

Policy Foundation of Maryland

Committee: Judiciary, Education Energy, & the Environment

Testimony on: SB0224-Department of the Environment - Zero-Emission Medium- and Heavy-Duty Vehicles - Regulations (Clean Trucks Act of 2023)

SPONSOR: Senator Augustine, Feldman, Smith, M. Washington, Watson, & Zucker

Organization: Policy Foundation of Maryland, TMT Coalition, MD Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Sarahia Benn (Executive Dir.)

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: February 9, 2023 1:30PM, March 29, 2023 1PM

Mr. Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for allowing testimony today in support of SB0224. Policy Foundation of Maryland is a grassroots organization focused on State and County level legislation and policies that impacts Black, Brown, marginalized, low income communities and veterans affairs. Environmental legislation is of massive importance to these communities particularly due to how impacted these communities have been historically and currently.

[It's 6 a.m. and Spesutia & Perryman Road](#) in Perryman Peninsula in Harford County is already clogged with rumbling big-rigs, tractor trailers, semis, 18-wheelers and delivery trucks. By 9 a.m. they hadn't slowed. By noon, the line of large vehicles rolling past is even longer.

[Truck traffic is here and in the surrounding areas everyday, 24 hours a day.](#)

Warehouse industrialization is responsible for this increased traffic near homes, local businesses, restaurants, and our children. All day, every day, this historic Black community is being pummeled by deadly diesel exhaust and soot.

The new access point that was added in 2019 has made my community a free-for-all with 5 new warehouses projected to be the biggest in the Eastern region.

This is a two-lane road. It's unsafe for pedestrians, people can't get out of the driveways, they can not receive emergency services easily, these truck backups leave them idling, spewing smoke that settles into a thick, greasy, gray layer on our front doors, windows, plants...and in our lungs. Literally diesel truck traffic has been killing many in our community from lung cancer to reproductive and developmental harm, diabetes, and dementia to name a few. It has long been established that living within just one third of a mile of a highway or close to ports, warehouse

distribution centers or other freight corridors is devastating for lung health and can lead to early death. Black and Brown and Military/Veteran Marylanders and specific to my area are being exposed to these deadly toxins even in a higher percentage than the remainder of the County.

In Maryland, Black residents are exposed to 12% higher diesel soot concentrations from on-road transportation than the average. Latinos experience concentrations 11% higher than the average. At the same time, white residents have an average exposure that is 8% lower than the state average. That's not by accident.

This is why the Advanced trucks clean act 2023 is so important to be passed. We can no longer speak about diversity, inclusion, and equity and continue to disproportionately harm Black and Brown communities as is being done with the diesel pollution in my community. Our children in our community literally are not playing outside because the air they breathe they can not breathe in. We are being killed.

Passing this Advanced Clean Trucks Act of 2023 bill will be a game changer for my community in terms of finance as well. Financially speaking the move to a more healthy and electric system will ensure financial opportunities in an area wherein Black business ownership is low or nonexistent. High paying jobs being more readily available can transform my community's life.

My community and many like it depend on leadership from the State to move towards a better tomorrow. For these reasons, I urge an **FAVORABLE REPORT** on **SB0224**.

Respectfully submitted,



Sarahia Benn
(Policy Foundation of Maryland, TMT Coalition, Maryland Legislative Coalition)

(Dedicated to Women's History month)

“To me, environmental justice is just plain justice. I can't imagine a type of justice that doesn't include the environment.”

— Mary Anaise Heglar