

February 8, 2023

Testimony on SB 224:
Clean Trucks Act of 2023

Position: Favorable

Most vehicles require fossil fuels to function. Unsurprisingly, transportation is the leading cause of air pollution. The toxins emitted by these vehicles cause both immediate and long-term harm. People, especially children, who live in areas of poor quality are more likely to suffer from respiratory illnesses, including asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder. These same pollutants contribute heavily to climate change, which is now irreversibly underway. As climate change worsens, more people will get sick and die from floods, extreme heat, extreme cold, and lack of clean water.

Only 9% of the vehicles on the road are trucks or other large vehicles. Nonetheless, they cause 21% of carbon pollution and 48% of particulate matter pollution. If these vehicles were electric, we would see a huge improvement in air quality. Those with homes near busy roads would be less likely to fall ill, and one of the main drivers of climate change would be reduced. We would see a reduction in noise pollution as well; most gasoline- and diesel-powered vehicles have loud motors that can disrupt people's sleep and general sense of well-being.

The Clean Trucks Act of 2023 (SB244) would require manufacturers to make sure that an increasing number of the trucks and other large vehicles that they sell are zero-emission. According to data from a report by the International Council on Clean Transportation, if Maryland passes the Clean Trucks Act, the state could avoid more than 116,000 cases of respiratory illnesses cumulatively through 2050. By passing SB 244, you, as legislators, can prevent hundreds of thousands of our citizens from getting sick and possibly dying. In addition, we, as a state, would be doing our part to help keep climate change from worsening as quickly; although climate change is irreversible, perhaps we, as a state, can avert the worst effects of it by taking bold steps now. Extreme weather occurrences, like droughts, floods, and fires, cause illness and death, and by passing SB 244, you, as legislators, can help protect innocent people from these dire events. In addition, you would be helping Maryland follow through on its commitment for 30% of all medium and heavy-duty vehicles sales to be electric by 2030, and the law could create high-quality green jobs in the process.

Please vote for SB 244, the Clean Trucks Act of 2023!

Sincerely,

Shilpa Shenvi

