



**Olivia Bartlett, DoTheMostGood**

**Committee:** Education, Health and Environmental Affairs

**Testimony on:** SB0126 – Environment – New Motor Vehicles – Pollution Fee

**Position:** Favorable

**Hearing Date:** February 15, 2022

**Bill Contact:** Senator Benjamin Kramer

DoTheMostGood (DTMG) is a progressive grass-roots organization with more than 3000 members across all districts in Montgomery County as well as a number of nearby jurisdictions. DTMG supports legislation and activities that keep residents healthy and safe in a clean environment and which promote equity across all our diverse communities. DTMG strongly supports SB0126 because it will help Maryland meet its greenhouse gas reduction goals and promote cleaner air for everyone in the state to breathe.

Greenhouse gas emissions caused by human activity – particularly carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) -- are the main driver of climate change due to global warming. Scientists from around the world have issued increasingly urgent and dire warnings that we must reduce greenhouse gas emissions rapidly to avoid the worst consequences of global warming. The transportation sector is responsible for most of the greenhouse gas emissions in Maryland. Nitrous oxide (NOX) and particulate tailpipe pollution from fossil fuel powered vehicles also contribute to smog and asthma. SB0126 will help reduce both of these types of air pollution.

SB0126 will establish a new pollution fee for vehicles based on the CO<sub>2</sub> tailpipe exhaust of new passenger vehicles and light trucks sold or registered in the State that have a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency [Greenhouse Gas Rating](#) equal to or higher than 400 CO<sub>2</sub> gm/mile. The one-time fee will be charged by the Department of the Environment and collected by the Comptroller. The fee will be \$1.25 times the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's pollution rating of the motor vehicle in its model year. The fee will begin with the 2023 model year, and the minimum CO<sub>2</sub> gm/mile will decrease by 10 grams per mile each model year to incentivize purchase of cleaner running cars.

Commercial vehicles for transporting goods, agricultural vehicles, vehicles for public transportation, ambulances, and local government vehicles that are not used as passage vehicles will be exempt from the fee. The Department of Transportation review the exemptions in July of 2029.

The pollution fee will be deposited in the Maryland Strategic Energy Investment Fund (SEIF), and revenue from the fee will be used to:

- Provide rebates on the sale of electric vehicles, which will make them more affordable for all Maryland residents;
- Expand electric vehicle infrastructure; and
- Purchase clean running electric transit and school buses.

The pollution fee will therefore disincentivize purchase or registration of high CO<sub>2</sub> emitting “gas guzzlers” and incentivize purchase and registration of cleaner hybrid or electric vehicles, which will reduce greenhouse gas emissions responsible for global warming as well as NOX and particulate tailpipe emissions that pollute our air.

Passage of SB0126 will be a win for all Marylanders who breathe the air and for our fight against global warming. Therefore, DTMG strongly supports SB0126 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report on this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

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