



**HB40 – “Maryland Energy Administration Study on Geothermal Heating and Cooling Systems and Geothermal Energy Workgroup”  
Testimony before Economic Matters Committee**

**January 26, 2021**

**Position: Favorable**

Mr. Chair, Madame Vice Chair and members of the committee, my name is Richard Deutschmann, and I represent the 700+ members of Indivisible Howard County. We are providing written testimony today in **support of HB40**, to instruct the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) to conduct a comprehensive study on Geothermal Heating and Cooling systems. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members).

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has stated that we have less than 10 years to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to avoid the worst effects of climate change. And, according to the Maryland Commission on Climate Change in their 2020 report “Decarbonizing Buildings in Maryland”, the building sector accounts for more than 18% of GHG emissions in the state. In order to get to where we need to be as a state, increasing efficiency in our building heating and cooling systems, and fully electrifying our building stock, will be paramount. One of the best tools that we have at our disposal is the broader use of Geothermal Heating and Cooling systems to provide environmental control of our buildings. This bill will put MEA in the lead, creating a comprehensive study of the issue, to inform our actions moving forward.

As a Licensed Professional Engineer in the State of Maryland, I have seen firsthand how Geothermal systems can be key to a broader effort to make our buildings more efficient, both at the residential and commercial/institutional levels. I was part of a team that conducted a deep energy retrofit at the New Carrollton (MD) Federal Building in 2015. As part of the strategy, geothermal wells were drilled, pipes laid, and system was integrated into the central heating and cooling plant for this 3-tower complex that houses more than 6,000 employees. As a result, energy use at the complex was slashed by more than 60%. This strategy should be rolled out across the state, and this bill, along with the study that results, will be a big factor in Geothermal heating and cooling becoming the norm in our building stock.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

**We respectfully urge a favorable report.**

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