

Testimony Rejecting HB1379

Economic Matters Committee

March 5, 2024

Position: Unfavorable

Submitted by: Dave Arndt

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

As a resident of Baltimore, MD, I am writing to express my strong opposition of HB1379, which is heavily weighted by the methane industry and seems to have a predetermined outcome before the work starts. We are in a climate crisis, and we cannot afford to be spending any effort to maintain or drive the use of methane, a strong greenhouse gasses - now is the time to double down Maryland's commitment to truly renewable energy and subsidize only facilities that are methane free.

Methane production locks Maryland into leaking greenhouse gas emissions

- In the anaerobic digestion of biomass, factory farm waste, animal waste and other materials are fed into a digester where it is broken down by specialized methane-producing microorganisms that can only thrive in the absence of oxygen. Biomass, when composted, does not emit significant amounts of methane.
- We all know that landfilling biomass produces methane, however we must stop presenting the false narrative, either we have to burn or landfill biomass. Composting is the answer. Sure, we have existing landfill sites that are producing methane and we must managing them correctly by harvesting the unwanted methane, however this should be a limited practice that we know how to do and should be ever decreasing in practice.
- No matter the source, burning methane produces CO2. Furthermore, it is an even more potent greenhouse gas in and of itself when it leaks into the atmosphere - a huge and undercounted problem. Studies show that in 2015, leaks along the natural gas supply chain were approximately 60% higher than the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency inventory estimate. [[Earthjustice paper](#), page 5, [research paper](#)]
- Since the construction of biogas facilities is extremely costly, they are generally not profitable without subsidies and incentives. ([FWW Fact Sheet](#)) The examining of incentivizing the use of the digestate produced during anaerobic digestion provides an unwanted financial incentive to add new greenhouse gas emitting technology to our grid under the guise of renewable energy - on the public's dime.
- Sending animal waste to a digester creates methane but does nothing to mitigate the significant air quality issues associated with factory farms. Additionally, the anaerobic digestion process leaves behind a toxic digestate that must still be disposed of. [Studies](#) have shown that the effluents include highly concentrated amounts of nitrogen(ammonia) and phosphorus that when spread on fields causes increase stream and Chesapeake Bay pollution

- The production of methane from organic matter through anaerobic digestion has been used as an excuse for expanding and entrenching dangerous LNG infrastructure.

For all of these reasons and many more, please oppose HB1379.

Dave Arndt

Retired Chemical Engineer and Climate, Environmental and Social Justice Advocate