



Kim Coble
Executive Director

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SUPPORT: SB126: New Motor Vehicles - Pollution Fees

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Maryland LCV supports SB126: Vehicle Emissions Inspection Program - Not Subject to Inspection, and we thank Senator Kramer for his leadership on this issue.

Maryland LCV works at the intersection of strong climate policy and environmental justice. This bill supports both of those interests.

In order to confront the growing threat of climate change, Maryland must continue to take bold steps to address the pollution coming from the transportation sector, which is the largest contributor to our greenhouse gas emissions. Moving our state vehicles away from fossil fuel-reliant technologies and moving to zero-emission electric vehicles (which can be charged with clean, renewable energy) is critical to this effort. Maryland set a target goal of 300,000 electric vehicles on the road by 2025. Unfortunately, the program has been insufficiently funded when compared to the demand and we are still falling dramatically short of meeting the goal. By one estimate, there are roughly 25,000 plug-in electric vehicles currently registered in Maryland.

Levying a modest fee on traditional gas-powered vehicles to augment the Strategic Energy Investment Fund will support state incentives for electric vehicle purchase and transition. Maryland LCV supports this fee and is especially invested in the inclusion of purchase of electric school buses as a designated use of the funds that this bill would support.

We encourage the sponsor to consider making clarifications to the bill which would ensure that the funds collected through this program be distributed equitably, using the principles of Justice 40 that require at least 40% of funds be directed to communities overburdened by pollution, as identified by environmental justice screening tools.

Maryland LCV urges a favorable report on this important bill.