



Mar 05 2024

Testimony in Support of HB166: Jeffrey Barnes

Jeffrey Barnes for Progressive Maryland-Environmental Task Force

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Dear Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

As a resident of the 46th district and a Maryland ratepayer and a resident concerned about the quality of air we breath, I am writing to express my strong support of HB166, the Reclaim Renewable Energy Act.

Part of a governments' role is to safeguard the collective public interest and clean air is certainly a very important public interest. Maryland's government should not be expending money towards polluting our air. Instead the government should be spending funds towards clean, renewable energy sources.

I believe our government is wasting our taxpayers dollars by contributing to the burning of trash for energy, under the guise of trash burning being a clean, renewable energy source. This clearly is not a truth. Trash burning is not renewable nor clean under any definition and to continue to expend our money towards an entity that is burning trash while claiming to be renewable is a shame and an embarrassment. Dollars are tight and I feel we should be more responsible in how we spend taxpayers dollars.

For too long, our state's Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) has been compromised by the inclusion of sources like waste incineration. These so-called "renewables" come at a heavy cost: air and water pollution, public health risks, and environmental degradation. They are not green solutions; they are greenwashing.

For years, we have touted Maryland as a leader in renewable energy, but our definition of "renewable" has been flawed. HB166 corrects this mistake by removing trash incineration from our Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard (RPS). This source, while marketed as green, is riddled with problems. Trash incineration spews air and water



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pollution, harming public health and contributing to climate change. Those facilities disproportionately burden marginalized communities with environmental injustice, placing them on the front lines of pollution and health risks. Including trash incineration in the RPS inflates our progress towards clean energy goals, creating a misleading picture of our emissions reduction efforts.

Opponents of this bill may argue that it will hinder Maryland's progress towards its RPS goals. But I urge you to consider: are we truly making progress if we're relying on false solutions that cause more harm than good? The Reclaim Renewable Energy Act is not about slowing down; it's about setting the right course.

As I understand it, multiple Maryland state government agencies supports eliminating the payments under the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) to incinerators. They are emitters of CO₂, mercury and lead which are not safe at any level. We are paying over 24 million dollars a year to trash incinerators as of 2022 and the reality is this money is doing nothing to add clean, renewable energy sources to the power grid. This is almost madness. Trash incinerators as clean and renewable? No reasonable person could think that is true. It simply is not and our laws must reflect that reality. You all must correct a mistake made years ago when trash burning incinerators were added as a clean and renewable energy source. How that aberration occurred is not important. Correcting that error now is. I live about 4 miles from the incinerator here in Baltimore and I feel the effects of the pollutants daily.

Finally, this issue is not a matter of competing, reasonable interest. Maryland gives over 24 million dollars a year to trash incinerators under the guise of contributing to clean renewable energy. It was a mistake made. This bill simply corrects a wrong. It's that simple. You must pass HB166.

That's my take as a voter, homeowner, taxpayer and an air breathing human. I urge you, members, to stand on the right side of history. Pass HB166 and show Marylanders that we are all serious about clean energy, environmental justice, and a healthy future for our state. Let's send a clear message that we will not be fooled by greenwashing.