



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: Neka Duckett-Randolph of Out for Justice Inc

Date: 2/20/2025

My name is Neka Duckett-Randolph, I am the Membership, Advocacy, and Strategic Partnerships Coordinator at Out for Justice. **Out for Justice, Inc. (OFJ)** is an organization led by individuals who are both directly and indirectly impacted by the criminal justice system. We advocate for the reform of policies and practices that adversely affect successful reintegration into society. We accomplish our mission through the three E's: 1) ENGAGE formerly incarcerated individuals, families, and friends through grassroots outreach and community events; 2) EDUCATE our member base and communities on the policies and practices impacting our communities and navigating the legislative process for reform; 3) EMPOWER those impacted by the criminal justice system to utilize their voices and experiences to enact tangible change. I am writing **in support of [HB0220](#) The Reclaim Renewable Energy Act (RREA) of 2025.**

As the facilitator of the Out for Justice Climate and Environmental Justice Fellowship, our fellows learned firsthand how the incinerator impacts their daily lives. Their direct experiences and outcomes from the fellowship highlight the intersection between criminal justice and environmental justice. For far too long the systemic links between environmental racism and public safety have been ignored, unexplored, and unaddressed in modern policy solutions. Thanks to extensive research and books like Lawrence T. Brown's *Black Butterfly: The Harmful Politics of Race and Space in America* and Harriet A. Washington's *A Terrible Thing to Waste: Environmental Racism and Its Assault on the American Mind*, we have an abundantly clear and concise picture of how environmental racism directly contributes to negative public safety outcomes. We have before us an opportunity to move Maryland forward and correct racist infrastructure that still to this day disproportionately impacts Black, Brown, and low-income Baltimoreans, especially those residing in Black Butterfly neighborhoods.

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. Similarly, residents from these and other Black Butterfly neighborhoods are egregiously overrepresented in our criminal justice

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)

system, which is a direct result of racist redlining policies in the 50s and 60s. 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 to achieve the 2031 greenhouse gas emissions reduction goal. Simultaneously, it will ensure that Marylanders, specifically Black, Brown, and low-income, are no longer financing investments into dirty energy sources that pollute the environment and negatively impact their health. Instead, we advocate that these subsidies be directed toward clean energy sources that improve the health, wealth, and public safety of our communities at no additional cost to the state budget. As an organization that advocates for systemic change for the betterment of society as a whole, we remain committed to a clean energy transition that prioritizes the most disadvantaged and impacted and allows the people most proximate to the problem to be at the forefront of solution-making. Please submit a favorable report on HB220. Thank you Delegate Stewart for sponsoring this legislation, and thank you committee for your dedicated commitment to tackling this issue.