



Legislation Text

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The official copy considered by the City Council is the first reader copy.

Introductory*

City of Baltimore Council Bill R (Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Burnett

A Resolution Entitled

A Council Resolution concerning **Supporting Coal Community Transition Legislation in Maryland**

For the purpose of urging the Maryland General Assembly to pass and the Governor to sign legislation establishing a clear and enforceable commitment to finally move Maryland beyond coal-fired power plants, and to create a Coal Community Transition Fund to support impacted communities and workers.

Recitals

In 2016, Maryland enacted a law requiring the state to reduce climate pollution 40% below 2006 levels by 2030. Despite these long-term efforts, the City is presently in non-attainment for the National Ambient Air Quality Standard for ground-level ozone pollution.

Currently, there are 6 remaining coal-fired power plants in Maryland, including two coal plants operating in close proximity to Baltimore, the Herbert Wagner Plant and the Brandon Shores Plant, located in Anne Arundel County. Together, all 6 plants emitted 9 million metric tons of climate disrupting carbon pollution, equivalent to over 40% of passenger vehicles on the road in Maryland.

Four of the state's remaining coal plants, including the Brandon Shores plant, routinely discharge arsenic, selenium, and mercury in concentrations that exceed the Environmental Protection Agency's Effluent Limitation Guidelines. In fact, a 2011 Natural Resources Defense Council report found that the Brandon Shores plant released the second highest amount of toxic air pollutants annually of any plant in the nation, approximately 13.1 million pounds. Furthermore, this plant discharges toxic metals directly into the Patapsco river.

Three of the state's remaining coal plants, including the Herbert Wagner plant, are operating without state-of-the-art pollution controls for smog-forming nitrogen oxides. Moreover, the Herbert Wagner plant is operating without state-of-the-art pollution controls for harmful sulfur dioxide and is one of the highest emitting power plants for sulfur dioxide (in lb/MMBtu) in the region.

It is well-documented that elevated sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide levels are leading causes of respiratory ailments such as asthma. Indeed, the asthma hospitalization rate in Baltimore is double the rate in Maryland and nearly triple the national average. Measures of poverty, especially median household income, are strongly correlated with asthma hospitalization and emergency room visit rates in Baltimore.

The Maryland General Assembly should consider Coal Community Transition legislation that would establish greenhouse gas emissions standards for coal plants. In effect, the legislation should set pollution standards that force the closure of Maryland's 6 remaining coal-fired power plants by 2025. Noting this impact, the legislation should create a transition fund for Maryland communities affected by the phase-out of coal-fired plants. This fund should set aside monies annually to protect and support communities and workers traditionally reliant on these fossil fuel facilities. Specifically, the fund should provide job retraining assistance necessary to allow displaced workers to re-enter the workforce in a timely manner, support the growth of clean energy projects in impacted communities and the redevelopment of the former power plant sites, add new family-sustaining, and wherever possible, union jobs to the local clean energy economy, and be governed by communities and appropriate constituencies to ensure local control of community benefits.

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the City Council of Baltimore, That the Baltimore City Council urges the Maryland General Assembly to pass and the Governor to sign legislation establishing a clear and enforceable commitment to finally move Maryland beyond coal-fired power plants and to create a Coal Community Transition Fund to support impacted communities and workers.

And be it further resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to *the Governor, the Honorable Chairs and Members of the Baltimore City House and Senate Delegations to the Maryland General Assembly, the President of the Maryland Senate, the Maryland House*

Speaker, the Honorable Chair of the House Economic Matters Committee, the Honorable Chair of the House Environment and Transportation Committee, the Honorable Chair of the Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee, the Mayor, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.