



HB0166

Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard- Eligible Alterations (Reclaim Renewable Energy Act of 2024).

Economic Matters

March 7, 2024

FAVORABLE (SUPPORT)

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility (CPSR) supports HB0166. We are a statewide evidenced-based, organization of over 900 physicians, and other health professionals and supporters, that addresses the existential public health threats: nuclear weapons, the climate crisis and the issues of pollution and toxics' effect on health as seen through the intersectional lens of environmental, social and racial justice. As an organization founded by physicians, we understand that prevention is far superior to treatment in reducing costs; death, illness, injury, and suffering.

Incineration should come out of the Renewable Portfolio Standard and should never have been there in the first place. Waste-to-energy incineration is more polluting and produces more CO₂ per unit of energy than even coal fired power plants.¹ Incineration emits nitrous oxide (N₂O), another greenhouse gas² which is emitted during the combustion of solid waste. Trucks hauling waste to and from incinerators are an important source of additional greenhouse gases.³

This bill is not intended to shut down incinerators, only to remove subsidies that are designed for clean renewable energy. Removing incinerators will allow credits to go to and subsidize truly renewable energy. Incinerators out of state and in state should not be entitled to receive credits from the Renewable Portfolio Standards.

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility is concerned by the additional health harms from incineration including Baltimore's Wheelabrator municipal waste incinerator, which was identified as the single largest industrial polluter in Baltimore in 2017.⁴ It emits mercury, dioxin,

¹ <https://environmentalintegrity.org/news/eip-report-waste-to-energy-incinerators-pollute-more-per-of-hour-of-energy-than-coal-fired-power-plants-and-are-not-renewable/>

² <https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/overview-greenhouse-gases#nitrous-oxide>

³ [https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/sources-greenhouse-gas-emissions#:~:text=Transportation%20\(28%25%20of%202021%20greenhouse,ships%2C%20trains%2C%20and%20p lanes.](https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/sources-greenhouse-gas-emissions#:~:text=Transportation%20(28%25%20of%202021%20greenhouse,ships%2C%20trains%2C%20and%20p lanes.)

⁴ <https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/environment/bs-md-trash-incineration-20171107-story.html>

nitrogen oxides and just one year's direct and indirect health costs from PM2.5 (fine and ultrafine particulate matter) in Maryland was estimated to be nearly \$22 million.⁵ This bill won't eliminate that pollution, because it doesn't shut the incinerators down. It just eliminates a subsidy incinerator shouldn't have been receiving in the first place. Spending that money, that has been profiting the trash incinerators, on renewable energy development instead, will clean our grid and clean our air.

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility supports HB0166, removing incineration from the Renewable Portfolio Standards. We should not be subsidizing that which is increasing greenhouse gases and other health harms.

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⁵ <https://www.cbf.org/document-library/cbf-reports/thurston-wheelabrator-health-impacts-2017.pdf>