



Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Testimony in Support

HB 166- Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard - Eligible Sources - Alterations (Reclaim Renewable Energy Act of 2024)

To: Chair C.T. Wilson and members of the Economic Matters Committee
From: Phil Webster, PhD
Lead Advocate on Climate Change
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland.
Date: March 7, 2024

The Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland (UULM-MD) strongly supports **HB 166 - Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard - Eligible Sources - Alterations (Reclaim Renewable Energy Act of 2023)** and urges a FAVORABLE report by the committee.

The UULM-MD is a statewide faith-based advocacy organization, with over 1,200 members, based on the Principles of Unitarian Universalism. Unitarian Universalists believe in *“justice and equity in human relations”* and *“respect for the interconnected web of all existence of which we are a part.”*

We believe that renewable energy should not add greenhouse gasses to the atmosphere. We support passing this legislation to ensure that Maryland ratepayers are getting what they’re paying for: renewable energy dollars going to support actual renewable energy.

This bill would eliminate Trash Incineration from Maryland’s Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS). Trash incineration is a simple “solution” to a very complicated problem. Burning trash maximizes pollution, especially when it is used in lieu of implementing a comprehensive solution, which would include composting, recycling, and reusing products. Incinerating trash disincentivizes better alternatives for handling our trash. So it defies logic for incineration to be classified as a source of renewable energy; it’s not!

Since 2008, Maryland ratepayers have spent over \$200 million on Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) from dirty sources misclassified as “renewable.” That money should have been supporting those communities that have borne the brunt of harmful pollution.

Three years ago, the legislature wisely eliminated black liquor, a polluting paper mill byproduct, from the RPS. That action freed up money that was being wasted to support real renewable energy instead. For all the good reasons the legislature eliminated black liquor from the RPS, we urge you to pass the Reclaim Renewable Energy Act (SB 146) in 2023.

All Marylanders need bold and urgent action! Please keep us on the right and moral path towards a livable climate and a sustainable world. We owe it to our children.

We support this bill and urge a FAVORABLE report in committee.

Phil Webster, PhD

Lead Advocate, Climate Change UULM-MD