



Chair Delores Kelley
Vice-Chair Brian Feldman
Members
Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Ofc Bldg
Annapolis, MD 21401

March 9, 2021

SB 810 – Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard and Geothermal Heating and Cooling Systems
Position – Favorable

Good afternoon Chairman Davis and members of the House Economic Matters Committee. My name is Rick Binetti, here on behalf of LiUNA's Baltimore Washington District Council. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 810.

As we continue toward meeting greenhouse gas reduction requirements, labor must be a top priority when considering Maryland's policy. In whatever form, the transition to greener energy in Maryland MUST include a blueprint for the transition of meaningful employment for trades workers currently working in the energy industry. Hundreds of well paid, middle-class, family-sustaining jobs, with millions of manhours are on the line. They can't just go away without a statewide plan. They are simply too important to the state's economy.

That's why BWLDC supports SB 810. Much like the Clean Energy Jobs Act, it contains language that will help create a wage and benefit floor for future workers in Maryland's geothermal industry. Additionally, it also requires companies working on large scale geothermal projects to ensure that at least 10% of the construction workers on the project are apprentices participating in an apprenticeship program approved by the state or federal government.

We know there are not likely to be the same number jobs created in the green energy economy as there are today's energy economy. We have seen this thus far in MD's solar industry. Incentives and credits may be making the industry profitable, but they aren't creating the kind of middle-class, career building jobs so important to building the state's economy. We cannot let the same thing happen in the development of other clean energy industries.

But bills like this, that leverage RPS credits to create labor standards in growing industries, will ensure that building trades jobs and the environment are equally important as Maryland continues to develop effective clean energy policies.

By leveraging public infrastructure, and incentivizing geothermal on large-scale commercial or residential projects, Maryland has an opportunity to do both. Geothermal can put a lot of laborers, pipefitters, operators and many other craft people to work. RPS policies are helping grow clean energy use in Maryland. These policies should also focus on growing the middle class.

We urge a favorable report on SB 810. Thank you.