



**Bill Title:** HB220 Reclaim Renewable Energy Act

**Position:** Favorable

**To:** Chair C.T. Wilson, Vice chair Crosby, Economic Matters Committee

**From:** SirJames Weaver, Member of Progressive Maryland

**Date:** 2/18/25

I appreciate the opportunity to present my testimony in favor of HB220, the Reclaim Renewable Energy Act (RREA) of 2025. My name is SirJames, and I serve as the Environmental Justice Organizer for Progressive Maryland, as well as a community member of Pigtown in South Baltimore. Progressive Maryland is a grassroots organization dedicated to uplifting working-class communities of color and advocating for social justice.

As a resident of South Baltimore, I am disappointed by the inaccurate statements made by Mary Urban, representing WIN Waste, to WBAL-TV on February 8th, claiming that incineration is not a fossil fuel.<sup>1</sup> This assertion is completely false, as evidenced by the 21-page report authored by George W. Thurston, a member of the National Academy of Science's Committee that provides guidance to the EPA on ambient air quality regulations, as I highlighted in my testimony before the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment committee on February 13th.

Thurston's report concluded with even greater concern that the incinerator poses the most significant health risks within Baltimore city and in the adjacent downwind counties. This indicates that Mary Urban's assertions regarding incineration being a renewable process lack foundation; furthermore, she has failed to present any study to support her claims.<sup>2</sup>

Equally revealing is the recommendation from the 2023 Maryland Commission on Climate Change (MCCC) annual report, which advises excluding municipal solid waste incineration from the list of eligible sources in Maryland's Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) due to the significant fossil fuel emissions associated with this process.<sup>3</sup>

Governor Moore's administration's Clean Power Standard reinforces the commitment to terminate existing eligibility and subsidies for municipal solid waste incineration. These reports

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<sup>1</sup> Collins, David. Last modified February 8, 2025.

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

<sup>2</sup> Thurston, George D. "Written Report of George D. Thurston Regarding The Public Health Impacts of Air Emissions From the Wheelabrator Facility." (November 20, 2017).

<sup>3</sup> McIlwain, Serena, and Kim Coble. "Maryland Commission on Climate Change."

[https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/air/ClimateChange/MCCC/Documents/MCCC%20Annual%20Report%202024/MCCC\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2024\\_508.pdf](https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/air/ClimateChange/MCCC/Documents/MCCC%20Annual%20Report%202024/MCCC_Annual_Report_2024_508.pdf).

clarify the misconceptions propagated in the media by WIN Waste.<sup>4</sup> It is important to note that incineration does not qualify as renewable energy. Given this information, it is crucial for legislators to act quickly and support the passage of the Reclaim Renewable Energy Act, thereby freeing Maryland ratepayers from the constraints imposed by incinerator companies.

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<sup>4</sup> McIlwain, Serena. *Maryland's Climate Pollution Reduction Plan* (December 2023): 23-24.