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February 27, 2025

SUPPORT: SB882- Coal Transportation Fee and Fossil Fuel Mitigation Fund (Coal Dust Cleanup and Asthma Remediation Act)

Chair Feldman and Members of the Committees:

Maryland LCV and the undersigned organizations support the Coal Dust Cleanup and Asthma Remediation Act and thank Senator Rosapepe for his leadership on this issue.

In 2022, the Maryland General Assembly passed the Climate Solutions Now Act (CSNA), which set ambitious goals and put Maryland at the forefront of strong climate policy nationally. In December 2023, the Maryland Department of the Environment released the Climate Pollution Reduction Plan (Climate Plan), outlining the path to reach the goals set by the CSNA, and identified the cost to implement the plan could reach as much as \$1 billion annually. SB882 implements one of the recommendations specified in the plan as a solution to help fund this plan¹ - a “Hazardous Substance Fee” that would be paid into the Strategic Energy Investment Fund to fund the investments outlined in the Climate Plan.

As outlined in this legislation, the modest fee on coal transported into the state replicates an existing fee for oil maintained by the Maryland Department of the Environment. While the proposed fee is modest (\$13/short ton levied against the carrier, the estimated revenue for the state is estimated to surpass \$250 million annually and be deposited into a newly created “Fossil Fuel Mitigation Fund.” This significant revenue source takes an important step in ensuring that Maryland is able to achieve its climate goals and continue to set the standard nationally on climate policy - without a direct impact on tax-payers. An independent analysis by researchers at the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (attached), demonstrates that this fee is, on average, less than half of the additional cost to the coal companies than rerouting their business to ports in Virginia - the next closest export facility - limiting the financial threat to the Port of Baltimore’s export terminal.

Additionally, this legislation directly supports communities most harmed by the pollution left behind by the coal transportation through the state. Since a similar bill was introduced last year, multiple studies (including from [University of California - Davis](#) and [the Johns Hopkins University](#)) have shown the dramatic increase in respiratory ailments in communities along the coal route. While this is especially true in Baltimore City, which has one of the highest asthma rates in the country, the impact of coal dust can be felt in communities along the coal route, including Frostburg, Hagerstown and other Western Maryland communities. The fund established by this bill ensures that at least 40% of the funding raised by this bill are directed to support the overburdened and underserved communities impacted by this pollution, with additional resources directed to support asthma treatment programs.

¹<https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/air/ClimateChange/Maryland%20Climate%20Reduction%20Plan/Maryland%27s%20Climate%20Pollution%20Reduction%20Plan%20-%20Final%20-%20Dec%2028%202023.pdf>

Maryland LCV and the undersigned organizations urge a favorable report on this priority bill.

Maryland League of Conservation Voters
Audubon Mid Atlantic
BlueWater Baltimore
CASA Maryland
Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Environmental Justice Ministry
Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Clean Water Action
Climate Communications Coalition
Climate Justice Wing
Climate Reality Greater Maryland
Earthjustice
Elders Climate Action Maryland and HoCoMD Environmental Action
Maryland Legislative Coalition
Mobilize Frederick
Potomac Conservancy
Progressive Maryland
Rachel Carson Council
St. Vincent's Green Team
The Nature Conservancy
Third Act Maryland
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland
Zion Hill Baptist Church

Attachments:

- Report from University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science
- Testimony from Sandra Martinez, Baltimore City
- Testimony from Abigail Batista, Baltimore City
- Testimony from Gloria Fernandez, Baltimore City