



Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Testimony in Support

SB 570 - Thermal Energy Network Systems – Authorization and Establishment (Working for Accessible Renewable Maryland Thermal Heat (WARMTH) Act)

To: Chair Feldman and members of the
Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
From: Phil Webster, PhD
Lead Advocate on Climate Change
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland.
Date: February 29, 2024

The Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland (UULM-MD) strongly supports **SB 570 - Thermal Energy Network Systems – Authorization and Establishment (Working for Accessible Renewable Maryland Thermal Heat (WARMTH) Act)** and urges a FAVORABLE report by the committee.

The UULM-MD is a statewide faith-based advocacy organization, with over 1,200 members, based on the Principles of Unitarian Universalism. Unitarian Universalists believe in *“justice and equity in human relations”* and *“respect for the interconnected web of all existence of which we are a part.”*

This legislation would require each gas company to develop a plan for a pilot Thermal Energy Network System (TENS) in disadvantaged communities. TENS provides efficient, affordable and reliable clean energy heating and cooling to entire neighborhoods through a shared network of water pipes that transfer heat in and out of buildings. These distributed energy heating and cooling systems are one of the most promising climate solutions available to ensure a safe, equitable and just transition away from fossil fuels in buildings.

TENS, solves a wide array of community energy challenges, from lowering and stabilizing energy bills, to providing jobs for local utility workers, improving air quality, and increasing community safety and resilience.

TENS also creates, and maintains, local jobs by providing a pathway for utility fossil fuel workers to transition to clean energy using the skills they already have to install the networks.

TENS are based on electricity, not fossil fuels, providing a path to decarbonization of buildings as solar and wind generation comes on line. TENS systems provide 3-4 times the heat than combusting methane gas.

All Marylanders need bold and urgent action! Please keep us on the right and moral path towards a livable climate and a sustainable world. We owe it to our children.

We support this bill and urge a FAVORABLE report in committee.

Phil Webster, PhD

Lead Advocate, Climate Change UULM-MD