

TESTIMONY ON HB 1545
Position: FAVORABLE
March 5, 2020
House Economic Matters Committee

Chairman Davis and Members of the Committee:

We support the Maryland Coal Community Transition Bill (HB1545, more formally listed as “Electric Generation - Transition from Fossil Fuels - Carbon Dioxide Emissions Rate and Transition Account”) which set a firm timetable for retiring Maryland’s coal plants.

Faith leaders are calling it by name: coal-fired plants in our poorest communities is an immoral demonstration of environmental injustice:

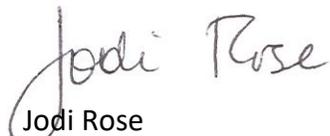
- Coal-fired plants have historically been sited in marginalized communities. The Chalk Point Generating Station was built adjacent to the oldest black community in Maryland (Eagle Harbor) and the discharge of the heated water is routed just outside its harbor on the Patuxent River. The Brandon Shores Power Plant and Herbert A. Wagner Generating Station are located near poor and disadvantaged communities in northern Anne Arundel County and southern Baltimore City. **Closing these plants is essential in order to truly fight for justice for all people and to eliminate disparities in how healthy the environment is in certain communities.**
- Specifically, in 2015, the Maryland Public Service Commission said: “If a proposed plant to be sited in Brandywine meets all legal requirements, the fact that other plants are located nearby is not a legal restriction to another one being built. This is true even though the negative impacts of a plant fall most severely upon Brandywine while the benefits are distributed across a much larger geographic area.”¹ **This is potent proof that “what is legal is not always moral.”** We must act to discontinue the disproportionate placement of environmental burden on a small number of communities. Communities are being locked out of decision-making, and their health is paying the price.

Maryland can do better. Our organization supports HB1545 because it will lead to a Maryland that doesn't generate carbon pollution from coal plants. This will finally protect marginalized communities from the detrimental health impacts from coal-fire emissions. And, this bill will produce a transition plan for employees of plants slated to close.

¹ Order No. 87243, Public Service Commission Case No. 9330, Docket. No. 126 (Nov. 13, 2015) at 10-11.

Maryland needs to be ready for the 21st century, and that means shutting down our coal plants.

Thank you for supporting HB1545 – for today and for tomorrow.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jodi Rose". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Jodi Rose
Executive Director