

## **Support for HB 553**

### **Environment and Transportation Committee**

Dear Delegate Stewart,

I support the passing of House Bill 553 to ban coal tar sealants. Coal tar sealants contain PAHs that are extremely toxic to humans and animals. The Columbia University Center for Children's Environmental Health led a 2012 study that was conducted on 164 pregnant women. The scientists concluded that PAH exposure is associated with changing DNA segments, genes, and white blood cells in the umbilical cord of the participants. The study also showed that PAHs can cross the placenta and fetal blood-brain barrier, triggering inflammation that is toxic to the developing brain. Also the inflammation caused by coal tar sealants lower IQs. Secondly, there was a case about a gas plant in Taylorville, Ill. The gas plant buried 50,000 gallons of coal tar in secrecy. Construction disturbed the coal tar and contaminated the local water supply and air. A jury awarded \$3.2 million to families of 4 children stricken with neuroblastoma, a rare childhood cancer that resulted from their exposure to coal tar. The four children were diagnosed with neural cancer that experts linked to coal tar exposure, according to court records. Coal tar is also way more dangerous than other sealants and used motor oil. Concentrations of mg per kg of PAHs in coal tar based sealants are about **14 hundred times higher** than in asphalt-based products. Coal tar sealants also contain approximately **16 times more** mg per kg of PAHs than used motor oil. Most people think that used motor oil is extremely toxic for the environment but coal tar sealants are worse. Humans are not the only ones affected by coal tar, benthic organisms (bottom dwellers) are as well. Bottom dwellers include mussels, snails, and a wide range of larvae. When these benthic organisms are exposed to large amounts of PAHs, they can experience a series of problems such as loss of consciousness, inability to reproduce, and death. That can disrupt entire food chains.

Coal tar should be banned in Maryland because of the extreme danger. We do not want our children to get neuroblastoma or grow up with lower IQs. We do not want the food chain to collapse. We want our state to thrive, not die. The good news is that we have alternatives and can switch very easily. So please ban coal tar sealants in Maryland and protect its citizens and our environment!

Sincerely,  
Melanie Ritter  
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