

Support for HB 553
Environment and Transportation Committee

Dear Delegate Stewart:

As a concerned resident of Maryland, I strongly support House Bill 553 and Senate Bill 730, calling for a ban on coal tar in Maryland. They are not only harmful to human health, but they are also harmful to aquatic health.

I looked through many safety data sheets that sealcoating companies provided on their websites. Sealcoating companies are required to put these on their websites and they explain properties of the sealants and the health hazards. One safety data sheet that I read says that coal tar may cause fertility damage, genetic defects, and organ damage.

There are many other alternatives to coal tar such as latex and asphalt-based sealers, which means that banning coal tar won't be too bad. These alternatives are easy to get and are not that expensive. Home Depot and Lowe's have already stopped selling coal tar because they know about its health effects.

Al Innes is a Minnesota state official who's running an EPA-funded program to reduce the use of coal tar sealants. He held webinars throughout the Great Lakes region last summer to educate businesses about how to shift to asphalt products. He said that there are few applications for which asphalt sealants won't work well.

I read an article from the Sheboygan Press about coal tar. In it, there was a man named Lonnie Harris who is the president of West Suburban Asphalt and Concrete. He said that he applied coal tar sealants to parking lots for years and got second-degree burns on his neck from carrying an applicator hose around his shoulders. He said that he got lightheaded and had panic attacks, which would go away during his work's off-season. He said he now uses only asphalt-based products and feels better. This shows that asphalt-based sealants are better for human health than coal tar.

Because of all these reasons, I highly suggest that we ban coal tar sealants in Maryland.

Signed,
Claire Wang
4442 Cross Country Drive
Ellicott City, MD
21042