient, air-source and ground-source heat pumps. Direct combustion of fossil fuels for heating and other appliances in Maryland's buildings is a top-five contributor to climate pollution in the state. Geothermal systems present a clean, efficient opportunity to decrease the climate impact of our building sector and should be installed and used at a greater rate in Maryland.

This bill would help determine the best pathway forward to incentivize and deploy more geothermal systems. Particularly, it is important that Maryland determine the right grants, tax incentives, loans, and EmPOWER rebates and reforms needed to achieve the installation of significantly more geothermal heating systems in Maryland.

We urge support for this bill.

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