



Testimony Supporting HB438 / SB560
House Economic Matters Committee / Senate Finance Committee
February 20, 2020 / February 25, 2020

Position: SUPPORT

As a pastor of three Catholic parishes in (and also a resident of) the 45th district, I am writing to express my strong support of HB438/SB560 and the effort to remove trash incineration from Maryland's Renewable Portfolio Standard. Burning trash is not clean energy, and Maryland's renewable energy subsidies should be used to support truly green energy like wind and solar, not trash incineration that pollutes our communities.

My faith tradition teaches that ecological crises are also moral, spiritual and ethical crises. Our parishioners know by faith, and by family medical histories of asthma, cancer and other illnesses, that burning trash is dirtier than burning coal. Fine particle air pollution from the BRESKO incinerator causes over \$55 million in adverse health effects annually, according to a study commissioned by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. That study also found that living near the BRESKO incinerator has the same health impacts as living with a smoker. And according to the Environmental Integrity Project, trash incineration produces more greenhouse gas emissions per unit of energy than coal plants.

Clearly, we must make profound changes, and HB438/SB560 is a positive step forward. A Baltimore City Office of Sustainability 2014 report (*Waste to Wealth: Baltimore Waste Stream Analysis*) showed that 82% of Baltimore's household materials could be recycled or composted. Pope Francis shares our belief that we can demonstrate accountability to one another, to our earth and to future generations by adopting zero waste and recycling approaches to dealing with our trash instead of incineration:

We have not yet managed to adopt a circular model of production capable of preserving resources for present and future generations, while limiting as much as possible the use of non-renewable resources, moderating their consumption, maximizing their efficient use, reusing and recycling them. A serious consideration of this issue would be one way of counteracting the throwaway culture which affects the entire planet. (Pope Francis, Laudato Si, #22).

When Pope Francis chose to address our environment and care for creation as his first encyclical letter, *Laudato Si (On Care of Our Common Home)*, he was speaking for us in Baltimore, too:

Doomsday predictions can no longer be met with irony or disdain. We may well be leaving to coming generations debris, desolation and filth. ... The effects of the present imbalance can only be reduced by our decisive action, here and now. We need to reflect on our accountability before those who will have to endure the dire consequences. (Pope Francis, Laudato Si, #161).

For all of these reasons and many more, I urge these committees to support HB438/SB560 and end subsidies for trash incineration in Maryland. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Rev. Ty S. Hullinger

Pastor of St. Anthony of Padua, St. Dominic & Most Precious Blood Catholic Churches (Baltimore, MD)