

February 20, 2025

The Honorable C. T. Wilson
Chair, House Economic Matters Committee
Maryland General Assembly
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Support for House Bill 220 – Reclaim Renewable Energy Act

Dear Chair Wilson and Esteemed Committee Members,

At Maryland Latinos Unidos (MLU), we believe that Maryland must take bold and immediate action to address the climate crisis. House Bill 220, the Reclaim Renewable Energy Act, is a necessary step toward ensuring that our state's renewable energy investments genuinely support clean energy sources and move us closer to an equitable and sustainable future.

For too long, Maryland's Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) has funneled millions of ratepayer dollars into subsidies for trash incineration under the false pretense that it is a clean energy source. This misallocation of funds has done little to advance the state's climate goals, while simultaneously burdening ratepayers with unnecessary costs. Since 2020, Maryland ratepayers have spent \$75 million subsidizing trash incinerators, with \$29.9 million going to a private incinerator in Virginia. Instead of continuing to waste resources on outdated and polluting technologies, Maryland must prioritize truly renewable sources such as wind, solar, and geothermal energy.

Maryland is also facing a \$3 billion budget deficit, making it even more critical to reassess how our energy subsidies are allocated. HB 220 ensures that our clean energy funding is invested wisely by eliminating trash incineration from the RPS. This will not increase costs for consumers. Utilities can replace incinerator Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) with cleaner alternatives at comparable prices or make Alternative Compliance Payments, which directly fund low-income renewable energy projects. Redirecting funds in this way strengthens Maryland's clean energy goals while protecting ratepayers from continued wasteful spending.

Trash incineration is among the most polluting energy sources, emitting more greenhouse gases per unit of electricity than even coal-fired power plants. In 2020 alone, the three incinerators currently subsidized under Maryland's RPS released 2.5 million tons of CO₂ into the atmosphere, along with harmful pollutants such as mercury, lead, and particulate matter. These emissions have severe public health consequences, disproportionately affecting low-income and communities of color. HB 220 moves Maryland closer to a clean energy future by shifting our support away from polluting sources and toward renewable technologies that improve air quality and reduce climate-warming emissions.

MLU is committed to supporting policies that not only combat climate change but also create healthier, more sustainable communities. HB 220 represents an opportunity to realign our state's clean energy strategy with its climate and equity commitments. By eliminating subsidies for

trash incineration, Maryland can ensure that its renewable energy investments are truly advancing a cleaner, healthier future for all residents.

We urge the House Economic Matters Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 220. It is time to stop wasting money on outdated, polluting technologies and start directing our resources toward real renewable energy solutions.

Sincerely,

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