



SB0882 - SUPPORT
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SB0882, Coal Transportation Fee and Fossil Fuel Mitigation Fund (Coal Dust
Cleanup and Asthmas Remediation Act)

Meeting of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Feb. 27, 2025

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee, on behalf of Elders Climate Action Maryland, I urge a favorable report on SB0882, the Coal Transportation Fee and Fossil Fuel Mitigation Fund.

Elders Climate Action is a nationwide organization devoted to ensuring that our children, grandchildren, and future generations have a world in which they can thrive. The Maryland Chapter has members across the state.

Each day, we see the climate crisis more clearly. We know that Maryland is at risk for sea level rise, flooding from intense rainfall, heat waves, and other extreme weather events. Maryland can also be a leader in moving us to a safer, cleaner future where we all can thrive. The clean energy transition is an essential part of that future.

In 2022, the Maryland General Assembly passed the Climate Solutions Now Act which set the most ambitious greenhouse gas reduction goals in any state law. In December 2023, the Maryland Department of the Environment released the Climate Pollution Reduction Plan which set out a plan to reach those vital goals. We strongly support that plan and its implementation.

The plan identified the costs of the actions we must take to protect our children and grandchildren's futures. Those costs are estimated to be about \$1 billion each year. The plan also recommended funding sources. One of those was a Hazardous Substance Fee. This bill would create such a fee.

We are well aware that Maryland is in a budget crisis that is aggravated by recent changes in the Federal government. That makes passage of this bill even more urgent.

The bill is modeled on Maryland's existing fee for oil. It would charge a modest fee on coal transported into Maryland, and that money would be deposited in a Fossil Fuel Mitigation Fund. Although the fee is modest, it would bring in over \$250 million dollars each year. It would not raise prices in Maryland and is very unlikely to negatively impact businesses in Maryland, including the port of Baltimore.

In addition to raising vitally needed funds for climate mitigation, it would help the communities that are negatively impacted by coal transport. The coal transported through Maryland in open rail cars loses a tremendous amount of dust, which results in increases in asthma and other respiratory illnesses from Garrett County to Baltimore. At least 40% of the funds would be directed to assist those communities.

For all of these reasons, we strongly urge a favorable report on SB0882.