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March 7, 2025

OPPOSE: HB 1258 - Consumer Goods - Restrictions Based on Energy Source - Prohibition (Energy Equality Act of 2025)

Chair Korman, Chair Wilson and Members of the Committees,

Maryland LCV strongly opposes HB1258 – Energy Equality Act of 2025, which would prohibit state and local governments from restricting the sale, purchase, or use of consumer goods based on their energy source, and repeal Maryland’s Advanced Clean Cars II (ACCII) and Clean Trucks Act of 2023 programs. We firmly reject any attempts to repeal the implementation of these programs, which are essential to reducing pollution, protecting public health, and advancing Maryland’s climate goals.

Maryland has made significant strides in addressing the harmful impacts of air pollution and climate change through the adoption of zero-emission vehicle policies like the Clean Trucks Act of 2023 and the ACCII regulations. These programs are essential to meeting the state’s greenhouse gas reduction goals outlined in the Climate Solutions Now Act, protecting public health, and addressing the disproportionate burden of air pollution in low-income communities and communities of color.

Transportation is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Maryland, accounting for nearly 40% of the state’s emissions. Medium- and heavy-duty vehicles contribute a disproportionate share of this pollution, despite representing a small fraction of vehicles on the road. These vehicles emit higher levels of nitrogen oxides (NOx) and particulate matter (PM2.5), pollutants linked to asthma, lung disease, heart disease, and cancer. Communities located near highways, freight corridors, and warehouses—often low-income communities and communities of color—bear the brunt of this pollution, leading to higher rates of respiratory illness and other health disparities.

ACCII and Clean Trucks programs are critical tools for protecting public health, reducing emissions, and promoting environmental justice. By requiring manufacturers to sell increasing percentages of zero-emission passenger cars, trucks, and buses, these policies will deliver cleaner air to communities, lower fuel and maintenance costs for consumers, and accelerate the transition to a clean energy economy. It is important to emphasize that ACCII and Clean Trucks programs apply solely to vehicle manufacturers, not consumers or dealers. The programs do not mandate individuals or fleet owners to purchase zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs) or relinquish internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles.

Additionally, these programs include significant compliance flexibilities for manufacturers, including the ability to bank, trade, and pool credits. If a manufacturer does not meet the ZEV sales target in a given model year, they have up to three years to make up the deficit before facing penalties. These provisions provide manufacturers with ample time and tools to meet their obligations, supporting a gradual, achievable transition to cleaner transportation without imposing burdens on consumers or dealers.

Repealing these programs would stall Maryland's progress in addressing the climate crisis and perpetuate harmful health disparities in overburdened communities. Additionally, it would undermine the state's ability to meet its legally mandated emissions reduction goals and jeopardize Maryland's leadership in advancing clean transportation solutions.

Maryland LCV urges the Committees to issue an unfavorable report on HB1258.