

Journeyman Pipe Fitters and Apprentices



Local Union No. 602

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TESTIMONY OF CHRIS MADELLO, BUSINESS MANAGER / FINANCIAL
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UA STEAMFITTERS LOCAL 602

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE
ENVIRONMENT, AND THE HOUSE ECONOMIC MATTERS COMMITTEE

IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 716 – THE DECARBONIZATION INFRASTRUCTURE
SOLUTIONS ACT OF 2025

Chairs Feldman and Wilson, and members of the Senate Education, Energy and
Environment Committee, and the House Economic Matters Committee,

I appreciate the opportunity to testify on behalf of UA Steamfitters Local 602, which
represents 6,031 Journeymen, 1,200 Apprentices, and 205 signatory Mechanical
Construction and Service Contractors across the Washington, DC metropolitan area's
heating, air conditioning, refrigeration, and process piping industry. Our workforce
footprint is significant, having performed more than 9,000,000 work hours in 2024 alone.

We know how to make Maryland work, because that is what we do—every day. Our
work represents a business-labor partnership, and our contractor affiliates, represented
by the Mechanical Contractors Association of Metro Washington (MCAMW), generate
\$2 billion in annual revenue and contribute \$500 million in state, federal, and local taxes
each year.

Today, I strongly urge you to support Senate Bill 716, the Decarbonization Infrastructure
Solutions Act of 2025, because it provides a pragmatic, market-driven, and labor-
friendly approach to Maryland's clean energy and resource adequacy crisis.

I. Why Nuclear Energy is the Primary Solution to Maryland's Energy Challenges

Maryland's electric grid is facing a resource adequacy crisis, with growing electricity demand and the retirement of reliable, dispatchable power plants. The Maryland Public Service Commission ("PSC") and PJM Interconnection have warned that the loss of firm capacity without sufficient replacement threatens grid stability, price volatility, and increased dependence on imported electricity.

While wind and solar play a role in Maryland's clean energy future, they cannot provide consistent, 24/7 power. Nuclear energy is the only carbon-free generation source capable of supplying the firm, around-the-clock electricity Maryland needs.

Nuclear Power Provides a Unique Set of Advantages:

- **Unmatched Reliability:** Unlike wind and solar, nuclear is not dependent on weather conditions and operates at over 92% capacity factor—significantly higher than all other energy sources.
- **Energy Independence:** Expanding nuclear energy reduces Maryland's reliance on imported electricity from fossil-fuel-heavy PJM markets, ensuring long-term energy security.
- **Scalability and Growth Potential:** Nuclear energy's proven ability to provide large-scale clean power makes it the most practical choice for deep decarbonization.

This legislation enables Maryland to:

- Expand the output of the existing Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant within its current footprint
- Pursue the construction of a third reactor at Calvert Cliffs
- Deploy Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) as a scalable, advanced nuclear solution

Without nuclear energy, Maryland risks energy shortages, rising costs, and continued reliance on carbon-intensive electricity imports.

II. Why Nuclear Belongs in the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS)

Maryland's Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) is the foundation of its clean energy policy, creating a structured, competitive market that drives investment in renewable energy through tradable Renewable Energy Credits ("RECs").

Senate Bill 716 rightfully classifies nuclear energy as a Tier 1 renewable source, ensuring that nuclear receives equal treatment alongside wind and solar. This approach is based on:

1. The Scientific Reality: Nuclear Energy is Renewable

- Modern uranium extraction and recycling technologies make nuclear fuel virtually unlimited.

- Advanced reactors and breeder technology extend fuel cycles and minimize waste.
- Future developments in thorium and fusion reactors will further enhance nuclear's sustainability.

By integrating nuclear into the RPS framework, Maryland aligns its energy policy with economic and environmental realities.

2. Market-Driven Investment Rather Than Government-Mandated Procurement

- The RPS allows nuclear projects to compete on a level playing field with wind and solar, rather than relying on direct government subsidies or ratepayer-funded mandates.
- Utilities can purchase Nuclear Renewable Energy Credits ("NRECs") just as they do for other renewable energy sources—ensuring market efficiency.
- This incentivizes cost-effective deployment of nuclear power while protecting ratepayers from unnecessary charges.

By including nuclear in the RPS, Senate Bill 716 unlocks private investment in Maryland's energy future while ensuring that new nuclear generation is cost-effective and competitive.

III. Why Senate Bill 716 is the Better Approach

While House Bill 1035 (Next Generation Energy Act) and its Senate companion, SB 937, acknowledge the need for nuclear power, their procurement-based approach is fundamentally flawed.

Key Problems with HB 1035/SB 937's Approach:

Government-Controlled Procurement Rather Than Market Competition

- HB 1035 forces utilities and ratepayers into long-term, state-mandated cost recovery obligations for nuclear projects, regardless of market efficiency or competitiveness.
- By contrast, SB 716 allows nuclear to compete for RPS compliance just like wind and solar—encouraging private investment without direct government intervention.

Ratepayer Burden and Lack of Cost Certainty

- HB 1035 imposes a nonbypassable surcharge to fund nuclear development, shifting the financial risk entirely onto Maryland ratepayers.

- SB 716 avoids unnecessary cost burdens by leveraging market-based REC pricing, ensuring nuclear remains cost-competitive while keeping ratepayer costs in check.

Unnecessary Bureaucratic Delays and Regulatory Hurdles

- HB 1035 requires regional cost-sharing agreements and federal siting negotiations, delaying nuclear deployment and creating regulatory uncertainty.
- SB 716 eliminates these roadblocks by treating nuclear as any other RPS-eligible resource—allowing for immediate financing and construction.

Ensuring Long-Term Energy Security and Union Jobs

- HB 1035's nuclear subsidy program expires in 2030, creating uncertainty for investors and job creation.
- SB 716 offers a long-term, predictable revenue structure, ensuring sustained investment in nuclear energy well beyond 2030.
- With mandated labor protections—including prevailing wages, registered apprenticeships, and community benefit agreements—this bill ensures that new nuclear projects create thousands of registered apprenticeship programs that train the next generation of skilled workers, thousands of family-sustaining union jobs, and generational wealth.

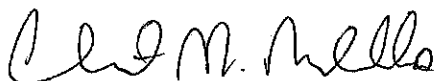
IV. Conclusion: Support SB 716 for a Stronger, Smarter Energy Future

Maryland needs a realistic, market-driven, and union-built clean energy strategy—and nuclear energy is the answer.

Senate Bill 716 ensures that nuclear energy is developed responsibly, cost-effectively, and in a way that strengthens Maryland's workforce, economy, and energy security.

For these reasons, I ask for a favorable report.

Sincerely,



Chris Madello
Business Manager / Financial Secretary Treasurer
UA Steamfitters Local 602