

Committee:	Environment and Transportation
Testimony on:	HB1088 Coal Dust Clean Up and Asthma Mitigation Fund
Submitted by:	Deborah A. Cohn
Position:	Favorable
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Dear Chair Korman and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing my testimony today in support of HB1088, the Coal Dust Clean UP and Asthma Mitigation Fund.

Maryland currently charges an 8-cent per barrel fee for oil transport through our state, allocating the revenues to address damage from oil spills. HB1088 creates a similar fee (\$13.00 per short ton) on coal transported in Maryland. The fee would be used to address the health and climate change impacts of coal transport through Maryland.

Coal Dust Adversely Impacts Health: Coal dust from surface transportation of coal can significantly impact health, primarily by causing or aggravating various respiratory conditions including asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases such as emphysema and chronic bronchitis.¹

Climate Change Costs and Threats to Maryland: Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the combustion of coal exacerbate climate change. Climate change is a world-wide existential threat. Maryland is not immune. We have already spent \$228 million for flood prevention in Ellicott City, \$84 million for tidal protection in Annapolis, and \$950,000 annually for stormwater infrastructure in St. Mary's County.

Estimates indicate that HB1088 would provide at least \$300 million per year to address the health and climate change damage caused by combustion of coal. It would provide an estimated \$5 million annually for asthma treatment programs targeting residents living along coal transport routes. The revenues would also be used to increase home energy efficiency and electrification, reduce GHG emissions from commercial buildings, including multifamily housing, and supporting and facilitating use of electric vehicles (EVs), including school buses, EV charging equipment and mass transit, with 40 percent of revenues being used to support those communities most burdened by coal transport. **Critically, it brings in immediate resources in a tight budget year.**

Impact on Jobs at or En Route to the Port of Baltimore. The Port of Baltimore is the second largest coal export hub in the U.S. Concerns have been raised that the coal transport fee might lead to the diversion of coal to ports in other states which could lead to overall loss of jobs and investment at the Port, including federal funds for dredging shipping channels. The University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science analyzed this potential diversion risk, and issued its Analysis of Changes in coal transportation routes and costs in response to new fees for transit through Maryland. **That analysis suggests that the coal transport fee is unlikely to result in diversion of coal from the Port of Baltimore to the Port of Virginia** since for all mines in Northern Appalachia, which produce the vast majority of coal exported from the Port of Baltimore, the cost of diverting the coal would exceed the transport fee. Potentially, the small amount of coal from Central Appalachian mines that currently

¹ Ostro, et al, "Health impact assessment of PM2.5 from uncovered coal trains in the San Francisco Bay Area: Implications for global exposures," Environmental Research (July 1, 2024)
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0013935124006911>

export through the Port of Baltimore might divert this coal since the route to the Port of Virginia already is more cost-effective even without considering a transport fee.

With minimal diversion of coal moving through the Port of Baltimore as a result of the coal transport fee, CSX trains, and their workers moving coal through Maryland to the Port also should not be significantly impacted.

Impact on Jobs in Maryland. Estimating the jobs created from investment of \$300 million annually of coal transport fees was beyond the scope of the University of Maryland analysis. The job, health and greenhouse gas emission reduction impacts of investing these annual resources to increase home energy efficiency and electrification, reduce GHG emissions from commercial buildings and multifamily housing, increase purchases of EVs, EV school buses, and EV charging equipment, and investing in mass transit also need to be taken into account. Moreover, some portion of the revenue set aside to support those communities most burdened by coal transport will be invested in communities near the Port of Baltimore impacted by the coal dust.

For these reasons I respectfully request that this committee issue a FAVORABLE report on HB1088.