

Testimony Supporting SB146
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
January 25, 2023

Position: SUPPORT

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee,

As a resident of Frederick County, a Maryland ratepayer and Chair of the Fellowship of Scientist and Engineers I am writing to express my strong support of SB146, the Reclaim Renewable Energy Act.

These funds should be spent on renewable energy such as solar and offshore wind, not polluting incinerators, and especially not incinerators that operate out of state but are subsidized by Maryland ratepayers.

Maryland needs to take action on climate change. We need to be funding renewable energy development and taking the climate crisis seriously. The RPS is an important tool to support clean, renewable energy development and decrease emissions from the electricity sector. These funds should be used to promote solar and offshore wind installations.

Maryland needs to tighten its belt - this is the year to stop wasting money. Passing the Reclaim Renewable Energy Act will not cost any money out of the state budget and will better prioritize the money we already spend.

Maryland needs to invest in climate solutions and finding funding for the \$1 billion called for in Maryland's Climate Pollution Reduction Plan poses a significant challenge. Governor Moore recently [said](#) about his state budget proposal: "Where we choose to invest that actually defines our values and dictates the course of our future." Senate President Ferguson recently [said](#) about the budget: "I think this is a year about prioritizing the resources that we have."

Maryland is wasting an increasing amount of money subsidizing trash incineration. Over three years, due to the market-based nature of the subsidy (the amount of electricity produced by incinerators has not increased), **the total subsidies to trash incinerators through Maryland's RPS ballooned from \$11.5 million in 2020 to \$24.7 million in 2022.** This is an incredible windfall for the incinerators, and bad for Marylanders. We can't afford to keep wasting increasing amounts of money profiting something that's not putting renewable energy on the grid.

A trash incinerator in Virginia is making the most profit from Maryland ratepayers. The BRESKO incinerator in Baltimore received \$4.2 million; the Montgomery County incinerator in Dickerson received \$8.7 million, and the Covanta incinerator in Lorton, VA, received a windfall of \$11.7 million - twice as much as Montgomery County's incinerator and three times as much as the incinerator in Baltimore. **A lot of good could be done with this money!**

This waste of money harms Maryland electricity ratepayers. The RPS subsidy is paid by electric utilities, and ultimately comes out of our utility bills. We deserve to know that when we're paying for renewable energy, we're actually helping support the renewable energy we need to fight climate change and clean our air.

State government supports this bill. It's recommended in the [Climate Pollution Reduction Plan](#) that MDE just released at the end of December, and also recommended by the Maryland Commission on Climate Change's [2023 Annual Report](#).

Trash incineration is a very polluting method of producing electricity. [A new 2023 study in PLOS Climate](#) found that "incinerators emit more greenhouse gas emissions per unit of electricity produced than *any* other power source" - including coal plants. [EPA's Emissions Inventory](#) indicates that in 2020, the three trash incinerators profiting from Maryland's RPS emitted 2.5 million tons of CO2 into the atmosphere. Incineration emits mercury and lead, which are not safe at any level of exposure.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Law