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Testimony on Maryland House Bill HB718 Reclaim Renewable Energy Act

TO: Chair Wilson, Speaker of the House Jones, and members of the committee

FROM: Sharif Dendy, Member of Progressive Maryland

DATE: March 9, 2023

POSITION: Favorable

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of the Reclaim Renewable Energy Act. Progressive Maryland is a grassroots nonprofit organization with regional chapters from Frederick to the Lower Shore and more than 100,000 members and supporters who live in nearly every legislative district in the state. In addition, there are dozens of affiliated community, faith, and labor organizations across the state that stand behind our work. Our mission is to improve the lives of working families in Maryland. Please note our **strong support for HB718**.

Thank you for the chance to offer my own testimony for SB0590. I have recently joined the Progressive Maryland organization in hopes for putting my best foot forward and helping reduce the environmental injustices that have plagued my neighborhood, Cherryhill, as well as others it seems in disinvested communities. Decades of industrial waste have been thrown into our environments causing our areas to become brownfields versus other areas being reconstructed or built back up and given the proper resources other communities don't get a chance to receive. Mind you this is only one of the many historical or systematic injustices that have served against communities such as ours. I strongly urge you to reconsider this bill creating a better environmental future for the next generations to come.

I am 29-years-old, and have lived in Cherryhill since I was 3. Even though I wasn't fully aware of the damage that the incinerator caused I knew of what it wasn't doing indirectly without a doubt. I live on a block that's full of homeowners and families that have been in the area for 2 or more generations. It is safe to say most of the people that live on my block are home owners and over time I have see many of my older relatives or family friends on Hillview Rd pass away from causes such as cancer, respiratory diseases and issues, and these are the symptoms that I'm aware from those that were immediately around the family and myself. I myself have had type 1 diabetes since I was 6 years of age.

After being able to conduct my own research into the systemic and historical events in Baltimore that have amplified and created not just metaphysical but physical boundaries lines and areas of

disinfected communities for our people.

Theories such as the “Butterfly” effect or “L”theory excuse me if I incorrectly named them but show how communities of color are being greatly affected due displacement and disinvestment over time and how these affected have created decades of mental and physical disparity in these neighborhoods. I only bring this to your attention because all of these things have played a role in the shaping of our communities as time has progressed. Being able to do community service for canoe and scoop at the Waterview boat house was a great experience but it also puts a lot into perspective in our own community. I can remember that the water wasn't but so deep in certain areas and you literally could feel the grime , sludge, and chemicals picked up cleaning or as you towed the canoe and it was alarming.

I support this environmental cause because it isn't just for the ones we have with us but also for our next generation of loved ones to grow and have to deal with the health circumstances that plague some of us to this day. If we can come together to create changes such as this one step by step we will be able to rebuild and uplift our disinvested communities all around Baltimore and create a future for the generations to come. We shouldn't have to argue or debate over whether drinking clean water, breathing fresh air without chemical pollutants, or dealing with the severe health cases sue to where you live or the community in which you reside. We all as people deserve more from one another and I genuinely hope you support this bill to end the incinerator.

For these reasons, **we respectfully urge a favorable report on HB 590.**

Sharif Dendy