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As a Maryland resident and business owner, I am writing to express my apprehension regarding forced electrification in new construction.

I am the owner of SOMD Hearth in Leonardtown, Maryland. Including myself I have seven employees. And while I strongly support climate action, forced electrification in new construction jeopardizes my business, my employees, and the consumers' ability to choose affordable, reliable heating options.

Today's electric heating technology alternatives, such as heat pumps, underperform on cold days and are not as reliable in a power outage. Bottom line, electrification policies will cost consumers more to heat their home and would take away reliable and affordable home heating options that they currently have access to.

Since opening in 2016 I have been able to keep my employees year-round, full time even during what is considered our off season. We survived our operations being shut down during the pandemic as well as many turns of the economy throughout the years but restricting what is available to offer not only drastically limits the choices of consumer's it will drastically limit the amount of work, I am able to offer to my employees.

I ask that you please consider the impact it will have on small businesses, jobs, and consumer choice.

Please OPPOSE HB 831. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Austin Tulin