



Bill Title: HB0220 Reclaim Renewable Energy Act of 2025

Position: SUPPORT (FAV)

To: Economic Matters Committee

From: Shenae Thomas, Community Member, Progressive Maryland Environmental Justice Task Force

Date: 02/18/2025

Thank you Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby and members of the esteemed Economic Matters Committee for allowing me the opportunity to share my testimony **in support of the Reclaim Renewable Energy Act of 2025.**

My name is Shenae Thomas and I am a resident of Cherry Hill in South Baltimore as well as a proud member of Progressive Maryland's Environmental Justice Task Force. As I mentioned to this committee last year, I was not aware that I was a victim of the financial exploitation employed by incinerator companies like WIN Waste Innovations. For 14 years, WIN Waste has sustained the operation of the Wheelabrator Baltimore Refuse Energy Systems Company ("BRESKO") Incinerator by extracting my community's hard-earned money.

You may have heard folks on the opposition side share that incineration is a renewable energy source last week at the Senate Hearing. This is unequivocally false. Burning trash is not clean and releases carbon dioxide, mercury, lead, and other toxic pollutants into the environment. Although the Maryland Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) program was established 19 years ago to support fossil-free energy, it currently includes waste incineration in the list of "renewable" energy sources that can be subsidized by ratepayers. This designation has unfortunately made polluters like WIN Waste rich because ratepayers like myself are exploited into subsidizing an energy source that is not clean and pollutes my community.

The 2024 PEER Report on the RPS concluded that if "waste-to-energy" remains in the list of renewable energy sources, it will cost Maryland ratepayers like myself an additional \$200,000,000 of renewable energy credits (RECs) between 2023 and 2030. Maryland constituents, especially those that are underserved and overburdened, should not be financially contributing to their own demise. It's time to pass the Reclaim Renewable Energy Act, so that the shackles can be removed from the pockets of my community.

Sincerely,
Shenae Thomas
Community Member and Member of Progressive Maryland