



HB1193

Environment - Coal Combustion By-Products

Testimony before House Economic Matters Committee

Hearing March 7, 2024

Position: Favorable

Dear Chair Wilson and Vice-Chair Crosby, and members of the committee, my name is Virginia Smith, and I represent the 700+ members of Indivisible Howard County. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We are providing written testimony today **in support of HB1193**, which would require the owner or operator of a coal combustion by-products unit to submit certain reports and plans, including water surveys, to the Department of the Environment and the Power Plan Research Program. We thank Delegate Lehman and many of her colleagues for introducing this important legislation.

Coal ash has been found to contain many hazardous pollutants, including arsenic, chromium, and lead, which can lead to cancer, heart disease, thyroid disease, reproductive failure, and many other serious health conditionsⁱ. Unfortunately, Maryland currently has at least 21 coal ash dumpsites, and the industry data itself shows that 91% of the coal ash plants are polluting the local ground waterⁱⁱ. I think these statistics show why something needs to be done.

HB1193 includes numerous requirements that would force the coal industry to identify the coal ash disposal sites, both on and offsite, as well as where potential leaks could lead to drinking water contamination. It also contains requirements for industry to fund replacement water to the communities impacted and pay administrative costs to remove the waste. All aspects of this bill are needed to ensure that these areas are cleaned up and that local communities continue to receive access to clean water for drinking and life.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

We respectfully urge a favorable report.

Virginia Smith
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ⁱ <https://earthjustice.org/feature/coal-ash-contaminates-our-lives>

ⁱⁱ <https://earthjustice.org/feature/coal-ash-states/maryland>