

Testimony on House Bill 220 – 2/20/2025

House Economic Matters Committee

By Frazier Blaylock

Reworld is the operator of the Montgomery County Resource Recovery Facility, located in Dickerson, MD. Resource Recovery, more commonly known as Waste-to-Energy (WTE) is a clean, local, efficient, and economical form of renewable baseload energy production and post-recycled waste disposal.

This facility in Dickerson helps Maryland divert waste from landfills while producing energy to reduce our reliance on expensive out of state generation sources. This is a time for Maryland to be supporting our in-state generating facilities, not sending more of our dollars to out of state sources. We oppose HB220.

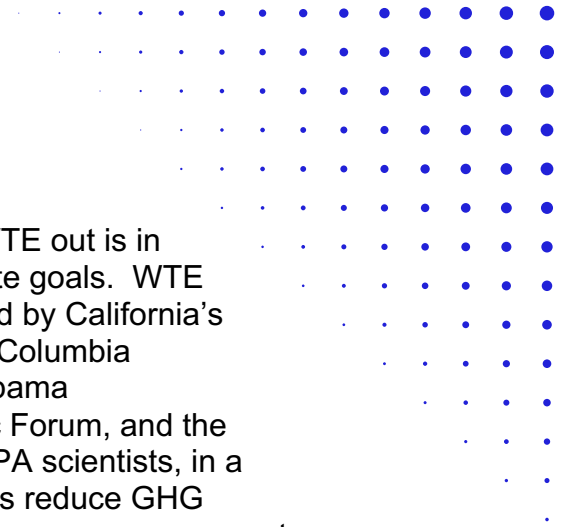
The Montgomery plant generates enough electricity to power 30,000 homes for a year, or power 75,000 electric cars for a year. It represents one of the few in-state sources of electricity generation we have.

Removing WTE from the RPS will cost Montgomery County approximately \$13MM in annual Renewable Energy Credit (REC) revenue and thus result in an increase in taxes for Montgomery County residents and businesses.

The elimination of waste-to-energy as a Tier 1 renewable source would ignore the many benefits these facilities bring to our communities and treat it unfairly in the very competitive energy and disposal markets.

Montgomery County sets a sustainable example for other Counties in Maryland by taking care of our own trash. We do not export our municipal solid waste to other states' landfills, but rail it from Shady Grove out to Dickerson avoiding hundreds of trash trucks from traveling our highways. Our neighbors in Frederick County, for example, transport 96% of their waste by trailer trucks to a private landfill in Chambersburg, PA. We believe that Montgomery County's self-sufficiency should be rewarded, not penalized.

HB 220 would continue to allow out-of-state landfills, which are as far away as OH and IL to earn Maryland RECs, while our in-state waste-to-energy plants would be disqualified. This policy would have the result of adding to the state's budget crisis by sending MD ratepayer dollars to out-of-state energy sources that do not pay MD state taxes or employ our citizens.



Allowing landfills to sell RECs into Tier 1 while cutting WTE out is in direct conflict with climate science and our State's climate goals. WTE GHG benefits relative to landfilling have been recognized by California's air and waste regulatory agencies, U.S. EPA scientists, Columbia University's Earth Engineering Center, U.S. EPA, the Obama Administration's Clean Power Plan, the World Economic Forum, and the Joint Institute for Strategic Energy Analysis ("NREL"). EPA scientists, in a prominent peer reviewed paper, concluded WTE facilities reduce GHG emissions relative to even those landfills equipped with energy recovery systems. The Montgomery facility alone avoids 442,000 metric tons of GHGs each year, which is equivalent to removing 109,000 vehicles for 1 year or displacing 546 million pounds of coal.

The benefits of diverting waste away from landfills to recycling and energy recovery are clearer than ever. Across a series of recent studies employing direct measurement of methane plumes via aircraft downwind of landfills, actual measured emissions from landfills have averaged twice the amount reported in GHG inventories, including Maryland's.

Furthermore, Maryland's inventory downplays methane's role in the climate, using an outdated methane GWP. Today, scientists recognize methane as a potent short-lived climate pollutant that is more than 30 times stronger than CO₂ over 100 years, and 84 times stronger over 20 years, when all of its impacts are considered. States currently leading on climate, like New York and California, have adopted methane's 20-year GWP in planning and legislation.

To remove WTE from Tier one and yet leave landfill gas in Tier 1 is counter to Maryland's goal of reducing the GHG's that contribute to climate change. It is also going to raise the cost of trash disposal for the citizens of Montgomery County, who will need to pay for the \$13MM shortfall in the County budget going forward.

We urge the committee to reject HB 220.