

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 168
Electricity - Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard - Qualifying Biomass
Senate Finance Committee | February 4, 2020

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The Chesapeake Climate Action Network (CCAN) Action Fund supports Senate Bill 168, legislation to remove black liquor from the Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard (RPS). We thank Chair Delores Kelley for sponsoring this legislation to further ensure resources dedicated to clean energy truly go to renewables like wind and solar.

CCAN Action Fund and our grassroots network throughout Maryland is dedicated to achieving a net zero greenhouse gas emission economy by 2045, as is recommended by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). To create this future, we must invest in frontline and historically disadvantaged communities, protect workers, create good-paying union jobs, and result in greater wealth and income equality.

According to the Maryland Department of Environment (MDE), greenhouse gas emissions from the electricity sector make up about 30% of the state's climate pollution, making it the second-largest climate change contributor in the state behind transportation. The General Assembly took a huge step towards reducing these emissions when it passed the Clean Energy Jobs Act last year, requiring 50% clean electricity by 2030.

Unfortunately, the definition of "clean" in state law still includes some forms of electricity generation that emit greenhouse gases. Black liquor, in particular, has most recently made up 15% of Maryland's RPS. More than 90% of that black liquor electricity generation has come from out-of-state, subsidizing non-Maryland polluters. With the closing of Luke Mill, that will become 100% if this bill is not enacted.

Instead of subsidizing out-of-state pollution, we can free up Renewable Energy Credits for in-state solar and wind jobs. This is especially important because reducing emissions in the transportation and building sectors is dependent on electrification of vehicles and building infrastructure. This legislation is another key step in the path to 100% clean electricity.

CCAN Action Fund urges the Committee to give SB 168 a favorable report.

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