



Memorandum of Support

S.2994 (Harckham)

Purpose: S.2994 would prohibit the use of #4 fuel oil after July 1, 2029.

Statement of Support:

Fuel oils are what remain from petroleum distillation after the lighter fractions like gasoline and kerosene have been removed. Number 4 fuel oil is a commercial heating oil used in furnaces or boilers to generate heat or in engines to generate power.

Fuel oil grade number four can contain high amounts of pollutants, especially cancer-causing polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and sulfur, a respiratory irritant which forms sulfur dioxide when it burns. Combustion of #4 fuel oil forms soot, which sends fine airborne particles which are easily inhaled into the atmosphere. However, this viscous, dirty fuel is relatively cheap and is still used in some industrial boilers and old buildings. "In 2011 New York City estimated that the 1% of its buildings that burned fuel oils No. 4 and No. 6 were responsible for 86% of the soot pollution generated by all buildings in the city." Burning this oil also releases carbon dioxide, which exacerbates climate change.

While all fossil fuels cause a worsening of climate change and therefore need to be replaced with clean energy, the low price of natural gas until recently and concerns with pollution have already caused the conversion of many buildings using #4 fuel oil to less polluting fuel. The fine particulate matter and sulfur dioxide produced by this fuel oil causes serious health impacts to humans, including premature death from lung cancer and cardiovascular disease, as well as childhood asthma, especially in the frontline neighborhoods where the fuel is burned.

Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter supports this bill to ensure the final phaseout of #4 fuel oil, which will result in cleaner air and better health for our communities, plus reduction of carbon dioxide emissions which contribute to climate change.

The Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter Urges Your Support of S.2994