



SB146 – Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard - Eligible Sources - Alterations (Reclaim Renewable Energy Act of 2024)

**Testimony before Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
January 25, 2024
Position: Favorable**

Mr. Chair, Mdm. Vice Chair and members of the committee, my name is Peter Alexander and I represent the 750+ members of Indivisible Howard County. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We are providing written testimony today in **support of SB146**, Reclaim Renewable Energy Act. We appreciate the leadership of Senator Lewis Young and her colleagues for sponsoring this important legislation.

This can keeps getting kicked down the road.

SB146 will eliminate highly polluting trash incineration from Maryland's RPS, pollution that harms nearby communities' health, and contributes to climate change. The Climate Pollution Reduction Plan just released by the MDE recommends eliminated the trash incineration subsidy as does a recent 2023 report from the Maryland Commission on Climate Change. In fact, incinerators emit more greenhouse gases per unit of electricity produced than any other power source¹.

The RPS is an important tool to support clean, renewable energy development and decrease emissions from the electricity sector, but trash incineration should not be subsidized, especially with a fiscally tight State budget. Worse, \$11.7 million of the \$24.7 million subsidy paid in 2022 to burn trash went to a trash incinerator in VIRGINIA. Passing the Reclaim Renewable Energy Act is a no-cost bill in the state budget and will better prioritize the money we already spend.

Subsidizing this seemingly renewable material takes money away from real renewable energy programs and drives waste markets toward the worst methods of waste management. Simply put, subsidizing trash incineration is counter-productive. Subsidies exist to support the things we want, so why are we subsidizing things we don't want?

It's time to stop kicking this can and enact this important alteration to the RPS. Let's put RPS subsidies toward wind and solar power, and let the waste sector work on managing waste.

We respectfully urge a favorable committee report.

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1 Tangri N (2023) Waste incinerators undermine clean energy goals. PLOS Clim **2**(6): e0000100.
<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pclm.0000100>