



SB810 – “Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard and Geothermal Heating and Cooling Systems”

Testimony before Senate Finance Committee

March 9, 2021

Position: Favorable

Madame Chair, Mr. Vice Chair and members of the committee, my name is Richard Deutschmann, and I represent the 700+ members of Indivisible Howard County. We are providing written testimony today in support of SB810, which establishes Geothermal Heating & Cooling Systems as a Tier 1 resource under the Renewable Portfolio Standard. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members).

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has stated that we have less than 10 years to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to avoid the worst effects of climate change. And, according to a study by Energy and Environmental Economics conducted for major U.S. utilities, Geothermal Heating and Cooling System are characterized as “...the low hanging fruit when it comes to saving customers money and reducing greenhouse gas emissions”. In order to get to where we need to be as a state, increasing efficiency in our building heating and cooling systems, and fully electrifying our building stock, will be paramount. One of the best tools that we have at our disposal is the broader use of Geothermal Heating and Cooling systems to provide environmental control of our buildings. This bill will utilize the power of our state’s Renewable Portfolio Standard, to accelerate the deployment of Geothermal Heat Pumps across the state. The results will be fewer greenhouse gas emissions, cleaner air, and better public health. It will also spur a boom in jobs for manufacturers, installers, and engineers to make this transition.

As a Licensed Professional Engineer in the State of Maryland, I have seen firsthand how Geothermal Heating and Cooling systems can be key to a broader effort to make our buildings more efficient, both at the residential and commercial/institutional levels. I was part of a team that conducted a deep energy retrofit at the New Carrollton (MD) Federal Building in 2015. As part of the strategy, geothermal wells were drilled, pipes laid, and system was integrated into the central heating and cooling plant for this 3-tower complex that houses more than 6,000 employees. As a result, energy use at the complex was slashed by more than 60%. This strategy should be rolled out across the state, and this bill, along with the new incentives it will bring, will be a big factor in Geothermal Heating and Cooling becoming the norm in our building stock.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

We respectfully urge a favorable report on SB810

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