

Committee: Environment and Transportation
Testimony on: HB1556 – Consumer Goods- Restrictions Based on Energy Source – Prohibition (Energy Equality Act of 2025)
Submitting: Deborah A. Cohn
Position: Unfavorable
Hearing Date: February 12, 2025

Dear Chair Korman and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing my testimony today in opposition to HB1556. I have resided in Maryland since 1986, and most of my descendants reside in Maryland. I am writing because I care about the air they breathe and most of them live near the Capital Beltway.

This testimony will show why timely implementation of the Advanced Clean Cars II (ACC II) and Advanced Clean Trucks (ACT) regulations are critical for improving the health of Maryland residents and are attainable.

Background: HB1556 would delay the enforcement and penalty provisions under Maryland’s ACC II and ACT regulations two years. These regulations require vehicle manufacturers to sell an increasing percentage of zero emission cars, trucks, delivery vans and school buses from Model Year 2027 through 2035 and are based on the California Air Resources Board’s (CARB) rules. The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) adopted the CARB rules under the authority of the Maryland Clean Cars Act of 2007 and Clean Trucks Act of 2023.

Scope of Health and Toxic Emissions Problem: The transportation sector is Maryland’s number one generator of greenhouse gas emissions¹ and vehicles of all sizes are significant emitters of other toxic pollutants as well.

Gasoline-fueled vehicles account for 76 percent of GHG emissions from the on-road transportation sector, as indicated in Maryland’s 2020 Greenhouse Gas Inventory. Under MDE’s Climate Pollution Reduction Plan the ACC II and the ACT programs are key policies needed for Maryland to meet its climate targets. **Indeed MDE has called the Advanced Clean Cars II program “our single largest existing climate pollution reduction strategy over the long term.”**

Trucks and other large vehicles constitute only 9 percent of vehicles on our roads but contribute 21 percent of carbon pollutants and a whopping 48 percent of small particulate matter (PM2.5) that gets trapped in lungs and can be found in the blood stream, leading to systemic impacts, including cardiovascular inflammation and impaired cardiac function.

Maryland has long-standing air quality non-attainment challenges, particularly for fine particle matter and ozone caused smog. Over 80 percent of Maryland residents live in areas designated by EPA as being in non-attainment of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for ozone, with the Baltimore region and Cecil County being in serious non-attainment. Vehicles

¹ <https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/air/climatechange/pages/greenhousegasinventory.aspx>

are responsible for over 40 percent of Maryland's NOx emissions that contribute to the formation of smog. For ozone caused smog in Maryland, the American Lung Association's most recent [State of the Air](#) report showed that results for eight Maryland counties were improving, **but that most counties that are part of metro areas, while improving slightly, still ranked among the worst 45 counties in the nation.** Baltimore and Harford Counties received an F rating, while Prince George's County, although improving, received a D.

High levels of ozone and even small levels of small particle pollution can lead to significant adverse health consequences. Both can cause premature births and death, asthma attacks, heart attacks, strokes, and impaired cognitive function later in life. Small particle pollution can also cause lung cancer.

The State of the Air report praised Maryland's strong commitment to improving air quality, citing the adoption of the ACC II and ACT rules. And it was with good reason that Maryland adopted these laws and regulations. They both can help to reduce harmful air pollutants that impair our health and trap heat within the atmosphere, leading to global warming and climate change. These reasons still stand.

Achieving increased sales of hybrid electric and zero emissions vehicles is attainable. MDE has been part of the Clean Cars program since 2007. **No clean car state, including Maryland, has imposed any penalties on vehicle manufacturers under that program.** Indeed, ten years ago ten states, including Maryland, signed a Memorandum of Understanding committing to attaining 10 million zero emission's vehicles on the road within the next 10 years. That goal has been achieved, already reducing polluting emissions from vehicles in Maryland. Moreover, according to MDE, vehicle manufacturers are significantly exceeding the standards that apply in the final years of ACC I. They accrued enough carryover credits to maximize flexibility through MY2031. **If vehicles manufacturers already can satisfy the ACCII standards through MY2031, what is the justification for delaying the enforcement and penalty provisions for MYs2027 and 2028?**

The enforcement of ACT regulations does not even start in Maryland until MY2030, so delaying imposition of enforcement and penalty provisions under the ACT for MYs2027 and 2028 does not make sense. It is simply premature to consider any delay in enforcement or penalties under ACT. Manufacturers and dealerships have significant time to adjust, and Maryland and the private sector have time to install additional appropriate charging facilities. **In California, where the ACT is already in effect, the state has exceeded its ACT goal two years ahead of schedule.**

Providing a clear, consistent regulatory framework promotes market and business certainty and market and private sector adjustment. It reduces risk and accelerates any needed business investments. Maryland should not introduce uncertainty into this market. Businesses do not like uncertainty or change. But our world is changing and the adverse health impacts of pollutants only accelerates as climate warming accelerates.

With larger numbers of manufacturers offering qualifying vehicles, consumers and businesses

have more options at more price points.² With continued expansion of publically available vehicle charging stations and improved range, range anxiety is decreasing. We have every reason to believe that the goals under ACC II and the ACT will also be attainable. Suspension of the enforcement and penalty provisions for MYs 2027 and 2028 is not justified and significantly shortchanges the health of Maryland residents.

For these reasons I strongly oppose HB1556 and urge an UNFAVORABLE report in Committee.

Thank you.

² Options even for electric semis are increasing. Scania, Volvo, Freightliner and Tesla all offer models.