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February 11, 2021

The Honorable Kumar Barve, Chairman
Members of the Environment & Transportation Committee

RE: Oppose HB-583

REPRESENTATIVES

CUMBERLAND
Local 430
VACANT

Local 600
JASON WEAVER

BRUNSWICK
Local 631
TOM CAHILL

EDMONSTON
Local 1470
KENZELL CRAWFORD

BALTIMORE
Local 610
JOHNNY WALKER

Local 1949
ERIC BILSON

As the Maryland Legislative Director for the Transportation Division of the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Worker's (SMART) and on behalf of our members we would like to express our opposition to HB-583 as currently written.

We are the largest rail labor union in North America. Our members in Maryland are employees of CSX, Norfolk Southern Railway, Amtrak, Bombardier (MARC Service) and the Canton Railroad and work as conductors, engineers, switchmen, trainmen, utility persons and yardmasters. Our members operate freight and passenger trains that travel throughout the State of Maryland and throughout the Northeast Rail Corridor. SMART represents over 216,000 members throughout the country.

HB-583 would require the State to reduce statewide greenhouse gas emissions by 60% from 2006 levels by 2030, require the State to achieve net-zero statewide greenhouse gas emissions by 2045 and require the Maryland Department of Labor to adopt regulations establishing certain energy conservation requirements. These are all laudable goals that we support, but how we get there and who suffers the consequences along the way is the problem.

As a representative of workers, I can tell you the most important thing next to their safety in the workplace is job security. When legislation will have an affect on who gets to remain employed once it's implemented it requires great scrutiny. What's missing in this legislation is a real answer as to what a just transition is to an affected worker. You can establish all the committees and study groups you want to evaluate the affects, but to support legislation on a promise of a just transition without defining it would be imprudent. If it is the legislature's intent to proffer bold legislation that will drastically impact working families, the legislature should be bold enough to accept responsibility and define a just transition within the legislation.

Also, carbon capture processes are a promising technology. To eliminate its affect as part of a greenhouse gas emission reduction measure would be imprudent too. Technologies that are focused on improving the quality of air, water and the like should be encourage not excluded.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our position on this matter.

Sincerely,

Lawrence E. Kasecamp
MD State Legislative Director
SMART Transportation Division