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## HOUSE BILL 1545

Date: March 5, 2020  
Committee: Economic Matters  
Bill Title: Electric Generation - Transition From Fossil Fuels - Carbon Dioxide Emissions Rate and Transition Account  
RE: Letter of Information

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House Bill 1545 utilizes funds from the Strategic Energy Investment Fund to establish a transition account for grants to support individuals transitioning from employment with electric generating units and communities that are impacted by the permanent retirement of an electric generating unit.

The Maryland Department of Labor (Department) currently provides valuable workforce training opportunities that are available to all Marylanders. Pursuant to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, the Department manages **federal funds** designed to provide assistance to employers for managing workforce reductions, which may include early identification of firms at risk of layoffs, assessment of the needs of and options for at-risk firms, and the delivery of services to address these needs.<sup>1</sup>

Layoff aversion activities may also include ongoing engagement, partnership, and relationship-building activities with businesses in the community, in order to create an environment for successful layoff aversion efforts and to enable the provision of assistance to dislocated workers in obtaining reemployment as soon as possible. Moreover, the Department currently has the ability to connect businesses and workers to short-term, on-the-job, and/or customized training programs and registered apprenticeships before or after layoff to help facilitate rapid reemployment.

Large layoff events are covered by the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act of 1988. The WARN Act protects workers, their families, and communities by requiring employers with 100 or more employees to provide at least 60 calendar days advance written notice of a plant closing and mass layoff affecting 50 or more employees at a single site of employment.<sup>2</sup>

Once a WARN event has begun, the Department begins its “Rapid Response” process, which includes: (1) the provision of information and access to unemployment compensation benefits and programs, such as short-time compensation, Pell Grants, the GI Bill, introduction to American Job Centers, and other resources; (2) the delivery of other necessary services and resources, including workshops and classes, use of worker transition centers, job fairs, and training to support reemployment efforts for affected workers; and (3) the provision of additional assistance, as described in 20 CFR 682.350, to local areas that experience mass layoffs, or other dislocation events, when such events exceed the capacity of the local area to respond with existing resources.

In addition to the above information, Maryland currently manages federal and state funded programs that provide opportunities for training and sustainable employment.

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<sup>1</sup> WIOA sec. 134(d)(1)(A)(ix)(II)(cc)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/termination/plantclosings>