



Committee: Economic Matters
Testimony on: HB166 - Reclaim Renewable Energy Act of 2024
Organization: Climate Justice Wing of the Maryland Legislative Coalition
Submitting: Laurie McGilvray, Co-Chair
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: March 7, 2024

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of HB166. The Maryland Legislative Coalition Climate Justice Wing, a statewide coalition of nearly 30 grassroots and professional organizations, urges you to vote favorably on HB166.

The Reclaim Renewable Energy Act of 2024 (HB166) will clean up the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) by retaining subsidies for truly renewable energy sources and removing subsidies for a problematic dirty energy source, i.e., trash incineration. As Maryland moves aggressively toward meeting its ambitious greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction goals, we need to align all available incentives toward clean sources of energy and stop incentivizing polluting sources like trash incineration.

Trash incineration was only added to Tier 1 of the RPS in 2011, making it part of the same subsidized category as wind and solar. Maryland needs to stop wasting money subsidizing trash incineration. We need to put our money where our mouth is by focusing ratepayer money for “renewable energy” on truly renewable sources that will help us meet our GHG reduction goals. The Maryland Commission on Climate Change and Governor Moore agree. In the Governor’s Climate Pollution Reduction Plan, released at the end of December, and in the Commission’s 2023 Annual Report there are recommendations to remove trash incineration from the RPS.

In addition, this is the year to do it! Maryland must find the \$1 billion needed each year to achieve its climate goals, as called for in Maryland’s Climate Pollution Reduction Plan. The total subsidies to trash incinerators from Maryland’s RPS in 2022 were \$24.7 million. The Reclaim Renewable Energy Act will redistribute this subsidy, which ratepayers already waste on trash incinerators (including out-of-state facilities) to truly renewable energy sources like solar and wind facilities in Maryland.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge that trash incineration is not “clean energy” and does not belong in the RPS. In 2015, the Baltimore incinerator emitted on average about twice as much GHG emissions per unit energy produced as each of the coal plants located in Maryland. In

addition, air pollution from trash incinerators increase the risk of pre-term births, cancers of the blood and lung, and emergency room visits. According to a Chesapeake Bay Foundation commissioned study, fine particulate matter emitted from the Baltimore “waste-to-energy” facility causes over \$55 million in adverse health effects annually. The Climate Justice Wing supports policies that benefit overburdened and underserved communities, which have historically sustained disproportionate environmental harm. The South Baltimore communities closest to the incinerator are truly overburdened by multiple pollution sources, including the incinerator. This polluting source of energy should not be receiving a renewable energy subsidy intended to promote the generation of clean and healthy renewable energy.

By removing trash incineration from the RPS, Maryland will better direct its subsidies to the truly clean, renewable energy sources of the future. We strongly support HB166 and urge a **FAVORABLE** report in Committee.

350MoCo

Adat Shalom Climate Action

Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church Environmental Justice Ministry

Chesapeake Earth Holders

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility

Climate Parents of Prince George's

Climate Reality Project

ClimateXChange – Rebuild Maryland Coalition

Coming Clean Network, Union of Concerned Scientists

DoTheMostGood Montgomery County

Echotopia

Elders Climate Action

Fix Maryland Rail

Glen Echo Heights Mobilization

Greenbelt Climate Action Network

HoCoClimateAction

IndivisibleHoCoMD

Maryland Legislative Coalition

Mobilize Frederick

Montgomery County Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions

Montgomery Countryside Alliance

Mountain Maryland Movement

Nuclear Information & Resource Service

Progressive Maryland

Safe & Healthy Playing Fields

Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee

The Climate Mobilization MoCo Chapter

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