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Committee: Environment and Transportation

Testimony on: HB 1247- Environment - Advanced Clean Cars II Program - Application and Enforcement

Position: Oppose

Hearing Date: March 8, 2024

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club opposes HB 1247. The bill would prohibit the Advanced Clean Cars II regulations from being effective before Vehicle Model Year 2030. The bill also prohibits the Maryland Department of Environment from enforcing the bill on vehicle manufacturers that fail to meet the requirements.

The Advanced Clean Cars II regulations require vehicle manufacturers to sell an increasing percentage of light-duty zero-emission vehicles and plug-in hybrids from Model Year 2027 through 2035. Section 177 of the Clean Air Act allows states to adopt vehicle emissions standards that are more strict than federal standards if they are identical to those adopted by the state of California. The Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) has been a part of the highly successful Clean Cars program since 2007 and is required under Maryland law to adopt and maintain the Clean Cars regulations as they are adopted, including the recent Advanced Clean Cars II program.

Transportation is the largest source of climate-damaging greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and a leading source of toxic air pollution that is hazardous to human health. Gasoline-fueled vehicles account for 76% of GHG emissions from the on-road transportation sector according to the 2020 Greenhouse Gas Inventory. The MDE's Climate Pollution Reduction Plan has indicated that the Advanced Clean Cars II regulation is a key strategy needed for Maryland to reach its climate targets.

The Advanced Clean Cars II program is also necessary to combat unhealthy air pollution. Almost half of Maryland's total NOx emissions—approximately 41.3 percent—are attributable to pollution from vehicles on Maryland's roads. Residential neighborhoods located near major roads and highways face disproportionate burdens from transportation pollution. These neighborhoods are often communities of color due to decades of residential segregation, and bear the burden of higher rates of cancer, heart disease, chronic respiratory diseases and premature death.

The Advanced Clean Cars II regulations should be implemented and enforced without delay in order to meet our climate targets, improve public health, and clean our air. We strongly recommend an unfavorable report on this bill.

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Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America's oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 70,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has over 800,000 members and nearly four million supporters.