

MARYPIRG

Students

Bill Title: HB0220 Reclaim Renewable Energy Act

Position: Favorable

To: Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, Economic Matters Committee

From: Tewodros Assefa, Member of MaryPIRG Students

Date: 2/18/25

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB10, the Reclaim Renewable Energy Act (RREA) of 2025. My name is Tewodros Assefa and I am a proud member of MaryPIRG Students, a grassroots advocacy organization at the University of Maryland- College Park.

As a Maryland resident and renter, I was previously unaware of how my electricity bill supported the financial gain of toxic incineration facilities across the state, particularly the Bresco incinerator. For four decades, this facility has emitted harmful chemicals that have disproportionately affected predominantly Black neighborhoods in South Baltimore, including Cherry Hill, Brooklyn, Westport, and Mount Winans, resulting in elevated rates of asthma and cancer.

From 2012 to 2022, electricity bills paid by Maryland ratepayers contributed over \$100 million to incineration efforts.¹ These funds ought to be directed towards genuine renewable energy sources like solar, geothermal, and hydro power. This aligns with the original intent of Maryland's renewable portfolio standard (RPS).

According to the Public Service Commission's 2022 report on Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS), energy companies allocated significant funds to acquire Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) from three incinerators. Specifically, they invested \$8,776,070 for 382,233 RECs from the Montgomery County incinerator, \$4,203,999 for 183,101 RECs from Wheelabrator in Baltimore, and \$11,733,532 for 511,045 RECs from Covanta Fairfax.²

As a ratepayer, I am disenchanted by this high level of financial exploitation, and it is clear that incineration has clearly become a financial liability to our state's RPS. Once incineration is removed from RPS more REC's would go to support clean energy projects. The writing is clearly on the wall, it's time to pass the RREA and remove incineration from RPS.

¹ "Report: Maryland's energy subsidies are going up in flames." peer.org. Last modified March 5, 2024. <https://peer.org/report-maryland-energy-subsidies-in-flames/>.

² "Report: Maryland's energy subsidies are going up in flames." peer.org. Last modified March 5, 2024. <https://peer.org/report-maryland-energy-subsidies-in-flames/>.