



**Committee:** Environment & Transportation

**Testimony on:** HB280-- “Maryland Recycling Act--Recyclable Materials and Resource Recovery Facilities--Alterations” Investment Act”

**Organization:** MLC Climate Justice Wing  
**Person**

**Submitting:** Diana Younts, co-chair

**Position:** Favorable

**Hearing Date:** February 9, 2021

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of HB280. MLC’s Climate Justice Wing is a statewide coalition of over 50 grassroots and grasstops organizations focused on getting State level climate justice legislation passed. Each bill for which we advocate is evaluated through an equity lens, with a particular focus on how disadvantaged communities are affected by the bill and the bill’s climate impact.

We urge you to support HB280, a bill that excludes incinerator ash as “recyclable materials” under the Maryland Recycling Act (MRA). The bill also repeals the authority of a county to rely on trash incinerator ash to help meet its state-mandated waste reduction targets as part of its recycling plan. Incinerator ash is the leftover material resulting from the burning of municipal solid waste. The MRA currently allows ash that’s incorporated into cement blocks to count towards the MRA rate reported by local governments. (The Senate cross-file of this common sense bill passed out of committee unanimously and passed on the Senate floor, also unanimously).

We believe this is completely inconsistent with the definition and practice of recycling in the 21st century:

- Incinerators burn many recyclable materials (metals and food waste, for example) that could be separated, composted, or processed, and then subsequently marketed as raw materials or products. The Zero Waste International Alliance considers discarded material to be a resource for “reuse, and recovery of products, packaging, and materials without burning and with no discharges to land, water, or air that threaten the environment or human health.” Incinerator ash

is a product that will never be part of a sustainable cycle and should not be considered “recyclable.”

- Incinerator ash contains toxins known to be harmful to the environment and human health. Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and dioxin are common contaminants created when waste is incinerated; incentivizing “recycling” of incinerator ash encourages the persistence of these toxins in the environment, endangering human and animal life.
- Trash incinerators emit climate-disrupting greenhouse gases which damage our climate, and other pollutants which damage Marylanders’ health. Trash incinerators are expensive, polluting, and an appalling waste of resources. Our trash should be redirected to create jobs by growing recycling markets and creating circular economies. Eliminating incinerator ash from the MRA list of “recyclable materials” is a first step in the right direction.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable vote for HB280.

**MLC Climate Justice Wing:**

Maryland Legislative Coalition  
MD Campaign for Environmental Human Rights  
Chesapeake Climate Action Network  
WISE  
Frack Free Frostburg  
Mountain Maryland Movement  
Clean Water Action  
Maryland Sierra Club  
Howard County Indivisible  
Howard County Sierra Club  
Columbia Association Climate change and sustainability advisory committee  
HoCo Climate Action  
CHEER  
Climate XChange - Maryland  
Mid-Atlantic Field Representative/  
National Parks Conservation Association  
350 Montgomery County  
Glen Echo Heights Mobilization  
The Climate Mobilization Montgomery County  
Montgomery County Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions  
Montgomery Countryside Alliance  
Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee  
Audubon Naturalist Society  
Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church

Environmental Justice Ministry  
Coalition For Smarter Growth  
DoTheMostGood Montgomery County  
MCPS Clean Energy Campaign  
MoCo DCC  
Potomac Conservancy  
Casa de Maryland  
Nuclear Information & Resource Service  
Clean Air Prince Georges  
Ji'Aire's Workgroup  
Laurel Resist  
Greenbelt Climate Action Network  
Maryland League of Conservation Voters  
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland  
Concerned Citizens Against Industrial Cafos  
Wicomico NAACP  
Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility  
Chispa MD  
Climate Law & Policy Project  
Poor Peoples Campaign  
Labor for Sustainability  
The Nature Conservancy  
Clean Air Prince Georges  
350 Baltimore  
Maryland Environmental Health Network