



**Local Union 1900
Of The
International Brotherhood Of Electrical Workers**



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Representing the Employees of
Potomac Electric Power Co., GenOn Energy and Washington Gas

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**HB 1545 - Electric Generation - Transition from Fossil Fuels - Carbon
Dioxide Emissions Rate and Transition Account**

House Economic Matters Committee

March 5, 2020

OPPOSE

Chairman Davis and Members of the Committee,

Good afternoon. My name is James Griffin. I am the President/Business Manager/Financial Secretary of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local Union 1900.

Local 1900 represents 210 employees working at 7 of the 12 coal generating units targeted by House Bill 1545 which you are considering. These units are at three GenOn Energy generating plants in Maryland. The Dickerson plant is in upper northwest Montgomery County, Chalk Point is in southern Prince George's County and Morgantown is in Charles County at the Maryland/Virginia line on route 301.

We also represent the workers at Pepco in DC and the Frederick, Maryland office of Washington Gas. Combined, these three companies employ approximately 1,200 Local 1900 members, the vast majority of which live in Maryland.

Thank you for this opportunity to offer my perspective on House Bill 1545.

The workers we represent at the 3 GenOn plants earn tens of millions of dollars annually in wages alone. Their average wage today is \$44.65/hour straight time. Doing the math that's an average annual compensation of \$92,872 excluding overtime. This translates to over \$19,500,000 annually in base wages for the entire group.

These workers enjoy a defined pension, contribute to 401(k) accounts and have a robust health insurance plan. They have paid vacation and sick leave. A guaranteed 40-hour workweek provides them with very stable, long-term employment.

Last week the GenOn workers ratified a new 4-year collective bargaining agreement. By the time this agreement expires these employees will average \$48.33/hour straight time which will be over \$100,000/year. There is no fair and equitable transition for these employees.

This proposed legislation places a large majority of jobs at risk at these plants. The workers' job skills cannot be easily transferred to other occupations should they lose their jobs. Running and maintaining a power plant is very specialized as I am sure you know.

It is beyond a stretch to believe that these workers can transition to other careers. Apprenticeship programs are for the young, those just starting out. Right now, 174 of these workers are 40 years old or older. Of those, 142 are 50 years old or older.

A meaningful transition for them cannot be legislated. They are at a very vulnerable point in their careers. They have spent 15, 20, 25 years working at their plant. Any disruption of their service will mean losing out on a full, dignified pension because they haven't worked long enough and haven't reached retirement age.

One thing that can't be calculated is the value of working under a collective bargaining agreement. In addition to having a union to negotiate their contract, workers enjoy having that union represent them through a grievance and arbitration process to ensure fairness in the day-to-day employer-employee relationship.

The workers at GenOn have had decades of collective bargaining agreements negotiated by Local 1900. It is a mature relationship we have with the workers and with management. These relationships are immensely helpful in resolving disputes. There is no calculating the value of this.

On behalf of the 1,200 active members of Local 1900, I thank you for this opportunity to testify in opposition to House Bill 1545.

I urge you to let the market decide the future of these generating units, not random dates picked to place unachievable requirements on them.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James Griffin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "James" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Griffin".

James Griffin

President/Business Manager/Financial Secretary
IBEW Local Union 1900