

Testimony of Lisa Rose-Urquhart
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Member 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East
Economic Matters Committee

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Position: Favorable on HB 1545

For the record, my name is Lisa Rose-Urquhart. I'm a Critical Care Nurse at Prince George's Hospital Center and a proud member of 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East.

As the nation's largest healthcare workers union, 1199SEIU members know that burning fossil fuels cause and worsen chronic and acute respiratory diseases such as Asthma, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), Bronchitis, and various Cancers that initiate in the lung and metastasize throughout other organs and systems. We also know that communities of color and low-income communities are more likely to live and work in close proximities to the sources of pollution. Therefore, we support this bill because it will improve the health of communities within the State of Maryland by reducing and eventually eradicating exposure to pollution from coal and its byproducts. It will also serve to support good union jobs in the clean energy industry as education and new job training opportunities will provide an effective transition for employees that will be impacted by the necessary change processes.

I'm here today to share a few reasons for supporting this bill:

- Passing this bill will make Marylanders healthier because it will serve to reduce the harmful exposures produced by antiquated technologies and energy sources. I am here today because I am a patient advocate on and off the time clock. Although I innately advocate for my patients while at the bedside, I find it necessary advocate on their behalf in Annapolis.
- Given that our current President has decreased regulations, hence, corporate accountability as were managed by the EPA; it is imperative that State Legislatures assume the lead in protecting its citizens.
- I'm here today, to ask that you commit to improving the lives of Marylanders by decreasing the mortality rate of poor communities that happen to be a significant portion of people of color. I ask that you create laws that will stop climate disrupting pollution.
- Sadly, our current Governor is rolling back clean air regulations and coal companies are taking advantage of it. For example, when stronger clean air regulations were put in place by Governor O'Malley in 2014, energy regulators approved five of Maryland's twelve coal boilers request to deactivate in 2017. But, when those same regulations were pulled by Governor Hogan, they withdrew those deactivation notices in 2016 and they are still operating today.
- Finally, we are supporting this bill because it puts a plan, with certainty, in place for the impacted workers. It also gives Union members representation at table,

and it creates a way for workers to organize as a union with the new jobs created by:

- Securing 25% of the 12 seats on the Advisory Board for the Fossil Fuel Transition Fund;
- Safeguarding the largest portion, or 40%, of the Funds for dislocated workers;
- And finally, one of the amendments to the bill requires employers who are awarded grants from the fund to create new jobs and to sign an organizing neutrality agreement so that the workers can collectively bargain as a union.

Again, on behalf of 1199SEIU we urge a favorable report on this bill and thank you for the opportunity to testify.