



HoCoClimateAction.org
Howard County, Maryland

Testimony in SUPPORT of – HB0613, Prince George’s County – Coal– and Gas–Fired Generating Stations – Prohibitions

Hearing Date: February 23, 2021

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Julian Ivey

Committee: Economic Matters

Submitting: Ruth White for Howard County Climate Action

Position: Favorable

[HoCo Climate Action](#) -- a [350.org](#) local chapter and a grassroots organization representing more than 1,450 subscribers, and a member of the Howard County Climate Collaboration -- supports HB0613, Prince George’s County – Coal– and Gas–Fired Generating Stations – Prohibitions.

We have been educating ourselves and others in Howard County about the climate crisis for more than 13 years. We have supported and advocated for climate action legislation at the county, state and federal level and strongly support legislation promoting clean energy.

Power plants in Prince George’s County are clustered in a small geographic area adversely affecting the health and well-being of a majority minority community. We understand the intent of this legislation, an emergency measure is to halt Public Service Commission approval of any additional coal or gas fired power plants in Prince George’s County. This local bill is essential to prevent further harm to the health and well-being of county residents.

Within a 15 mile radius there are:

- Four fuel-fired power plants
- A contaminated Superfund Site (Brandywine DRMO)
- Toxic metals from the North Keys Coal Ash Disposal
- A landfill adjacent to a community playground
- Toxic waste treatment facilities
- Multiple sand and gravel mines
- Highly congested diesel truck traffic resulting in diesel pollution

Several years ago when staff from the Public Service Commission spoke to a community meeting at the request of Sen. Mike Miller, they explained how the community can appeal PSC decisions. When asked why so much pollution was located in the same area they were told that one reason is land is cheap here, and the PSC had no requirement to consider the health of local residents. We are shocked that there has been no process to consider the people who live in the area, or to consider the impact of carbon pollution on the planet.

The coal plants in this county are scheduled to close by June, 2021 and given the national move away from coal, new ones are not going to be scheduled. Frack-gas-fired power plants also cause air pollution and are as great a contributor to the climate crisis. In this state and region, gas comes from our neighboring fracking states. The lifecycle of gas from the fracking pad, through the leaky pipelines and the compressions stations which periodically vent plumes of methane, makes gas as climate polluting as coal over a 20 year period..

Fracked gas is methane which is 84 times more potent than CO2 for climate warming over a 20 year period.. But we can't solve the climate crisis if we continue to pollute for the next 20 years. And gas power plants will last for 30 or 40 years and are an investment that if built will continue to pollute into a future in which we must stop using fossil fuels, creating a climate that will not support civilization if we don't rapidly reduce greenhouse gases now.

Maryland gets only about half of its electricity from power plants in Maryland. Maryland is part of the PJM grid. The PJM grid does not need new power plants in Prince George's county. Studies show the PJM grid repeatedly buys more energy than it needs, which is costly for its customers. Maryland needs to move rapidly to clean renewable energy.

<https://www.utilitydive.com/news/pjm-over-forecasting-costs-consumers-up-to-44b-for-unneeded-energy-capacity/574264/#:~:text=PJM%20auctions%20consistently%20led%20to,the%20grid%20operator's%20reserve%20margin.ants>

For these reasons, we urge approval of HB613.

HoCo Climate Action

HoCoClimateAction@gmail.com -

Submitted by Ruth White Steering and Advocacy Committee, Columbia MD

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