



Time to Move Maryland Beyond Coal

Maryland needs to phase out coal plants & support impacted workers

Senate Bill 887 | House Bill 1545



69%

of Maryland voters
**support setting a
schedule for
when coal power
plants should close.**



Burning coal for electricity is a 19th century technology that is dangerously heating our planet, changing our climate, and making our families and communities sick. Maryland cannot meet its climate action goals and transition to a clean energy economy while continuing to burn coal for power. In 2020, we need a plan to phase out our state's coal-fired power plants and support the impacted workforce with a fossil fuel worker transition plan.

Across the country, over 300 coal plants have retired or announced retirement. Yet Maryland still has six old, large coal-fired power plants in Anne Arundel, Montgomery, Prince George's, Charles, and Allegany Counties.

Coal plants are the #2 source of in-state climate pollution. In 2017 Maryland's coal plants provided less than 14% of the state's electricity but generated over 75% of climate pollution from in-state electricity generators.

Over 85% of Marylanders live in counties that do not meet EPA healthy air standards for smog pollution, and our coal plants are a major source of smog-forming pollution. Smog exacerbates respiratory problems like asthma, which disproportionately impacts children, the elderly, and communities of color in Maryland.

Other states – like New York, New Mexico, and Washington – have enacted coal transition policies. Coal plants are on their way out across the country, but we need a plan for Maryland. 60 national and sub-national governments, including 8 US States are members of the Powering Past Coal Alliance.

What will the bill do?

This legislation will set a firm timetable for retiring Maryland's coal plants by establishing appropriate emissions standards under Maryland's Healthy Air Act. It also will create a Fossil Fuel Community Transition Account, governed by those who will be most impacted by the power plant closures, and supported by a dedicated, protected funding stream. Funding could be used for worker retraining, filling wage gaps, supplemental retirement security, and supporting the tax-bases of affected localities.

Clean Renewable Energy & Climate Action. Not Coal.

- In 2018, in response to the climate crisis, members of the Maryland Commission on Climate Change recommended the state adopt a specific, enforceable plan to retire its remaining coal plants and establish a transition for workers and communities.
- Under the Clean Energy Jobs Act, Maryland is committed to generating more than enough clean renewable electricity from in-state solar and offshore wind to replace the electricity from Maryland's coal plants by 2025, and possibly earlier.
- Coal-fired power plants in Maryland are only required to provide 90 days' notice before deactivation. 90 days is not enough time for workers and communities to prepare for a facility closure – the state must start planning now for fossil fuel workers facing job loss.
- Maryland's Draft Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan found that best practices for transition off of fossil fuel facilities include providing a "timeline for the phase-out of activities" and creating "worker training programs that facilitate the transfer of employees to new jobs." This bill will implement some of the best practices already identified by the state.
- Future power plant decisions must consider the climate crisis. A bill this session (SB656; HB531) would require the PSC to consider Maryland's climate goals when approving new facilities.

Support 2020 legislation to move Maryland beyond coal, and protect impacted workers and communities. To get involved, contact David Smedick (david.smedick@sierraclub.org) and Lossa Zenebe (lossa.zenebe@sierraclub.org).

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