



PLUMBERS LOCAL UNION NO. 5

UNITED ASSOCIATION OF JOURNEYMEN AND APPRENTICES OF THE PLUMBING AND PIPE FITTING INDUSTRY OF THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA, AFL-CIO

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March 6, 2026

House Environment & Transportation Committee
250 Taylor House Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Testimony in **Opposition** of the “Break STRIDE Act,” HB 1253

Chair Korman, Vice-Chair Guyton, and Members of the Committee:

This testimony is submitted on behalf of UA Plumbers and Gasfitters Local #5. Our members are the licensed professionals who install, repair, and maintain Maryland’s natural gas systems every day. We take a great deal of pride in this work because it plays a direct role in keeping Maryland’s communities safe, the communities that our members live and raise their families. For that reason, we respectfully ask the Committee to **oppose** HB 1253, the “Break STRIDE Act.”

For the skilled plumbers and gasfitters of Local #5, programs like STRIDE are critical to maintaining steady, long-term employment in a highly specialized trade. Our members are the ones out in the field doing the work; digging trenches, installing modern piping, removing old hazardous outdated piping materials, and safely reconnecting systems in homes and businesses to reliable service. If enacted, HB 1253 would significantly reduce the amount of pipeline replacement work happening across the state and would put hundreds of family-supporting jobs at risk.

STRIDE was established for an important reason: safety. The law was Maryland’s bipartisan response to a nationwide call from the U.S. Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration urging states to speed up the replacement of aging, leak-prone natural gas pipelines. At the time, many Maryland communities still relied on cast iron, bare steel, and mechanically coupled pipe running beneath homes, schools, and businesses—materials that are known to corrode, crack, and leak over time.

Since then, the STRIDE program has delivered clear and measurable results. Between 2019 and 2022, leaks on Maryland’s natural gas system dropped by more than 40 percent. That progress is directly tied to pipeline replacement projects completed under STRIDE by highly trained union professionals. These improvements go beyond numbers on a page. Fewer leaks mean fewer emergency calls, fewer neighborhood evacuations, and lower safety risks for families throughout the state.

For our members, it’s something they see firsthand in the course of their work. They know neighborhoods are still relying on pipes that were installed decades ago. They understand what can happen when replacement work is delayed, and they know that safety and reliability must remain the top priority.

For these reasons, and on behalf of the thousands of skilled workers who help keep Maryland’s energy infrastructure operating safely, we urge the Committee to reject HB 1253. Ending STRIDE would weaken an important safety program, put critical jobs at risk, and leave Maryland’s aging natural gas system more vulnerable at a time when millions of residents still depend on it.

Thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to submit testimony.

Sincerely,

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