

Bill Title: HB0220 Reclaim Renewable Energy Act of 2025

Position: SUPPORT (FAV)

To: Honorable Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and the members of the Economic Matters Committee

From: MD Grassroots EJ Workgroup

Date: 2/13/2025

The MD Grassroots EJ Workgroup is submitting this **testimony in support of [HB0220](#) The Reclaim Renewable Energy Act (RREA) of 2025**. We, the undersigned, are a table of grassroots organizations that engage in power building to undertake environmental and social justice initiatives in our communities all across Maryland while dismantling all forms of structural racism. Our organizing is concentrated in low-income, Black and Brown communities disproportionately bearing the burden of environmental issues and we seek to uplift and protect these voices throughout our advocacy.

For example, the low-income Black and Brown communities of Westport, Mt. Winans, Cherry Hill, Lakeland, Brooklyn and Curtis Bay in Baltimore, Maryland are disproportionately suffering at the hands of the Wheelabrator Baltimore Refuse Energy Systems Company (“BRESKO”) Incinerator, operated by WIN Waste Innovations. Maryland’s current Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) legitimizes these adverse impacts on the environment and public health by including “waste-to-energy,” (i.e. trash incineration) as a viable renewable resource that is eligible for Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) which are subsidized. Trash incineration releases thousands of tons of greenhouse gases, toxic elements such as lead and mercury, and toxic ash into the atmosphere.^{1,2} 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 an additional \$200,000,000 of RECs between 2023 and 2030.³ Maryland constituents, especially those that are underserved and overburdened, should not be financially contributing to their own demise.

Passage of the Reclaim Renewable Energy Act will:

1. Remove trash incineration from the list of renewable energy sources eligible for RECs without shutting down incinerators in Maryland and with no additional cost to the state budget; and
2. Redistribute the subsidy that would have otherwise been used to fund waste incineration to cleaner sources of energy such as solar, wind, and hydro.

The RREA will help advance the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE)’s Climate Pollution Reduction Plan which aims to modify definitions of qualifying resources that are eligible for subsidies under the Renewable Portfolio Standard in order to achieve the 2031 greenhouse gas emissions reduction goal. Simultaneously, it will ensure that Marylanders, specifically those that are low-income and minorities, are no longer financing investment into dirty energy sources that pollute the environment and adversely impact their health. Rather, we are hopeful that these subsidies will instead be directed toward clean energy sources that improve the health and wealth of our communities at no additional cost to the state budget. As a coalition of organizations that advocate for and organize with working class, Black and Brown communities, the MD Grassroots EJ Workgroup is committed to a clean energy transition that prioritizes these individuals and therefore favors the passage of HB0220.

¹“Mercury exposure and children's health” (Bose-O'Reilly S, McCarty KM, Steckling N, Lettmeier B., 2010)

² “Lead in Food and Foodwares” (FDA, 2025)

³ PEER Report (PEER, 2024)

Endorsing Organizations

The Maryland Just Power Alliance (Action In Montgomery (AIM), People Acting Together in Howard (PATH), Anne Arundel Connecting Together (ACT))

Baltimore Transit Equity Coalition

Black Girls Vote

CASA

Centro de Apoyo Familiar

Interfaith Power and Light (DC.MD.NoVA)

Out for Justice

Progressive Maryland