



TESTIMONY FOR HB0516 CLIMATE CRISIS AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ACT OF 2024

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Fennell

Committee: Economic Matters

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0516 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members. We represent the voices of constituents who share our concern over the harm that reliance on fossil fuels has wreaked in Maryland.

Our Coalition members strongly approve of measures to reduce Maryland's greenhouse gas emissions to zero as quickly as possible. We believe that the state should take an aggressive stance in moving in this direction.

This bill strikes a very good balance between aggressive climate policy that will help us achieve our statutory greenhouse gas emission reduction goals, and supporting those communities that have been most impacted by the dirty energy policies that we are trying to leave behind. It also takes a somewhat poetic approach in making the very entities who have become rich by flooding our state with fossil fuels to fund our transition to clean energy.

We believe that the fossil fuel companies who have for decades knowingly caused the climate crisis that we are currently experiencing, should be the ones to help reverse it. They have all touted the fact that they are spending billions to reverse the effects of climate change, but it seems that their efforts are not really effective and are designed to actually make our reliance on fossil fuels even greater. We think the state of Maryland would do a much better job of investing in reducing greenhouse gases than the fossil fuel industry.

The bill places a fee on fossil fuel products coming into the state and cleverly prohibits the entities who must pay the fee to then turn around and pass the fee on to consumers. The fee will escalate over time to drive home the point that fossil fuels are not our future and that companies supporting that industry should abandon it as soon as possible.

The monies that are collected from the carbon fee will then be used to fund green infrastructure projects and provide support to low-income households and energy intensive trade exposed businesses

affected by the change to cleaner energy sources. The funds will also be directed towards municipalities with environmental justice populations, which we enthusiastically support.

This will have the effect of changing our course to a cleaner future while having the polluters pay for it. They have made their fortunes on the backs of Marylanders for decades. We believe it is time they gave back.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.