

Committee: Senate Finance
Testimony on: HB1545
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: March 5, 2020

Dear Maryland legislators and committee members,

I am in strong support of the proposed Maryland Coal Community Transition Bill HB1545. Burning of fossil fuels has polluted air, water, and human life for the past century without remorse; and the state of our climate cannot withstand any more. Maryland is tired of relying on 19th century mechanisms of production, especially those that cost MORE than clean energy; the future offshore wind projects are projected to produce approximately 43% more electricity than three of our coal power plants. Fossil fuel company's paychecks are not equivalent to the lives and ecosystems that they destroy.

This bill will ensure the enforcement of Maryland's Healthy Air Act through appropriate emission standards and regulations that remove the ability to pump nitrogen oxides into our air. Maryland has already received D and F environmental justice performance grades, with 17,406 children diagnosed with asthma in Baltimore County. Surrounding the city, Brandon Shores and Herbert A. Wagner stations are strategically placed upstream and adjacent to communities of color, disproportionately affecting those who have no choice but to live with the consequences.

Our goal is not to displace communities that have been forced to rely on these corporations for a livelihood. The bill will incorporate a Fossil Fuel Community Transition Account to provide grants to certain individuals and communities allowing workers and families impacted to be retrained and supported in the transition processes. We demand greener energy that supports Maryland as a whole. The demand for electricity will not be impacted, our health will increase dramatically, and our communities will fill new jobs that lead to a cleaner future.

Consider these ideas when making your decision.

Becca Gohn