

HB1088: Coal Transportation Fee and Fossil Fuel Mitigation Fund (Coal Dust Cleanup and Asthma Remediation Act)

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FAVORABLE

Testimony submitted by:

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Coal dust is isn't just a Baltimore City issue. It affects all the communities along the coal route, including Western Maryland, where I live.

I am a health educator living near the border of Allegany and Garrett Counties. I live 5 miles from an active strip (surface) mine in Allegany County whose open scar and frequent dust clouds I see every time I drive east on I-68. I live about 20 miles from an underground coal mine, and when I drive southwest to the county seat in Oakland, I am following or being followed by numerous coal trucks servicing that mine.

CSX has major rail lines going through Cumberland — 12 miles to my east, a prime site for pick up not just for this coal but for regionally mined coal making its way east for further transport. Some of the coal mined near me is metallurgical coal, a grade of coal used to produce high-quality coke, the primary source of carbon used in steelmaking.

It is my understanding that getting met coal from this area of Appalachia to international markets may still be less expensive through Baltimore, even with this proposed coal transportation fee.

“This coal is blended at export terminals on the US East Coast for sale to international customers.” For example, see: Corsa Coal Corp.

<https://www.corsacoal.com/>

Allegany County, where Cumberland and CSX are situated, is the 2nd poorest county in the State, and extraction, processing, burning and transport of coal have left their mark on the health of our residents, through the air and in our streams.

Allegany County has the highest rate of “all cancers” in Maryland and ranks in the top quarter (18th out of 24) of counties with highest incidence of cardiovascular disease. Both cancers and cardiovascular disease have established links with air pollution, and historical and current coal mining (surface and deep mine) and combustion of coal are significant sources of this pollution.

<https://statecancerprofiles.cancer.gov/incidencerates/index.php?stateFIPS=24&areatype=county&cancer=001&race=00&sex=0&age=001&stage=999&year=0&type=incd&sortVariableName=rate&sortOrder=default&output=0#results>

<https://nccd.cdc.gov/DHDSPAtlas/Reports.aspx>

And latest data from the Maryland Department of Health on asthma by jurisdiction shows asthma rates two times higher in Allegany county compared to Maryland as a whole.

https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/mch/Documents/asthma_control/Profile_Allegany.pdf

The residents of western Maryland would greatly benefit from the remediation and coal dust containment this bill offers.

Please work for the passage of HB1088 for the wellbeing of us all.