



# Time to Move Maryland Beyond Coal

*Maryland needs to phase out coal plants and support impacted workers and Communities – Senate Bill 148  
– House Bill 66*



## 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 2021, 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, nearly 300 coal plants have retired or announced retirement.** In 2020, Maryland entered the year with six active dirty coal-fired plants and ended the year with five of the six plants that have either retired or have announced plans to retire.

**In 2020, the bipartisan Maryland Commission on Climate Change recommended the state transition off of all of its dirty coal plants by no later than 2030.** The Commission, made up of scientists, union leaders, & business representatives also recommended the state establish a coal transition plan to support impacted workers & communities.

**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.

**Maryland's Coal Plants are a significant source of toxic water pollution.** The state's coal-burning power plants discharge toxic heavy metals like mercury, arsenic, & selenium. Arsenic causes cancer; mercury impairs brain development in children; & Selenium damages the nervous system.

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

**Maryland already pledged itself to clean electricity generation.** 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.

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## What will the bill do?

The Maryland Coal Community Transition Act of 2021 will set firm retirement dates for Maryland's remaining coal-burning plants, moving the state beyond coal by no later than 2030. The retirement dates are both in line with international timetables for climate action and consistent with the recent plant retirement announcements from Maryland coal plant owners.

Next, the legislation establishes a Fossil Fuel Transition Account, including an initial \$40 million of funding, which can be used to support workers who face layoffs because of a coal facility closure, support local governments who potentially face a loss in tax revenue, and incentivize new energy efficiency and clean energy projects in affected communities.

Lastly, this legislation initiates a longer-term planning process that centers the need for a more just transition away from dirty fossil fuel facilities, one that prioritizes impacted communities workers, historically polluted communities, and economic development.

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Support 2021 legislation to move Maryland beyond coal, and protect impacted workers and communities. To get involved, contact David Smedick ([david.smedick@sierraclub.org](mailto:david.smedick@sierraclub.org)), Lossa Zenebe ([lossa.zenebe@sierraclub.org](mailto:lossa.zenebe@sierraclub.org)), and Teresa Ball ([teresa.ball@mdsierra.org](mailto:teresa.ball@mdsierra.org))

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