

Committees: Economic Matters

Testimony on: HB 613 - "Prince George's County Stop Environmentally Unjust Coal and Gas Plants Act of 2021"

Organization: Climate Parents of Prince George's

Person Submitting: Joseph Jakuta, Lead Volunteer

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: February 25, 2021

Climate Parents of Prince George's supports HB 613, "Prince George's County Stop Environmentally Unjust Coal and Gas Plants Act of 2021"

Prince George's County has too long had to bear the burden of unhealthy air due to generation of power within our borders. This legislation is needed so Prince George's County no longer is burdened with such a large share of Maryland's power generation.

Pollution data from power plants are available from the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Clean Air Markets Division (CAMD). When looking at data from active units in 2019, one can see the burden Prince George's County faces. Prince George's County has, by far, more power producing units than any other county in the state of Maryland (Prince George's County is the only county with more than ten units). These units produce the second most oxides of Nitrogen (NOX) emissions and the fourth most SO₂ emissions of any county in Maryland. These are pollutants linked with asthma exacerbation and other lung problems and also lead to the formation of fine particulate, which leads to premature death. This is all occurring in a county in which the majority of persons are people of color.

All of these power plants also are confined to Southern Prince George's County. The communities in this area most directly breathe the NOX and SO₂ emissions reported by EPA. Additionally they breathe in the hazardous air pollution that leaks from the methane pipelines that fuel the gas facilities at Brandywine and Chalk Point. Given how few areas of Prince George's County are zoned Industrial 2 (I-2) and the locations of existing methane pipelines, it is almost guaranteed that any additional power plants will be placed in the same communities further increasing their acute pollution exposure.

While we hope that when new generation needs to come online in Maryland the Public Service Commission will focus on bringing online clean energy sources that do not cause physical harm to people that live near by them, we can say for certain that the people of Southern Prince George's County can longer bear the burden of supporting dirty fossil fuel power generation. Prince George's County already has fourteen separate units producing pollution our people breathe and we cannot have any more.

We encourage a FAVORABLE report for this important legislation.