



February 18, 2025
House Bill 220/Senate Bill 10
House Economic Matters
Support

Dear Chair Wilson, Vice-Chair Crosby and Members of the House Economic Matters Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in support of the Reclaim Renewable Energy Act of 2025, House Bill 220 and Senate Bill 10. The American Lung Association is the oldest voluntary public health organization working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease, through research, education and advocacy.

The American Lung Association in Maryland supports modifying the state's renewable energy requirements to exclude waste and refuse derived energy, given the public health benefits of phasing out combustion energy sources. By excluding these forms of combustion energy sources that worsen air pollution, Maryland can prioritize policies that meaningfully reduce criteria air pollutants, curb greenhouse gas emissions and ultimately protect the health and well-being of Marylanders in the long term.

Energy derived from waste and refuse contributes toward worse air pollution. Burning fuels besides fossil fuels, such as biomass or trash, produces harmful air pollutants including particulate matter and carbon dioxide that drives climate change, and can also produce additional harmful air pollutants and toxics.

The American Lung Association's [2024 "State of the Air"](#) report found that two counties received a failing grade for high ozone pollution, with another four counties receiving a 'C' or lower.

Ozone ("smog") and particle ("soot") pollutants can intensify symptoms of existing lung disease, such as asthma attacks and emergency room visits in the short term. Long-term exposure to air pollution can interfere with lung development for babies and children and can contribute to the development of new diseases (asthma, cancer, chronic inflammatory lung disease and diabetes) and can lead to cognitive impairments later in life. Children and the elderly are more susceptible to these health impacts. Currently in Maryland, 80,837 adults and 504,338 children are currently living with asthma, and another 242,664 are managing other lung illnesses, increasing their vulnerability to the aforementioned impacts of air pollution.

Additionally, reducing greenhouse gas emissions causing climate change is similarly imperative to lung health. This is because climate change is making the job of cleaning our air much more difficult, as temperatures rise and drive conditions for unhealthy ozone pollution days, among other health challenges.



Adoption of the policies such as the Reclaim Renewable Energy Act are critical steps in reducing ozone-forming emissions, particle emissions and greenhouse gas emissions to protect the health of Marylanders now and in the future.

Prioritizing non-pollution sources of energy will provide Maryland with significant health benefits. The Lung Association's "[Zeroing In on Healthy Air](#)" report found that a transition to 100% clean, non-combustion electricity, coupled with zero-emission transportation, would provide Maryland with \$27.8 billion in public health savings and avoid 2,530 premature deaths, 63,600 asthma attacks and 315,000 lost work days.

I respectfully urge a supportive vote for the Reclaim Renewable Energy Act of 2025 for the benefits of reduction toxic air pollution and improving the lung health, particularly for protecting our most vulnerable populations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Aleks Casper". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Aleks Casper
Director of Advocacy
American Lung Association in Maryland