



Protecting Our Rural Legacy

Linden Farm, 20900 Martinsburg Rd., PO Box 218, Dickerson, MD 20842 • Tel. 301-349-4889
www.SugarloafCitizens.org

Testimony for SB 560: Removing trash incineration from the RPS

2.25.2020

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

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 as clean energy?? This is the number one largest polluter in the county and number two in the whole state.

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). 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 current market rates. If subsidies are eliminated, the incinerator industry will lose some revenue, but ratepayers will pay a little bit less – that's it. Market rates will not increase. And the fiscal note clearly tells us Maryland can easily meet its 50% renewable goal without trash incineration.



Protecting Our Rural Legacy

Linden Farm, 20900 Martinsburg Rd., PO Box 218, Dickerson, MD 20842 • Tel. 301-349-4889
www.SugarloafCitizens.org

This bill does not call for the closure of any incinerators. Just to stop allowing money earmarked for growing the clean energy sector to be sent to incinerators. No jobs will be lost, no new landfills will be built. And if, at some point in the future, the incinerators were to close, there are many more jobs in zero waste industries than incineration. Recology in San Francisco provides hundreds of well-paid union jobs to manage their waste. Residual waste that could not be composted or recycled could safely and economically go via rail to remote modern landfills with 75% methane capture rates in Ohio, Tennessee or North Carolina. New York City has been doing this for years.

It is also important to note that, because Montgomery County owns the Dickerson incinerator, Covanta has not been getting the REC's for it the past 12 years, the County has. They will lose nothing. County Executive Elrich has purposely NOT included the income from RECs in his current budget estimates because he fully supports removing incineration from the RPS. He recognizes how foolish it is for our community and our planet to be pouring money into dirty technology that could be going to clean.

Please support truly clean industry across the state that provides good, well-paying jobs and a path forward for all our children that will mitigate the devastating effects of GHG emitting industries.

We ask for a favorable report on this bill.

Thank you so much for your attention.