

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 438**  
**House Economic Matters Committee | February 20, 2020**

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The Chesapeake Climate Action Network (CCAN) Action Fund supports House Bill 438, legislation to remove trash incineration from Tier 1 of the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS). We thank Del. Nick Mosby for sponsoring this legislation to end ratepayer subsidies for climate pollution.

In the Maryland Department of Environment's 2017 emissions inventory, trash incineration was responsible for 1.19 MMtCO<sub>2e</sub> of climate pollution, more than half of all greenhouse gas emissions in the waste sector. It is Maryland's third dirtiest form of electricity generation behind coal and fracked gas.

Trash incineration polluters often try to make the case that emissions are *reduced* by avoiding landfill greenhouse gases. While this argument is only relevant if the incineration plants close down--something this bill **does not** mandate--it is also completely disproven by data. Polluters burned 1,298,472 tons of trash to create those 1.19 MMtCO<sub>2e</sub> in emissions. Meanwhile, landfills holding 3,209,829 tons of trash were responsible for 0.46 MMtCO<sub>2e</sub> in emissions. In MDE's annual solid waste report, they write, "In all cases where either recycling or source reduction is used instead of landfilling, there are reductions in GHG emissions and energy used. Only when combusting a material instead of landfilling it were there increases in GHG emissions or energy used."

As noted in the fiscal note, trash incineration is taking up a smaller and smaller portion of the RPS, making up 12% in 2018 compared to 32% in 2012. Using data from the Public Service Commission's and the PJM queue, we anticipate less than 4% of the RPS will come from trash incineration this year. This is driven in large part by a significant increase in solar in the PJM queue in the last year.

With the passage of the Clean Energy Jobs Act, the solar energy industry has already done an about face, going from losing 808 jobs in 2018 to gaining 339 in 2019. More growth is anticipated as the demand for truly clean energy rises. Meanwhile, by continuing to subsidize trash incineration, we only give money to already existing, polluting sources of energy in the face of a climate crisis, and additionally cost our state millions in health care expenses and other economic burdens. This severely undermines the intention of the RPS to grow new sources of energy and meet our climate commitments. We urge the Committee to give House Bill 438 a favorable report.

**CONTACT**

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