



# CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

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*Environmental Protection and Restoration  
Environmental Education*

## **Senate Bill 65**

Electricity – Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard – Qualifying Biomass

Date: January 21, 2021  
To: Senate Finance Committee

Position: **SUPPORT**  
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Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS** SB 65 which removes mill residue also known as “black liquor” from the list of qualifying biomass sources of energy in the renewable energy portfolio.

Black liquor is a waste product from pulp and paper mills that contain hundreds of chemical constituents that when burned for energy emit large amounts of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxides, all of which are potent greenhouse gases. Greenhouse gas emissions threaten the Chesapeake Bay through climate change and its effects.

Warmer waters exacerbate the Bay's dead zones, stressing fish including the Bay's iconic striped bass. The EPA predicts that a three-degree overall air temperature increase could increase the heat-related human death toll. Storm surges combined with higher sea levels and increasingly erratic storm activity may flood thousands of low-lying areas in Maryland, many of which are occupied by economically disadvantaged residents.

SB 65 removes black liquor as a qualifying source recognizing the fact that even though the fuel source is renewable, it is not environmentally clean. While Maryland's last pulping facility has now closed, the State's Renewable Portfolio Standard currently allows Maryland to purchase renewable energy credits from facilities in any state within the Pennsylvania-New Jersey-Maryland Interconnection (PJM) grid. This has the effect of Maryland now subsidizing mills in other states to continue to burn black liquor and sell the electricity to Maryland through the grid. By ending the State's ability to purchase credits from black liquor, SB 65 removes the subsidy for black liquor emissions throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

**CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on SB 65.**

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*The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 300,000 members and e-subscribers, including over 109,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.*