

## Maryland House of Delegates Testimony for BILL 1215

By: Delegates William Wivell and Geraldine Valentino-Smith

Witness: Arnold Kee of Bowie, MD.

Hearing Date: February 28, 2020

I am honored to have been asked by Delegate Geraldine Valentino-Smith to testify in support of House Bill 1215, sponsored by Delegate William Wivell and Delegate Geraldine Valentino-Smith and which provides exemptions from the Vehicle Emissions Inspection Program. Should this bill be passed, it will ultimately deepen support for other policies that promote sustainability. This deepening of support will come as the expanded exemption provides more individuals with substantial benefits. Those benefits will come in the form of time, money, and peace.

They will save the time required to report to an emissions station—though admittedly the new self-serve stations are an improvement. The significant money they save will come from being able to postpone non-safety-related repairs that can result unexpectedly from the inspection. Lastly, the ability to spread out the time in between inspections will reduce uncertainty and thus, relieve anxiety.

In my own case, keeping up with the emissions requirement had overwhelmed me with a huge expense at a time when my family could not afford it. I was facing a \$1,200 catalytic converter repair cost for a car that I drove less than 1,000 miles a year. I postponed the expense as long as possible by applying for extensions. But that bill was still going to come due before we were ready to pay it. My situation is better now, but with two children in school at the time, it was a significant challenge.

The car in question was used in rare occasions. Our family drove together to work, school, and church in our primary car. I only drove the second car to choir rehearsal and to work when one of us had another event to attend. Thus, the 2,500 mile exemption limit in bill 1215 would be more than sufficient to cover the low usage of this second vehicle.

Currently I work for the U.S. Green Building Council, the organization that developed the LEED standard for green building. As such, I'm committed to our global efforts to preserve the planet for future generations. However, neither I, nor my colleagues at USGBC rule out the kind of cost/benefit analysis that factors into policy support. We recognize that building owners agree to the long term environmental benefits of LEED in part because they have calculated an individual return on their investment at a future horizon. They also recognize the immediate benefits they gain by advertising their Class A commercial space with LEED as a premium-plus label.

From a benefit perspective then, sustainable policies like those found in LEED can be categorized with four squares in a grid. Starting clockwise in the upper left hand corner, there's: 1) immediate - individual; 2) long-term - individual; 3) long-term - collective (community or environment); and finally, 4) immediate - (community of environment). Historically, the sustainability movement has been able to articulate the benefits green policies offer the environment (3 & 4), but less so for the individual. In particular, the movement has had trouble articulating **immediate benefits** for individuals. The low mileage exemption in Bill 1215 would provide that kind of individual benefit.

You might then think about the cost to the environment for this exemption. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, a typical passenger vehicle emits 4.7 metric tons of carbon dioxide per year. However, a vehicle covered by the bill's exemption would emit no more than 22% of that total or 1.02 metric tons. Driving less would cost the individual and the environment less.

To recap, I'm asking you to support Bill 1215 because: a) it will save taxpayers money and anxiety; b) it will cost the environment less by incentivizing economic driving habits, especially for alternate cars; and c) it will deepen support for other sustainable policies when citizens sense that those implementing those policies seek practical ways to provide individual benefits along with those intended for the environment.