

Friday, March 8, 2024

TO: Marc Korman, Chair of the House Environment and Transportation Committee, C. T. Wilson, Chair of the House Economic Matters Committee, and Committee Members

FROM: Cait Kerr, The Nature Conservancy, State Policy Manager; Mariana Rosales, The Nature Conservancy, Director of Climate

POSITION: Oppose HB 1247 Environment - Advanced Clean Cars II Program - Application and Enforcement

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) opposes HB 1247 offered by Delegate Adams. HB 1247 seeks to significantly delay implementing Advanced Clean Cars II in Maryland. This bill directly conflicts with Maryland Commission on Climate Change's (MCCC) recommendation to "ensure the adoption and implementation of the California Advanced Clean Cars II standards, which require that an increasing percentage of new vehicles sold are zero-emissions starting in Model Year 2027." According to the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), "Advanced Clean Cars II (ACC II) builds on Maryland's existing Clean Cars Program to require manufactures to continuously increase the share of vehicles they sell that are electric - reaching 100% of passenger car and light truck sales in model year 2035."

As a member of the Mitigation Working Group and the Zero Emissions Vehicles Sub Group, TNC strongly supports the MCCC's recommendation. The transportation sector is the largest contributor to climate change in Maryland. It accounts for approximately 40% of greenhouse gas emissions statewide, predominately from on-road sources. Gas-powered vehicles also emit other air pollutants, like particulate matter, that harm pulmonary and cardiovascular health, including triggering asthma attacks and impairing lung function. Nitrogen oxides released from fossil fuel combustion contribute to increasing new cases of childhood asthma. Air pollution and subsequent respiratory health problems disproportionately impact BIPOC communities and low-income neighborhoods. These detrimental health impacts are also costly, in terms of lost work hours, hospital admissions and emergency room visits, and premature deaths.

The Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022 commits Maryland to 60% emissions reductions from 2006 levels by 2031 and net-zero emissions by 2045. MDE has predicted that by adopting ACC II in 2023 and applying its regulations starting in model year 2027, between 2027 and 2040 "ACC II will deliver additional vehicular emission reductions including: 5,978 tons of nitrogen oxides (NOx), a precursor to ground-level ozone; 585 tons of particulate matter (PM 2.5), a significant respiratory irritant; 76.7 million metric tons of vehicular and power plant carbon dioxide (CO2), a potent driver of climate change. By 2040, these reductions will provide a collective net health benefit equal to \$603.5 million dollars per year due to decreases in respiratory and cardiovascular illness and associated lost work days."

By delaying ACC II implementation, Maryland would not only fail to meet our statutory climate mitigation commitments, but we would also fail Marylanders by continuing their exposure to harmful air pollutants when it is currently within our power to reduce those damages.

Therefore, we urge an unfavorable report on HB 1247.