



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education

Senate Bill 549

Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard – Thermal Biomass systems

Date: February 23, 2021

To: Senate Finance Committee

Position: **OPPOSE**

From: Doug Myers
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Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **OPPOSES** SB 549 which would allow the direct incineration of animal manure and food waste as qualifying biomass sources of energy in the Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard (RPS).

This bill circumvents Maryland's progress towards alternative uses of animal manure and food waste

Composting and biogas digestion allows extracting useful biological energy from the breakdown of these materials. These age-old and emerging technologies extract energy from the biomass as heat, or fuel generators that produce electricity. The processes concentrate nutrients held within that biomass, reduce their weight for efficient shipping, and allow for their safe use, in certain quantities and under certain parameters, as agricultural and residential fertilizers.

CBF understands the need to better manage animal manure, including poultry manure and bedding, and food waste. Development of alternative uses for these waste products continues through the work of the Phosphorus Management Tool Transition Advisory Committee. The State is currently working to manage phosphorus pollution from farms with a history of overapplication of fertilizer. The Phosphorus Management Tool and manure transport program are efforts to this end.¹

Incineration of biomass for heat production has negative implications for the Chesapeake Bay

Directly incinerating any biomass creates significant air emissions of carbon dioxide and nitrogen oxides. These emissions contribute to greenhouse gases and the deposition of nitrogen oxides to the Bay during rainfall events. Several pilot-scale manure incineration facilities have failed to demonstrate efficient heat production without significant air pollution.

The diversion of these feedstocks to a cheaper, more polluting process undercuts the business model for developing composting and anaerobic digestion facilities that the State is pursuing. It would undermine truly renewable energy sources like wind, solar and geothermal in the renewable energy portfolio.

CBF urges the Committee's UNFAVORABLE report on SB 549.

For more information, please contact Robin Jessica Clark, Maryland Staff Attorney at rclark@cbf.org and 443.995.8753.

¹ Maryland Department of Agriculture, [The Agriculture Phosphorus Initiative](#), last visited 2.16.2021.

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