

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 185 Session of 2023

INTRODUCED BY WEBSTER, KAUFER, CEPEDA-FREYTIZ, DONAHUE, PIELLI, DELLOSO, FREEMAN, McANDREW, PROBST, ROZZI, MADDEN, BRENNAN, SANCHEZ, STEELE, CIRESI, OTTEN, HILL-EVANS AND T. DAVIS, AUGUST 29, 2023

AS AMENDED, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, NOVEMBER 14, 2023

A RESOLUTION

1 Directing the Joint State Government Commission to conduct a
2 study on the feasibility of using geothermal energy
3 technologies that utilize abandoned mining locations and
4 operations in this Commonwealth and issue a report of its
5 findings and recommendations to the House of Representatives.

6 WHEREAS, In the former coal mines located in the United
7 Kingdom, abandoned mines which once fueled the Industrial
8 Revolution are now being retrofitted to utilize new technology;
9 and

10 WHEREAS, The objective behind retrofitting abandoned coal
11 mines is to generate an alternative source of heat in a cost-
12 effective manner to offset rate impacts; and

13 WHEREAS, Former mining sites often flood and the water must
14 be subsequently pumped out and cleaned to prevent contamination
15 of drinking supplies at an eventual cost to consumers or
16 taxpayers; and

17 WHEREAS, Through the application of heat pumps, the
18 floodwater temperature, which is already warmed in the mines

1 deep underground, could be further increased and piped into
2 homes and other structures to serve as a constant source of
3 heat; and

4 WHEREAS, This process would produce almost no carbon while
5 harnessing a steady stream of cheap and reliable heating and
6 minimizing costs; and

7 WHEREAS, Multiple plans of a similar nature are in
8 development outside of the United States; and

9 WHEREAS, In addition to producing energy, these plans would
10 create an industry of technicians and engineers which will be
11 needed to build and service this new geothermal infrastructure;
12 and

13 WHEREAS, Since many former mining communities were built in
14 close proximity to where the coal was mined, there is a
15 substantial possibility for these residents to benefit from the
16 creation of a new geothermal energy industry; and

17 WHEREAS, The power-producing legacy of more than 100 years of
18 mining could continue in a manner that has a positive impact
19 economically and environmentally for generations to come; and

20 WHEREAS, THIS COMMONWEALTH HAS CONSIDERABLE INFRASTRUCTURE <--
21 AND A SIGNIFICANTLY TRAINED WORKFORCE THAT MAY BE EMPLOYED IN
22 THE GEOTHERMAL SECTOR; AND

23 WHEREAS, Refocusing attention and retrofitting this
24 Commonwealth's abandoned coal mines for the purpose of
25 geothermal energy could be transformative for the production of
26 low-cost, zero carbon energy in former mining communities;
27 therefore be it

28 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives direct the Joint
29 State Government Commission to conduct a study on the
30 feasibility of using geothermal energy technologies that utilize

1 abandoned mining locations and operations in this Commonwealth,
2 including the costs to ratepayers of public utilities, and issue
3 a report of its findings and recommendations to the House of
4 Representatives; and be it further

5 RESOLVED, That the study:

6 (1) identify and examine potential efforts and
7 procedures, measures, statutes and management
8 responsibilities of State agencies, public utilities,
9 nongovernmental organizations and academic institutions to
10 assist in determining the feasibility of utilizing abandoned
11 coal mines for the purpose of geothermal energy with a
12 particular focus on the impact to consumers in this
13 Commonwealth;

14 (2) conduct an economic impact analysis regarding the
15 widespread utilization of abandoned coal mines for the
16 purposes of geothermal energy in this Commonwealth in varying
17 degrees of scale and cost-effective deployment;

18 (3) identify possible best practices regarding the
19 development of the necessary infrastructure to support the
20 widespread use of abandoned mines for the production of
21 geothermal energy;

22 (4) identify and examine potential environmental impacts
23 regarding the development of abandoned mining locations; and <--

24 (5) IDENTIFY THE BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF DEVELOPING <--
25 THERMAL UTILITIES, INCLUDING WITH THE USE OF EXISTING
26 INFRASTRUCTURE;

27 ~~(5)~~ (6) identify financial mechanisms or potential cost- <--
28 effective deployment throughout private entities and options
29 for the development of a Statewide mine geothermal energy
30 program and related infrastructure in this Commonwealth; AND <--

1 (7) IDENTIFY AND EVALUATE:

2 (I) OTHER POTENTIAL USE CASES OF GEOTHERMAL
3 DEPLOYMENT IN PENNSYLVANIA, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED
4 TO:

5 (A) RECONFIGURATION OF ABANDONED OIL AND GAS
6 WELLS FOR GEOTHERMAL PRODUCTION; AND

7 (B) USE OF GEOTHERMAL HEAT FOR DISTRICT HEATING
8 AND FOR COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL APPLICATIONS; AND

9 (II) ANY TECHNICAL, REGULATORY OR STATUTORY
10 LIMITATIONS TO THE APPLICATIONS UNDER SUBPARAGRAPH (I);

11 and be it further

12 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission consult
13 with stakeholders that:

14 (1) have organizational missions and expertise regarding
15 consumer affairs, the economy, electricity generation and
16 distribution, GAS OR THERMAL DISTRIBUTION, the infrastructure <--
17 and operations of public utilities, the environment, the
18 health and safety of Commonwealth residents, mining, water
19 quality issues and both rural and urban affairs;

20 (2) collect data on the benefits that retrofitting
21 abandoned coal mines for the utilization of geothermal energy
22 may have regarding consumer impacts, the economy, electricity
23 generation and distribution, the environment, the health and
24 safety of Commonwealth residents, mining, water quality
25 issues and both rural and urban affairs; and

26 (3) have knowledge of issues relevant to the study;

27 and be it further

28 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission prepare
29 a report of its findings and recommendations and submit the
30 report to the House of Representatives no later than 18 months

1 after the adoption of this resolution.