



# CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

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*Environmental Protection and Restoration  
Environmental Education*

## **SenateBill 677**

Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard - Municipal Electric Utilities

**DATE: FEBRUARY 25, 2020**

**POSITION: OPPOSE**

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**The Chesapeake Bay Foundation opposes Senate Bill 677 as an erosion of the State's Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard.** SB 677 limits the annual percentage requirements of the State's Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard for municipal electric utilities to 20.4% in total, including 1.95% from solar energy and up to 2.5% from offshore wind.

In 2019, the General Assembly passed landmark legislation to increase Maryland's Renewable Energy Portfolio Standards. These Standards aim to confront greenhouse gas emissions and slow climate change. While the 2019 law included some exemptions for cooperative utilities comparable to this legislation, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation is wary of any steps back from the State's commitments to reduce greenhouse gases.

Maryland is one of the most vulnerable states to climate change impacts, several of which are already being observed. Climate change has immediate and drastic impacts on the Chesapeake Bay. Warmer climates mean warmer waters, which decreases dissolved oxygen and exacerbates the Bay's fish-killing "dead zones" and contributes to algal blooms. Rising water temperatures stress fish and reduce the populations from the Bay's iconic striped bass to brook trout. Other temperature-sensitive species such as eel grass, a critical habitat plant, are at risk.

The reduction of climate-impacting greenhouse gases is critical to achieving Bay clean-up goals. Atmospheric deposition of nitrogen is the highest nitrogen input load in the Chesapeake Bay. The principle sources of oxidized nitrogen, also called NO<sub>x</sub>, are air emissions from industrial-sized boilers such as electric power plants and internal combustion engines in cars, trucks, and airplanes.

**For these reasons, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation recommends an unfavorable report on SB 677 from the Finance Committee.** For questions or more information, please contact Robin Clark Eilenberg, Staff Attorney, at 443.482.2165 or [reilenberg@cbf.org](mailto:reilenberg@cbf.org).

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*The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 300,000 members and e-subscribers, including over 107,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.*