



PROGRESSIVE MARYLAND

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Bill Title: HB220 Reclaim Renewable Energy Act

Position: Favorable

To: Chair C.T. Wilson, Vice Chair Brian M. Crosby, Economic Matters

From: Alice Goldberg, Member of Progressive Maryland

Date: 2/18/25

Hello Distinguished Members of the Economic Matters Committee,

My name is Alice Goldberg - I am a resident in Cheverly in District 47, and my testimony today is in strong support of HB220, the reclaim renewable energy act of 2025. I write because burning trash is not renewable. For an energy source to be considered "renewable," it should cause minimal environmental damage. Additional sources of fuel should not be needed and further pollution should not be associated with that energy source. However, with the burning of trash, frontline communities bear the brunt of increased rates of cancer, asthma, and other respiratory disease because of gaseous heavy metal pollution and carbon dioxide emissions.

With my testimony today, I'd like to focus on addressing a line of argument I read from this bill's opponents, which is that representatives of the Baltimore WIN incinerator have implied they will tie their mandated donations to Baltimore community organizations to their renewable energy credit (REC) profits, and that this bill might shut down the plant.¹ The incinerator's representatives are saying, "Either let us keep collecting massive profits while we poison you, or else we stop giving back to the community we profit from."

First, this bill does not shut down the plant. It removes a profit element that they do not deserve because the energy that they provide is not renewable. If WIN relies on greenwashing in order to stay open, then the economically expeditious thing is to allow the cards to fall as they may. Real sources of renewable energy will increase in value on the REC market if WIN and other

¹ "Nonprofits decry state bill they say would impact donations from WIN Waste incinerator," David Collins, WBALTV, Feb 8, 2025.

<https://www.wbalTV.com/article/bill-nonprofits-donations-baltimore-win-waste-incinerator/63692592>

incinerators no longer flood the renewable energy credit market with dirty RECs. More valuable RECs coming from solar and wind will mean that builders will have more capital to invest in building real renewable energy infrastructure.

When I read the above mentioned article and saw that WIN is only mandated to give \$700K to communities in Baltimore, I couldn't help but think that the mandated donation is a pittance in comparison to the health bills stacking up, the lifelong maladies suffered, and the lowered life expectancy of those living in the incinerator's shadow. It's insulting that the company brings in a handy \$100 million in so-called renewable subsidies and then has a measly \$700K that they are mandated to give back to the communities of Baltimore as a part of their contract.

I'll close with this; in July 2024, the EPA moved forward investigating a civil rights complaint filed by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and the Environmental Integrity Project due to the impact on health outcomes for the primarily Black and Hispanic neighbors of that facility.²³ When I went to look up details about the health impacts of frontline communities using the EPA's Environmental Justice mapping tool, the website had been removed by the current federal administration. I highly recommend your reading the complaint before the EPA, under new guidance, takes down any mention of the case.

With the present castrated nature of the federal government, it is up to you, distinguished committee members, to take action. Members of this coalition aren't asking for the end of this plant; simply a needed definitional correction to the law. Maryland must stop greenwashing the burning of trash by finally passing this important legislation and voting yes on HB220.

Sincerely,

Alice Goldberg

Alice Goldberg

² "EPA Moves Forward with civil rights complaint over Baltimore Incinerator," CBS News, July 16, 2024. <https://www.cbsnews.com/baltimore/video/epa-moves-forward-with-civil-rights-complaint-over-baltimore-incinerator/>

³ "RE: Complaint Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d, and 40 C.F.R Part 7 against the City of Baltimore and its agency the Baltimore City Department of Public Works" Taylor Lilley, Ariel Solaski, Leah Kelly, Chesapeake Bay Foundation & Environmental Integrity Project https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2024-06/03rno-24-r3-complaint_redacted.pdf