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The Honorable Delores Kelley and
Members of the Senate Finance 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: SB148 OPPOSE

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 in its current form SB148**, "*Electric Generation – Transition From Fossil Fuels – Carbon Dioxide Emissions Rate and Transition Plan and Fund (Maryland Coal Community Transition Act of 2021)*."

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 recently 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 and the 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 **all** those working families who will be profoundly affected. This proposed legislation makes an insufficient attempt at providing remedies for a percentage of working families who will be profoundly impacted. If anyone "affected" happens to live in another jurisdiction, they are not covered by any provision of this legislation even though it effectively eliminates their job.

Our organization supports the efforts of legislators and the proponents to promote the cleanest environment we can reasonably have. We do not believe they are intentionally trying to cause financial hardship to any workers. We appreciate the items in this proposed legislation attempting to address a just transition, but don't believe they go near far enough on behalf of the many workers who will be either directly or indirectly affected. And we don't believe they are focused on the best ways to get there.

If the level of emission rate restrictions were set to an attainable level that's available today using modern technology and the industry chose not to comply, which resulted in their closure, that would be on the industry. But to force their closure through restriction at an unobtainable level places it on the legislature.

No labor representative is going to support legislation that outright eliminates the jobs of the members they represent. If their members lose their jobs due to a financial decision of their employer, then that's on their employer.

As a labor representative who has been involved in collective bargaining, I know you don't take a proposed agreement to your members for a vote without the cost and benefits defined. It's called putting the cart before the horse. This proposed legislation fits that description in that it establishes a committee to evaluate the effects on workers and make a recommended solution after the fact they lost their jobs. The establishment of a committee to work out the details so the cost and benefits are known should be included in the legislation when offered for consideration.

For these reasons, we urge an unfavorable report of SB148.

Sincerely



Lawrence E. Kasecamp
MD State Legislative Director
 Transportation Division