

Testimony for HB 438: Removing trash incineration from the RPS

Good afternoon, I am Lauren Greenberger, President of Sugarloaf Citizens Association.

We know that waste incineration is horribly polluting – Covanta will tell you they operate below EPA requirements but that still means they are putting over 600,000 tons of GHG in the air annually and dozens of other toxins including 24 pounds of mercury – one gram of mercury can render a whole reservoir undrinkable. Our incinerator is 5-25 times more polluting, depending on the toxin, per unit of energy produced than a coal-fired power plant. Would you consider subsidizing coal plants through the RPS??

By keeping trash incineration in the RPS we are subsidizing this polluter and, more importantly, taking away from the expansion of wind and solar production – industries we desperately need to combat global warming.

While George Bush was still governor of Texas, he signed a Renewable Portfolio Standard bill into law. The Texas RPS law caused the dirty utilities to have to invest in truly renewable energy. They turned to wind power, making Texas second to California in wind generation and causing more wind power to be installed in Texas (912 MW) than in the rest of the U.S. combined (775 MW) in 2001 (!) This is the power of a CLEAN RPS.

Now I know there are rumors that taking away this subsidy will make electric bills go up. This is ludicrous – electric bills will go DOWN because PURPA charges will be reduced. The incinerator industry does not set the market price, they sell to the grid and can charge ongoing market rates. If subsidies are eliminated, the incinerator industry will lose some revenue and rate-payers will pay a little bit less – that's it.

Thank you for your attention.

2.20.2020