



Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 882
Coal Transportation Fee and Fossil Fuel Mitigation Fund
Coal Dust Cleanup and Asthma Remediation Act

By Catherine Kirk Robins, Deputy Director of Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative
Before the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
February 27, 2025

Chairman Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee;

Thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 882, the Coal Dust Cleanup and Asthma Reduction Act, and thank you to Senator Rosapepe for introducing this important bill. I am writing today in support of this legislation on behalf of our individual organization, Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative, Inc, as we have not reviewed the bill with the full Maryland Health Care for All! Coalition.

As an organization, it is our mission to ensure that all Marylanders have access to quality, affordable health care. The dedicated funding in this legislation that would go towards asthma treatment for communities impacted by coal dust would help advance that goal. Recent CDC data estimates that approximately 450,000 Marylanders have asthma.¹ With the lifetime health care cost of asthma estimated at \$36,500, those afflicted are faced with considerable economic burdens, as is our health care system as a whole.² Establishing a dedicated fund to help mitigate these health impacts is likely to improve health outcomes and advance health equity due to low-income communities' proximity to coal processing and shipment facilities.

We thank the Committee for your work on this important issue and urge a favorable report of SB 882.

¹ https://www.cdc.gov/asthma/most_recent_data_states.htm

² <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32931705/>