



SOUTH BALTIMORE 7
UNITED COMMUNITIES

Testimony Supporting SB146
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee January
25, 2024

Position: SUPPORT

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee,

As a resident of District 46 and Executive Director of the SB7 Coalition, I am writing to express my strong support of SB146, the Reclaim Renewable Energy Act. Our South Baltimore communities neighbor the BRESKO trash incinerator receiving over \$4 million in ratepayer subsidies through Maryland's Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS). The thousands of residents that make up our strong and vibrant South Baltimore communities are proud to join fellow Marylanders, MDE's [Climate Pollution Reduction Plan](#) and the Maryland Commission on Climate Change's [2023 Annual Report](#) in calling for a more responsible use of the RPS to support clean, renewable energy while ending subsidies for burning non-renewable materials like single use plastics.

I am concerned that Maryland is spending an increasing amount of money subsidizing trash incineration. Over three years, the total subsidies to trash incinerators through the RPS grew from \$11.5 million in 2020 to \$24.7 million in 2022 while the amount of electricity produced remained the same. This is an incredible benefit for incinerator owners, while nearby residents suffer from the harms of exposure to toxics. Incinerators are a wasteful way to produce energy, in fact, 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.

We can't afford to keep wasting increasing amounts of money profiting something that's not putting renewable energy on the grid and putting our health at risk.

Sincerely,

Michael Middleton

Michael Middleton



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The following letter is directed toward the Baltimore City Delegation, particularly our Senator, Senate President Ferguson, from community associations and businesses in and serving District 46 in support of the Reclaim Renewable Energy Act.



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Dear Senate President Ferguson and members of the Baltimore City Delegation,

The undersigned neighborhood associations and business organizations in District 46 and across the city urge you to support eliminating trash incineration from Maryland's Renewable Portfolio Standard, and to work on behalf of the City government and your constituents to ensure that this passes in the General Assembly's 2024 session.

No source of energy that pollutes the air we breathe should be considered renewable. The BRESCO trash incinerator pollutes the air we breathe in District 46 and throughout the city every single day. A recent study found that incinerators emit more greenhouse gas emissions per unit of electricity produced than *any* other power source, and more criteria air pollutants than replacement sources of energy. Diverting renewable energy subsidies away from wind and solar to profit polluting industries like trash incineration is a terrible waste of money. In 2020, \$11.5 million of Maryland's Renewable Portfolio Standard subsidies went to profit trash incinerators, instead of helping develop the new wind and solar power that we need to fight climate change.

Subsidizing trash incineration also makes it harder for our local governments to transition to healthier infrastructure for managing our waste. Subsidies for trash incinerators give the companies that own them needless extra profits, making them artificially more competitive against the composting, recycling, reuse, and waste reduction initiatives and businesses that we actually need. Putting 'renewable energy' subsidies back into wind and solar power where they belong will also allow Zero Waste infrastructure to compete on an even playing field - but until we make that change, the state of Maryland is giving incinerators an economic leg up over the infrastructure we actually need.

Our local governments support eliminating trash incineration from the Renewable Portfolio Standard. In the General Assembly's 2023 session, the Baltimore City government wrote testimony in favor of eliminating trash incineration from the Renewable Portfolio Standard, saying *"This bill better aligns the State of Maryland's RPS with our citywide goals to reduce the emission of greenhouse gasses in both the waste and energy sectors. These changes help to prioritize renewable energy subsidies ... to evidence-based renewable energy generation such as solar, wind, and hydro energy, opposed to polluting industries."* So did Montgomery County, the only other jurisdiction with a trash incinerator in Maryland, and Frederick County, which considered building a trash incinerator but rejected the proposal in 2014. Communities and governments impacted by trash incinerators are united: we want the General Assembly to eliminate 'renewable energy' subsidies for trash incineration this year.

The message from Baltimore is clear: it's time for Maryland to stop subsidizing polluters like BRESCO, and use that money to support real renewable energy instead. Senate President Ferguson, we hope that you and the entire City delegation will lead on finally fixing this environmental injustice.

Sincerely,



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SB7 Coalition

South Baltimore Community Land Trust

Westport Neighborhood Association Harbor

West Collaborative

Family of Ellwood Park

Lakeland Community Association Partnership Inc.

Baltimore Community Toolbank

Locust Point Community Garden

Upper Fells Point Improvement Association Locust

Point Civic Association

Echotopia LLC - Bmore's 1st Zero Waste Biz Charm

City Land Trusts

Community of Curtis Bay Association