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The Honorable Dereck Davis and
Members of the Economic Matters Committee

REPRESENTATIVES

CUMBERLAND

Local 430
TIMOTHY HUMMELBAUGH

Local 600
JASON WEAVER

BRUNSWICK
Local 631
TOM CAHILL

EDMONSTON
Local 1470
KENZELL CRAWFORD

BALTIMORE
Local 610
JOHNNY WALKER

Local 1949
CORA WEEMS

RE: HB1545

As State Legislative Director for the Transportation Division of the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Worker's I am urging your committee to **oppose HB1545**, "*Electric Generation - Transition From Fossil Fuels - Carbon Dioxide Emissions Rate and Transition Account.*"

Our organization represents railroad workers who are employed by CSX Transportation, Norfolk Southern Railroad, Canton Railroad and in MARC and Amtrak commuter services.

All are covered by collective bargaining agreements that provide for an upper middle-class income with great health care benefits and an excellent pension system. Most have been employed in freight rail service for over ten years with the expectation they will retire from the industry after a healthy career.

The transportation of coal has been a large part of our members work opportunities. They understand the abundance of natural gas, due to recent production processes, has lowered the price of natural gas and has had a major impact in the marketplace causing the reduction in usage of coal. This is the way our national economy is designed to work, and they accept this.

They also understand the actions of the General Assembly over the past several years has been focused on forcing the reduced usage of coal through legislative efforts.

What they don't understand is the constant attacks on eliminating their livelihoods with little or no consideration of the consequences on them and their families.

Our members just experienced the devastating effects that the closure of the Verso paper plant in Luke Maryland has had on over 3000 jobs and business owners in that community with little or no expectations for re-employment in this location.

Families have been devastated by the loss of employment of the bread winner and having to face the reality that they will most likely have to sell their homes and uproot their families in order to find employment that will keep them in the middle class.

Industrial facilities such as the Luke Paper Mill, the Wheelabrator, Covanta and Curtis Bay Medical waste-to-energy facilities, and the six targeted coal-fired power plants in this legislation all provide jobs with family sustaining wages and benefits that cannot be replaced easily, if at all. Moreover, they provide economic benefits for communities through suppliers, service providers, educational resources and tax payments.

If it is the legislature's intent to proffer bold legislation that will drastically impact these facilities to the point of forcing closure, the legislature should be bold enough to accept responsibility for those working families who will be profoundly affected.

This proposed legislation makes an insufficient attempt at providing remedies for those working families who will be profoundly impacted. Mostly because these working families were not represented at the table when the legislation was developed.

It is true that a feeble attempt was made at requesting several labor union's input in the last hour before the proposed legislation was published. However, the labor coalition that represents the workers who will be profoundly impacted were put in an unattainable position when they were provided with a copy of the proposed legislation and requested to provide their input through suggested amendments at this late hour.

We therefore urge your committee to give an unfavorable report to HB1545.

Sincerely



Lawrence E. Kasecamp
MD State Legislative Director
 SMART Transportation Division