

Written Testimony in Opposition to HB220

February 18th 2025

Dear Maryland General Assembly Economic Matter House Committee,

My name is Michael Dorsey. I am the executive director of Grow Home, a Baltimore-based nonprofit organization that supports community-led programs that cultivate open spaces, empower resident leaders, and give youth opportunities for recreation and first-time employment. I have been working in undeserved Baltimore neighborhoods since 2010, and I founded this organization in 2018 to further this work in strategic and economically equitable ways.

In that time, we have never had a more engaged and supportive private partner than WIN Waste Innovations. The company not only invests in our mission financially, but its community outreach team comes to our events, rolls up their sleeves and does the hard work of building stronger, more vibrant neighborhoods. Much of the company's investment is made possible through the renewable energy subsidies your bill will eliminate.

You should know that this legislation isn't just taking money from a company. It is putting at risk vital funding for people in need across Baltimore. HB220 is threatening our ability to reach men, women and children who desperately need help to make ends meet, get the training they need to secure employment and learn the life skills that will make them successful in the future.

House Bill 220 also threatens to harm environmental and public health. Without WIN Waste, Baltimore will need to ship more waste to landfills. This has major implications for global warming, since landfills emit methane, a greenhouse gas 84 times more powerful than carbon dioxide over 20 years. The 700,000 tons of trash WIN Waste handles each year will have to be shipped to faraway disposal sites – mainly a regional landfill in Virginia – using thousands of tractor-trailer trips. Vehicle emissions are the largest source of air pollution we breathe. Our neighbors and our environment can't afford a plan that puts more vehicles on our roads and more trash in our landfills.

The Trump administration is making it clear that it will do everything it can to block the growth of renewables. If Maryland has any hope of generating 50 percent of its retail electricity from renewable sources by 2030, the state has to protect the renewable energy sources it already has. Even before President Trump was sworn in, wind and solar providers were facing major legal and regulatory challenges in Maryland. Those problems will only be worse now. We can't count on solar and wind power in the near term. We need to think more broadly about renewables.

I oppose your HB220. Baltimore's nonprofit community is in a precarious position. The state needs to close a massive budget gap, which means support for organizations like Grow Home is at risk. DOGE plans to cut trillions from the federal budget, which will definitely impact the people Grow Home serves.

In closing I would like to add that the WINWSTE plant is currently here, and there is no current effective plan to replace it with other renewables in the waste stream. As a practical person who is grateful for the partners we have in the everyday grind to fight generational poverty, disinvestment and economic isolation, we need to stand with the answers we have instead of clearcutting with no plan for what is next.

I appreciate the work you do to serve our state and constituents.

Sincerely,

Michael Dorsey

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