



HB - UNFAVORABLE  
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HB1556

Meeting of the Environment and Transportation Committee

March 13, 2025

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Members of the Committee, on behalf of Elders Climate Action Maryland, I urge an unfavorable favorable report on HB1556, which would delay the implementation of the Advanced Clean Cars II and Advanced Clean Trucks regulations by two years.

Elders Climate Action is a nationwide organization devoted to ensuring that our children, grandchildren, and future generations have a world in which they can thrive. The Maryland Chapter has members across the state.

Each day, we see the climate crisis more clearly. We know that Maryland is at risk for sea level rise, flooding from intense rainfall, heat waves, and other extreme weather events. Maryland can also be a leader in moving us to a safer, cleaner future where we all can thrive. The clean energy transition, including the move to zero-emissions vehicles, is an essential part of that future.

Maryland is one of twelve states and the District of Columbia that have adopted the Advanced Clean Cars II rule. In California and five other states, it goes into effect in model year 2025. In Maryland, six other states, and the District of Columbia, it will go into effect in model year 2027.

We are also one of eleven states that have adopted the Advanced Clean Trucks. The rule went into effect in model year 2024 in California and in model year 2025

in five other states. It will go into effect in Maryland and four other states in model year 2027. Maryland is not a first mover, and we are far from alone.

The transportation sector is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Maryland and a major source of air pollution. The Advanced Clean Cars II and Advanced Clean Trucks rules are key components of the work to clean up transportation in Maryland. The Maryland Department of the Environment stated in a hearing earlier this year that “the Advanced Clean Cars II is our single largest existing climate pollution reduction strategy over the long term.” Without these rules, we will not be able to meet our Climate Solutions Now goals or be able to protect the health of Maryland’s communities.

A two-year delay might seem minimal, but the effects on our health and our climate are not. These rules will provide major benefits in reducing particulate pollution and NO<sub>x</sub>. That NO<sub>x</sub> pollution reacts with volatile organic compounds that are also released from the burning of fossil fuels to form ozone.

Most of us are well aware of the effects of these pollutants in causing or exacerbating asthma and other respiratory diseases, but the effects go far beyond that.<sup>1</sup> They include increased risks for heart attacks, abnormal heart rhythms, strokes, diabetes, lung cancer, Parkinson’s disease, Alzheimer’s disease, other forms of dementia, anxiety, depression, increased susceptibility to infections, and premature death.

The risks are particularly severe to children. They include an increased risk of preterm birth and low birth weight, increased fetal and infant mortality, impaired neurological development and cognition, reduced lung development, and the development of new cases of asthma.

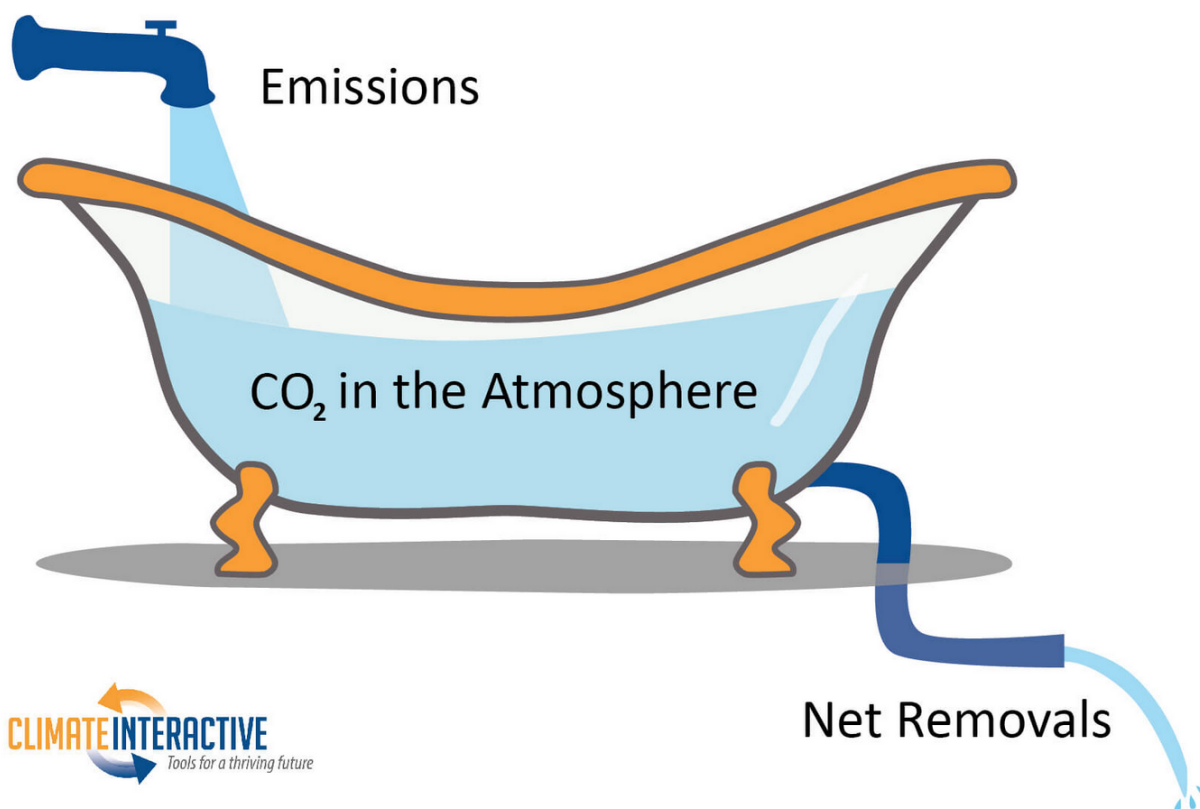
If the implementation of the rules and the resulting improvement in air quality is delayed for two years, those health risks will decrease once the rules take effect. But that will be little comfort to a child who faces a lifelong struggle with asthma, a family who has lost a baby, or an older person who has developed dementia.

These risks affect everyone who lives or works near a highway or a busy street, but they are most severe in areas with a lot of truck traffic, such as an area with multiple warehouses or near the Port of Baltimore. Most of those areas are in communities of color.

The damage to our climate from delaying these rules is less obvious, but no less real. Most of us are familiar with the time value of money. There is also a time value of carbon.

We tend to focus on our yearly greenhouse gas emissions, but emissions are cumulative. Most of the carbon dioxide<sup>2</sup> we emit today will remain in the atmosphere for centuries as the levels continue to rise. Any intervention that reduces emissions now is more valuable than the same intervention two years later.

One way to visualize this is the bathtub analogy<sup>3</sup> created by Dr. John Sherman at MIT. The sooner you turn off the tap, the less likely your bathtub is to overflow.



Overall framing by Dr. John Sterman, MIT Sloan

Removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere is much, much more difficult and expensive than avoiding the emissions in the first place.

We understand that the changes from the Trump administration are causing a lot of uncertainty and confusion, but now it is essential for the states to lead on climate.

For all of these reasons, we strongly urge an unfavorable report on HB.

1 <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/our-work/programs/advanced-clean-cars-program/states-have-adopted-californias-vehicle-regulations>

2 <https://www.lung.org/research/sota/health-risks>

3 <https://climate.mit.edu/ask-mit/how-do-we-know-how-long-carbon-dioxide-remains-atmosphere>