



# MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

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**SB 148 – Electric Generation – Transition From Fossil Fuels – Carbon Dioxide Emissions Rate and Transition Plan and Fund (Maryland Coal Community Transition Act of 2021)  
Senate Finance Committee  
February 2, 2021**

**OPPOSE**

**Donna S. Edwards  
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**Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO**

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to SB 148 – Electric Generation – Transition From Fossil Fuels – Carbon Dioxide Emissions Rate and Transition Plan and Fund (Maryland Coal Community Transition Act of 2021). My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. On behalf of the 340,000 union members, I offer the following comments.

Attached to this testimony is the “Resolution on Climate Change and Jobs” that was unanimously passed at the 32nd Biennial Convention of the Maryland State and D.C. AFL-CIO, held in November of 2019. The resolution puts the issue of good job creation in the emerging clean energy sector first and foremost, with an understanding that the path forward must include an inclusive energy portfolio. The entire labor movement in Maryland is committed to ensuring that – as we transition to a cleaner energy sector – workers are not sacrificed on the altar of environmentalism. If we, as a State, are going to make greater strides towards cleaning our energy, we must not put the cart before the horse. We must lead with good jobs and make the hard decisions necessary to hold harmless the workers that have provided us the energy needed to live, work, and play.

SB 148 leads with the environment instead of workers. It summarily closes operations at coal fired power plants over an extremely abbreviated timeline – with the first to close only three years from now. The bill allots Strategic Energy Investment Fund (SEIF) money to a transition, but not nearly in the amount that would be needed to address the thousands of workers directly affected nor the thousands more in support industries and in our communities. Moreover, a commitment to a Just Transition cannot rely on the ephemeral nature of SEIF, which is based on unreliable payments into it, and multiple ways it is already committed to other projects. A real

discussion of transitioning our energy, and, more importantly, thousands of jobs, involves appropriating real money to address the challenges.

On the energy front, coal is base-load energy. The plants in question provide consistent, scalable energy that is necessary for peak usage like sweltering August days. Without this backbone on the grid, and with no comparable green energy source that can operate on-demand, the future of Maryland energy will be a combination of brown-outs and smart-metering hundreds of thousands of Marylanders out of their air conditioning. There has been no appetite within the General Assembly to expand nuclear energy in our State, let alone natural gas, or any other form of scalable on-demand forms of energy. We cannot simply turn off our coal plants in three years, and expect the energy needs of citizens to be met, not to mention grow, with population increases.

We ask that you help us re-define our priorities on climate change and clean energy jobs. While the bill attempts to describe a transition plan and a working group to tackle the challenges of a transition are notable upgrades to last year's bill, it is still woefully insufficient in addressing the needs of displaced workers and affected communities. We ask that you join with workers in ensuring that our transition to a post-carbon energy economy lifts everyone and leaves no one behind. SB 148 is not the pathway to do that, and we welcome the opportunity for a summer study where all stakeholders – environmental, labor, and industry – can convene and discuss a path forward that is sustainable, clean, meets the energy needs of Marylanders, holds harmless the workers in coal fired power plants, and addresses the future of work in a clean energy industry.

**We urge an unfavorable report on SB 148.**