

NORTHEAST REGIONAL COUNCIL OF

SHEET METAL | AIR | RAIL | TRANSPORTATION



Local 17 - Local 40 - Local 63 - Local 83

Russell Bartash, President Robert Maloney, FST

1157 Adams Street, Dorchester, MA 02124

Phone: 617-296-1680

Council President

Russell Bartash

Financial Secretary

Robert Maloney

LOCAL 17

Regional Manager

Patrick Donlan

Boston

1157 Adams Street
Dorchester, MA 02124
617-296-1680

**Rhode Island &
New Bedford**

22 Amflex Drive
Cranston, RI 02921
401-944-3515

New Hampshire

161 Londonderry Tpk
Hooksett, NH 03106
603-626-5577

Maine

19 Enterprise Street
Lewiston, ME 04240
207-753-9377

LOCAL 40

Regional Manager

Daniel Mulcahy

100 Old Forge Road
Rocky Hill, CT 06067
860-529-2616

LOCAL 63

Regional Manager

Michael LaFleur

32 Stevens Street
Springfield, MA 01104
413-733-8332

LOCAL 83

Regional Manager

Robert Monahan

900 Commerce Drive
Clifton Park, NY 12065
518-489-1377

The Honorable Joseph J. Solomon, Jr.

House Corporations Committee

Rhode Island State House

Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Re: H7879 Thermal Energy Networks & Jobs Act

Dear Chair Solomon and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony. My name is Patrick Donlan and I am here on behalf of NERC of SMART, Sheet Metal Workers Local 17 which represents **Sheet Metal Workers**. I write in support of House Bill 7879, which advances thermal energy networks in Rhode Island, with the inclusion of an amendment to include labor standards for pilot projects.

FOR LABOR UNIONS: NERC of SMART Sheet Metal Workers Local 17 represents 200 workers across Rhode Island who play an important role in supporting our state's communities and economy. Our members work every day to build, maintain, and operate the infrastructure that ensures the places where Rhode Islanders live, work, and learn are safe, healthy, and resilient.

FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ORGS: NERC of SMART, Sheet Metal Workers Local 17 represents community members and advocates committed to advancing climate solutions, environmental protection, and public health in Rhode Island. Our work focuses on supporting policies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, expand clean energy, and build a more resilient and equitable economy.

Thermal energy networks present an important opportunity to support a just transition to a clean economy in Rhode Island. This legislation takes a first step by directing the utility to identify and study where thermal energy networks can be deployed across Rhode Island, with a focus on communities that have historically faced high energy costs and greater exposure to pollution.

Buildings remain one of the largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions in our state. These underground systems are extremely efficient: they can serve multiple buildings, provide reliable heating and cooling, and do so without placing additional strain on the electric grid. By sharing energy across connected buildings and using the stable temperatures underground, thermal networks can deliver locally sourced, dependable heating and cooling while helping reduce peak demand on the grid.

NORTHEAST REGIONAL COUNCIL OF

SHEET METAL | AIR | RAIL | TRANSPORTATION



Local 17 - Local 40 - Local 63 - Local 83

Russell Bartash, President Robert Maloney, FST

1157 Adams Street, Dorchester, MA 02124

Phone: 617-296-1680

Council President

Russell Bartash

Financial Secretary

Robert Maloney

LOCAL 17

Regional Manager

Patrick Donlan

Boston

1157 Adams Street
Dorchester, MA 02124
617-296-1680

**Rhode Island &
New Bedford**

22 Amflex Drive
Cranston, RI 02921
401-944-3515

New Hampshire

161 Londonderry Tpk
Hooksett, NH 03106
603-626-5577

Maine

19 Enterprise Street
Lewiston, ME 04240
207-753-9377

LOCAL 40

Regional Manager

Daniel Mulcahy

100 Old Forge Road
Rocky Hill, CT 06067
860-529-2616

LOCAL 63

Regional Manager

Michael LaFleur

32 Stevens Street
Springfield, MA 01104
413-733-8332

LOCAL 83

Regional Manager

Robert Monahan

900 Commerce Drive
Clifton Park, NY 12065
518-489-1377

Conducting feasibility studies now will help identify the most promising locations for projects across a variety of building types and neighborhoods, and build a pipeline of projects that the state can advance when investment opportunities arise.

Thermal energy networks also support a worker-centered clean energy transition. Designing, constructing, and maintaining these systems relies on many of the same skills currently held by Rhode Island's legacy energy workforce, meaning our workers can easily transition into this work. As the state transitions its energy systems, thermal energy networks offer a pathway that protects existing workers while expanding access to high-quality, family-sustaining careers.

Thermal energy networks represent a meaningful opportunity to reduce emissions, create good paying jobs while supporting our legacy fuel workers, and build a more equitable, resilient and affordable energy system for Rhode Islanders. For these reasons, I strongly support this legislation and urge the committee to move it forward.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Patrick Donlan

Regional Manager

NERC of SMART. Sheet Metal Workers, Local 17