

November 19, 2019

To whom it may concern:

As the nation-wide trend of moving our power sector beyond coal continues to gain momentum, we, the below-signed organizations and community leaders, call on Maryland state officials to, by the end of 2020, establish a specific and equitable plan to transition completely away from coal-fired power plants by 2025.

Maryland remains home to six large coal-fired power plants contributing to public health problems, climate disruption, and environmental degradation. Power plants that burn coal pump out toxic and dangerous pollution like lead, mercury, selenium, smog-forming nitrogen oxides, and acid rain-causing sulfur pollution. Eighty-eight percent of Marylanders live in Counties not meeting clean air smog standards set by the Environmental Protection Agency. Breathing smog is like getting a sunburn on your lungs and exacerbates respiratory issues like asthma – an illness impacting hundreds of thousands of Marylanders, including a disproportionate amount of the state's people of color.

It is clearly time for Maryland to prepare for the transition away from coal-fired power plants. We must support communities overburdened by coal pollution and impacted workers in defining, creating and implementing strategies that provide certainty for transition timelines. The local communities that are home to both the coal plants and many of the plant workers must be a part of developing the strategies and programs that will strengthen the health of their community and local economy. These plans must allow impacted industry and current union workers to receive access to training programs and economic opportunities that provide good-paying, family-sustaining, union jobs and the worker's right to unionize must be protected.

Maryland is not alone in the need for a just transition from coal. Places like New York and Washington state have developed and implemented coal community transition plans, and initiatives are moving forward in many other states like Montana and Colorado. Maryland must lead on this issue and develop a plan to provide communities and our workforce with certainty and specificity on this transition away from coal.

Maryland's reliance on coal-powered electricity is on a steep decline, but Marylanders continue to face significant environmental harms from coal plants, and these will continue until they stop polluting our air and water, we must recognize and prepare for the potential near-term economic impacts for fossil fuel communities. Maryland needs a plan to responsibly guide us off of coal in the next decade and ensure our workers and impacted communities are making decisions about how to thrive in the clean energy economy.

We urge your leadership on this important public health, economic, and environmental issue.

Respectfully,

1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East	League of Women Voters of Maryland
350 Baltimore	League of Women Voters of Maryland - Environmental Committee
350 Montgomery County	Loyola Maryland Environmental Action Club
Audubon Maryland-DC	Maryland Conservation Council
Baltimore County Progressive Democrats Club	Maryland High School Democrats of America
Baltimore Jewish Council	Maryland League of Conservation Voters
Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church	Maryland Legislative Coalition
Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church Environmental Justice Ministry	Maryland United for Peace and Justice
Central Maryland Beekeepers Association	MOM's Organic Market
Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility	Montgomery County Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions
Climate Law & Policy Project	Montgomery County Young Democrats
Climate XChange	North Baltimore County Democratic Club
College Democrats of Towson University	Nuclear Information and Resource Service
Earth Forum of Howard County	Prince George's County Peace & Justice Coalition
Earthjustice	Safe Skies Maryland
Elders Climate Action	Sierra Club Maryland
Environmental Justice Ministry Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church	Students of Sustainability
Food & Water Action	Sunrise Movement
Friends of St Clements Bay	Sunrise Movement Howard County
Glen Echo Heights Mobilization	Sunrise Movement Towson
Green Towson Alliance	Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee
Greenbelt Climate Action Network	Towson Unitarian Universalist Church Green Sanctuary Committee
Indivisible Central Maryland	UMBC Students for Environmental Awareness
IndivisibleHoCoMD	Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Columbia, MD
Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake	Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland
Karie Firoozmand	Waterkeepers Chesapeake
Kittamaquundi Community Church	