



Charles County Government

CHARLES COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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February 16, 2021

**Committee: Economic Matters**

**Testimony on: HB0066 – “Maryland Coal Community Transition Act of 2021”**

**Position: Favorable**

**Hearing Date: February 18, 2021**

Chairman Davis, Vice Chairwoman Dumais, and members of the Economic Matters Committee,

As the Commissioner President in Charles County, I respectfully request favorable action on HB0066, the Maryland Coal Community Transition Act of 2021.

Charles County is working to be a leader on growing the clean energy economy in an effort to build a thriving local economy and to ensure that our residents breathe healthy air, have clean water, and are doing their part to combat climate change. For more than 50 years our County has been home to the Morgantown coal-fired power plant, which, while it has provided energy to our homes and businesses and jobs to our local economy, is also a major source of air, water, and climate pollution. As we have witnessed across the nation, coal power plants are closing at an alarming rate, and I am looking to proactively lead our County in the response to this shifting energy landscape.

In December 2020, GenOn Holdings announced that they will retire their coal-fired electricity units at the Morgantown power plant by no later than 2027. This shifting energy landscape is at our doorstep and I am requesting the General Assembly’s support in managing the transition off coal across the entire state and in Charles County.

HB0066 provides the certainty Charles County needs to know that the coal transition will happen, and our air and water will be cleaner for it. Critically, though, the bill provides frameworks for economic support and recovery as we face the loss of this facility.

Charles County needs a seat at the table when the state is making decisions on managing the transition off coal. We need transition programs and planning processes like those in HB0066 to help aid local governments and communities facing this generational shift to the clean energy economy and away from fossil fuels. President Biden has recently announced that he is establishing an Interagency Working Group on revitalizing coal power plant communities. HB0066 will help ensure Charles County is primed and ready to work with the state and federal governments to plan for a more responsible transition away from fossil fuel facilities than we have seen in the past across the country.

Please provide a favorable report on HB0066. Thank you for your consideration.

Letter Identifier (Re: Line)

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Date

Respectfully,

/s/

Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq.

Charles County Commissioner President