

March 31, 2025

By E-mail

Testimony in Support of Utility Thermal Energy Network and Jobs Act (H5576)

To: Chair Solomon and Honorable Members of the House Corporations Committee:

I live in Newport and am writing in support of H5576 - which would, amongst other things, authorise the creation of at least three and up to five geothermal pilot projects in Rhode Island.

As we seek to develop clean fossil-fuel-free electricity, and thereafter electrify everything we can in order to meet our obligations under the Act on Climate; one of the most challenging issues is providing enough electricity.

Air source heat pumps are a very helpful tool in converting our heating sector from oil and gas, but they exacerbate the amount of electricity we need. Geothermal - which uses significantly (+/- 50%) less electricity to produce the same amount of heat as air source heat pumps - is an important tool in keeping our overall electricity demand down.

Geothermal based HVAC systems will also - in most cases - decrease the electricity demand for air-conditioning as well.

Moreover - while geothermal will not be a solution for every home, it will be a solution for homes in relatively dense areas, and therefore increases overall impact. Massachusetts already has four such geothermal pilot programs underway - and can provide helpful learning and insight. Two of the Newport mansions have converted to geothermal - as have campus-based users such as Princeton, Smith and Mt Holyoke.

Geothermal is an important tool in our fight against climate change. This bill gets us started along the path of actualizing the value and use of it.

Thank you.

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