

LOCAL 51

PLUMBERS • PIPEFITTERS • REFRIGERATION

April 1, 2025

The Honorable Joseph J. Solomon
House Corporations Rhode
Island State House Providence,
Rhode Island 02903

RE: H-5576, Utility Thermal Energy Network and Jobs Act

Dear Chair Solomon and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony. My name is Paul Alvarez and I am here on behalf of UA Local 51 which represents the plumbers and pipefitters. I write in strong support of House bill 5576, the Utility Thermal Energy Network and Jobs Act, with the caveat that the threshold for prevailing wage should be set at \$1 million, rather than \$10 million, to ensure fair wages and labor standards.

We represent over 1200 members in both RI and SEMass.

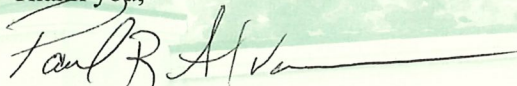
This legislation invests in renewable thermal energy networks, which is clean, efficient, and will significantly reduce emissions without adding stress to our grid. Geothermal energy can provide reliable energy directly from the ground, dramatically reducing pollution compared to traditional fossil fuels.

Critically, this bill protects and supports workers in the legacy fossil fuel industry by ensuring we can apply existing skills in the growing renewable energy sector. It promotes job creation, fair labor practices, project labor agreements, and opens pathways to family-sustaining careers through registered apprenticeship programs. This invests in a clear path forward for fossil fuel workers, offering job security and new opportunities in the growing green economy.

The legislation also prioritizes frontline and historically burdened communities by emphasizing pilot projects in areas most impacted by economic hardship and industrial pollution. Passing this bill is a critical step toward meeting our Act on Climate goals and achieving a just transition.

I urge you to pass H-5576 to advance both economic opportunity and climate action in Rhode Island. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Thank you,



Paul Alvarez, Business Manager
Plumbers & Pipefitters, Local 51