

Testimony Supporting HB438 / SB560
House Economic Matters Committee / Senate Finance Committee
February 20, 2020 / February 25, 2020

Position: SUPPORT

As a voter in district 43 and a Maryland ratepayer, I am writing to express my strong support of HB438/SB560 and the effort to remove trash incineration from Maryland's Renewable Portfolio Standard. I respectfully encourage the committee and leaders in Maryland to pursue truly clean, renewable, and sustainable waste reduction and energy solutions in lieu of incineration.

As a resident of Maryland, one of the things I appreciate most about living in this state is the opportunity to get out and enjoy our beautiful parks and natural resources. Not everyone has that luxury. Communities located closest to the BRESKO incinerator are facing hazardous air quality levels and significantly higher rates of asthma as a result of the pollutants put into the air by burning trash. By continuing to subsidize incineration we are forcing people to pollute their own communities. In total the adverse health outcomes associated with incineration are estimated to cost our state \$55 million. And we're not only putting people's immediate health at risk; incineration has greater greenhouse gas emissions per unit of energy than burning coal-- putting our entire state at greater risk from the accelerating impacts of climate change.

As a resident of Baltimore, and someone involved in the green sector, I am excited by the economic possibilities in renewable energy industries. We have the potential to use untapped skills in our labor pool, to put people back to work in living-wage careers in wind and solar and create new opportunities through zero waste strategies. Expanding recycling and composting has the ability to create 5-10 times more jobs than incineration. Jobs in the solar industry have grown locally and have been accessible and attractive to many Baltimoreans, with low-barriers to entry and opportunities for strong career pathways. Baltimore is already on a path to zero waste with commitments from Mayor Pugh in the 2019 Office of Sustainability plan-- continuing to subsidize incineration would be counterproductive to these more sustainable strategies.

Burning trash is not clean energy, and Maryland's renewable energy subsidies should be used to support truly green energy like wind and solar, not trash incineration that pollutes our communities. I respectfully urge the House Economic Matters Committee to support HB438/SB560 and end subsidies for trash incineration in Maryland. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Allie Busching