



**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 1545
House Economic Matters Committee | March 5, 2020**

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The Chesapeake Climate Action Network (CCAN) Action Fund conditionally supports House Bill 1545, legislation to effectively retire Maryland's six remaining coal-fired power plants. We thank Chairman Barve for sponsoring this legislation to provide a transition process for workers and communities impacted by the state's movement from coal to renewable energy. But we urge the Committee to engage impacted workers and their representatives to find a transition plan that meets their requests.

CCAN Action Fund and our grassroots network throughout Maryland is dedicated to achieving a net zero greenhouse gas emissions economy by 2045, as is recommended by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). To create this future, we must invest in frontline and historically disadvantaged communities, protect workers, and create good-paying union jobs that result in greater wealth and income equality.

The IPCC has recommended that in order to avoid the worst consequences of climate change, we must keep global warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius. They write, "In modelled 1.5°C pathways with limited or no overshoot...the use of coal shows a steep reduction in all pathways and would be reduced to close to 0% (0–2% interquartile range) of electricity (high confidence)." The top climate scientists are telling us that coal is incompatible with a healthy climate for our children.

The IPCC also recommends that states with high median income like Maryland must reduce their emissions 60% by 2030 (based on 2010 levels) in order to stay below 1.5 degrees Celsius. That means Maryland must reduce its emissions to 42.8 MMtCO_{2e}. Right now we are at 78.5 MMtCO_{2e}. It is extremely difficult to reduce emissions in the transportation or buildings sectors (responsible for a combined 58% of emissions) without (1) significant funding or private sector regulation that the General Assembly has not committed to, and (2) a 100% clean electricity sector, since reducing emissions in transportation and buildings relies on electric infrastructure, like cars and stoves. In-state coal plants are currently responsible for 8.8 MMtCO_{2e}. There is no pathway for Maryland to meet essential scientific climate benchmarks without retiring its coal-fired power plants.

That being said, there are hundreds of Marylanders who currently rely on these six plants for good-paying, union jobs. This is one of the many hard choices we will have to make to stop climate change in its tracks. How do we transition off of coal in a way that holds these workers harmless? This bill's proposal for a transition account, governed in large part by labor leaders, is a good first step. But CCAN Action Fund believes in the principle of worker voice. That means representatives of workers should lead the transition planning that protects themselves and their colleagues. It is clear, due in no fault to the bill sponsor nor the climate advocates supporting the bill, that workers have not

led or agreed to the process proposed in this legislation. The Committee should take that into consideration.

While there is much work to be done this session on a multitude of bills, none would create greater immediate positive progress on climate change than this legislation. We ask Committee leadership to bring labor leaders to the table to pursue a workable transition plan before Sine Die. It might not be possible with just a handful of weeks remaining. But at the very least it will kickstart needed conversations in the interim. The proposed Climate Jobs Working Group in HB1425 is one option for formalizing this work if a resolution is not reached by April 6.

We urge the Committee to give Senate Bill 887 a favorable report, on the condition that a worker transition plan is developed with buy-in and approval of labor leaders representing Maryland coal workers.

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