

MARYPIRG

Students

Bill Title: HB220 Reclaim Renewable Energy Act

Position: Favorable

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

From: Angelina Mussini, Climate Action Coordinator, MaryPIRG Students

Date: 2/17/25

My name is Angelina Mussini, and I am a senior studying Environmental Science & Policy at the University of Maryland, College Park. I serve as the Climate Action Coordinator for Maryland Public Interest Research Group (MaryPIRG) Students, a grassroots advocacy organization representing our student body. **I am writing in SUPPORT of HB220, the Reclaim Renewable Energy Act (RREA) of 2025.** As a resident and ratepayer in District 21, I am greatly concerned regarding how my electricity bill contributes to subsidies for waste incineration facilities across the state, as they are distinct from other Tier 1 energy sources due to their adverse public health and economic impacts on my fellow Marylanders.

Exposure to emissions from waste incinerators is correlated to higher rates of asthma and heart disease, evidenced by the impacts of Particulate Matter pollution from the Bresco incinerator.¹ These impacts fall disproportionately on predominantly Black neighborhoods in South Baltimore, including Cherry Hill, Brooklyn, Westport, and Mount Winans, which are designated by the Maryland Department of the Environment's Environmental Justice Screening Tool as communities that are overburdened from pollution exposure. For example, the Westport neighborhood falls within the 96% percentile statewide in pollution burden exposure, due to the high prevalence of pollutants such as PM2.5 and ozone.²

From 2012 to 2022, electricity bills paid by Maryland ratepayers contributed over \$100 million to the operation of incineration facilities. 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.³ As a ratepayer, I would like to see utility subsidies benefit renewable energy sources like solar, geothermal, and hydropower to advance progress towards the goals of Maryland's renewable portfolio standard (RPS).

Due to the intensity of these demonstrable public health and economic impacts, MaryPIRG Students respectfully requests a **favorable report on HB220**. Thank you for your attention and consideration to this matter.

¹ G. Thurston, WRITTEN REPORT OF GEORGE D. THURSTON REGARDING THE PUBLIC HEALTH IMPACTS OF AIR EMISSIONS FROM THE WHEELABRATOR FACILITY, November 20, 2017, <https://www.cbf.org/document-library/cbf-reports/thurston-wheelabrator-health-impacts-2017.pdf>

² University of Maryland, EJSscreen Mapper, <https://p1.cgis.umd.edu/ejscreen/>

³ Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, "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/>.

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Sincerely,

Angelina Mussini

Angelina Mussini, Climate Action Coordinator, Maryland Public Interest Research Group
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