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**THE SENATE  
STATE OF MICHIGAN**

May 13, 2025

Tiffany Franklin, Chair  
Historic District Commission  
Planning and Development Department  
Coleman A. Young Municipal Center  
2 Woodward Ave – Suite 808  
Detroit, MI 48226

*Via email to [hdc@detroitmi.gov](mailto:hdc@detroitmi.gov)*

Dear Chairwoman Franklin and members of the Historic District Commission,

I am writing to express my concern about Detroit Thermal's application for a steam infrastructure project on private property in the Nicolet Cooperative in the Lafayette Park Historic District. I have the honor of serving as the State Senator for much of Detroit, including the Lafayette Park cooperatives and 1300 E. Lafayette. I am a former eight-year resident of the LaSalle cooperative in Lafayette Park and, when she was younger, my older daughter spent time on the playground that would be impacted by the project.

I understand the need for residents of 1300 E. Lafayette to have a working, stable heat system and that a steam system is the best option they have chosen. However, it is my understanding that there likely are alternative locations for the steam system infrastructure that could meet the needs of 1300 residents without adverse impacts to this historic neighborhood.

Lafayette Park is a historic district and one of just nine National Historic Landmarks in the city of Detroit. It is critical that the historic nature and beauty of the neighborhood be preserved. I hope the commission will recognize that the landscape that exists today is the result of 60 years of care and stewardship. The natural beauty and landscape of the neighborhood is one of the reasons why my husband and I chose to live there and start our family there; this is likely the case for many current residents. The proposed Detroit Thermal project would negatively impact the beautiful historic landscape of Lafayette Park which is a key element of the National Historic Landmark status. The project could forever damage

dozens of mature trees and shrubs and disconnect the irrigation system in the neighborhood.

Dena Sanford, architectural historian at the United States Department of the Interior, expressed her concern about this project in a letter to the Planning and Development Department. She stated:

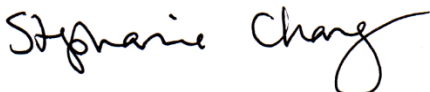
*“Work could impact mature honey locust trees, irrigation infrastructure, and planted beds with ornamental trees and shrubs. Excavation would also occur in the playground area, and apparently include ... installation of vents throughout the landscape. If undertaken as proposed, this would substantially and adversely affect the integrity of the Lafayette Park NHL.”*

Detroit Thermal has previously used rights-of-way in city streets for underground steam infrastructure and, to the community’s knowledge, never attempted to use an easement in a residential neighborhood or do their construction work on a playground. I support residents of 1300 E. Lafayette to have a heat system that works reliably, but I truly hope a solution can be found that achieves that goal without irreparably harming the Lafayette Park neighborhood.

It is my understanding that there has been very limited communication between Detroit Thermal and the families who will be impacted by the proposed project. I hope the commission will encourage Detroit Thermal to work more closely with my former neighbors to develop a more thorough plan that is workable for all and that does not negatively impact the historic landscape.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please contact me at (517) 373-7346 or [senschang@senate.michigan.gov](mailto:senschang@senate.michigan.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephanie Chang". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Stephanie Chang  
State Senator, District 3

Cc:

Calvin Jackson, Chair, Historic Designation Advisory Board, [historic@detroitmi.gov](mailto:historic@detroitmi.gov)  
Russell Baltimore, Assistant Director of Design Review, [baltimorer@detroitmi.gov](mailto:baltimorer@detroitmi.gov)