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**Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee**

**To:** Senator Pinsky, Chair; Senator Kagan, Vice Chair; and Members of the Committee.

**From:** Jason Ascher, Political Director, Mid-Atlantic Pipe Trades Association – United Association of Plumbers and Steamfitters

## **OPPOSE SB 552 – Environment – Climate Crisis Plan – Requirement (Better together to Save Our Weather Act of 2022)**

On behalf of the Mid-Atlantic Pipe Trades Association, our five United Association of Plumbers and Steamfitters Locals, and our over 10,000 members plus their families across all corners of Maryland, I ask you to **OPPOSE SB 552**.

As we move to renewable energy sources and eliminate fossil fuels the state needs to keep track of three important things. Protecting the workers, protecting the stability of the electric grid, and protecting taxpayers from excessive transition costs. We are not against the creation of a climate crisis plan, just the whole sale elimination of natural gas from energy sector, especially while renewable energy infrastructure cannot replace it.

Hard working Marylanders build and maintain the infrastructure needed to keep our electric grid operating. These workers earn good family sustaining wages with benefits so they can take care of their families, spend money in the community to help support local businesses, and pay taxes. Eliminating fossil fuels infrastructure would cost many of these hard-working Marylanders their jobs and ability to do these things. The jobs created to replace them in the renewable energy sector are typically lower paying than the ones they will lose and do not include the same benefits.

Everyone wants to be able to use their cell phones and computers. They also enjoy watching TV and Movies. To continue to do these things you need a safe flow of electricity on the grid. Removing fossil fuels from the grid before renewable infrastructure has been built to replace it could cause major issues with the electrical grid and lead to people not having the ability to use their phones, computers, and televisions. We need to make sure enough renewable infrastructure is built to support the fossil fuels you are removing from the grid.

Finally, if you require taxpayers to replace fossil fuel operating HVAC, water heaters, etc., there is a cost that many would not be able to afford. There would also be a need for these taxpayers to upgrade the electric wiring in a home. Studies have shown that these upgrades could cost as much as \$30,000 to \$40,000 per home. This is an expense that many working-class taxpayers cannot afford. This is also true of the increased rent costs landlords would pass on to their tenants to make these upgrades.

I ask that you remove this elimination of nature gas language from the legislation. Carbon reductions can be met by increasing renewable infrastructure and adding carbon capture and sequestration. For these reasons I ask you to **OPPOSE SB 552**

Sincerely,

Jason Ascher  
Political Director  
Mid-Atlantic Pipe Trades Association