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Testimony in Support of SB 146:

Jeffrey Barnes

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Chairperson Feldman and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jeffrey Barnes working with the Progressive Maryland ***Environmental Justice Task Force***.

As a ratepayer, a resident of Brooklyn in the 46th district, and a homeowner concerned about our environment, I am writing to express my strong support of SB146, the Reclaim Renewable Energy Act. This crucial legislation is not just about technical definitions; it is about upholding the true spirit of renewable energy and protecting the health and well-being of our communities in the face of the very real climate crisis.

For years, we have touted Maryland as a leader in renewable energy, but our legal definition of "renewable" has been flawed and compromised by the inclusion of sources like waste incineration in the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) which come at a heavy cost: air and water pollution contributing to climate change and environmental degradation and marginalizing communities with environmental injustice, placing them on the front lines of pollution and health risks. Also by creating a misleading picture of our emissions reduction efforts. Trash incineration is not a green solution, it is greenwashing. SB146 corrects this mistake by removing trash incineration from the RPS.

Our government should not be spending our money on sources of energy that pollute our air. The government should be directing those funds towards truly clean, renewable energy sources like solar, wind, and geothermal that do not harm our community.

I live about 4 miles from the incinerator in Baltimore and I can attest that trash burning is not renewable nor clean under any definition.

We must correct a mistake made years ago when trash burning incinerators were added as a clean and renewable energy source. Pass SB 146 and show Marylanders that we are all serious about clean energy, environmental justice, and a healthy future for our state.