



**Testimony SB687
Zero-Emission Truck Act of 2022
Environment & Transportation
February 25th, 2022
Akshaya Balaji, MaryPIRG Students President
FAVORABLE**

MaryPIRG Students: Students have the power to shape the future we will inherit. We work with professional staff at colleges and universities to make sure our peers have the skills, opportunities and training they need to create a better, more sustainable future for all of us. Our chapters provide the training, professional support and resources students need to tackle climate change, protect public health, revitalize our democracy, feed the hungry and more. Students have been at the forefront of social change throughout history, from civil rights, to voting rights to protecting the environment. For over 40 years we've helped students to get organized, mobilized and energized so they can continue to be on the cutting edge of positive change.

MaryPIRG Student Climate Action Coalition: Dealing with the challenges of today requires problem-solvers who bring different perspectives and are willing to take risks. MaryPIRG Student Climate Action Coalition emerged out of a pursuit to inspire and support the community, and a desire for actions to speak louder than words. This campaign began in 2020, driven by progressive ideas, bold actions, and a strong foundation of support. MaryPIRG Student Climate Action Coalition is a statewide student coalition dedicated to fighting climate change.

My name is Akshaya Balaji, I'm a sophomore at University of Maryland College Park, and I'm the President of MaryPIRG Students. I am writing on behalf of our organization to request a favorable report for the Advanced Clean Truck Rule.

Diesel fuels are a risk to all of our health. Throughout the state, Marylanders are suffering from the damaging effects of living with unhealthy air quality. In October, Maryland PIRG Foundation and Environment Maryland Research and Policy Center released "[Trouble in the Air](#)," which outlined elevated air pollution days throughout the state. Diesel particulate matter contributes to numerous health impacts including increased hospital admissions, particularly for heart disease, but also for respiratory illnesses, and even premature death. As a Marylander I want my family, friends, and community to breathe without suffering the adverse effects of unhealthy air quality.

Diesel trucks, like all fossil fuel vehicles, are also a source of global warming pollution. As I'm writing this, it is currently 60 degrees out in late february. However, a changing climate is far more sinister than a nice day in winter. Floods, extreme weather, sea level rise, and the decline of numerous species are not too far off if we continue to ignore the climate crisis. We can and

should be using every tool available to ensure we are creating the world we want to live in. The Advanced Clean Truck Rule is an important step in the right direction.

By passing this bill, Maryland would join a growing number of states adopting the Advanced Clean Truck Rule, including California, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Washington, and Oregon. This legislation would also help Maryland follow through on its commitment for 30% of all medium and heavy duty vehicles sales to be electric by 2030 and could create high quality, environmentally friendly jobs in the process.

As students, we are fighting for our future - we want to live in a cleaner, greener, world where we protect our environment and our own health. That is why we urge you to pass the Advanced Clean Truck Rule. We are excited for Maryland to take this important step towards creating the world we want to be part of.

We respectfully request a favorable report.