

Testimony Supporting HB718
House Economic Matters Committee
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Position: SUPPORT

As a lifelong, 62 years, Maryland resident and ratepayer I demand that you to pass HB718, the Reclaim Renewable Energy Act, for the following reasons:

1. **Our soils are being depleted at an unsustainable rate.** As much organic material as practical must be returned to our soils and we must transition to other sustainable agriculture practices. Organic material burned in municipal incinerators, chicken litter, and wood must be returned to the soil from which it came.
2. **Our atmosphere has too much CO2 and methane in it.** We cannot stop the extreme weather and rising sea level, it is too late—nature must run its course and it will take centuries after we stop emitting too much CO2 and methane for our atmosphere to recover. Burning municipal waste that can be composted and burning plastic that should be recycled or not produced in the first place will increase the death toll from our overheated atmosphere, as will extracting methane from chicken litter rather than composting the litter and avoiding methane production, as will burning wood rather than sequestering its CO2 by returning it to the soil.
3. **We are killing people in environmental justice communities.** Municipal waste incinerators are predominantly sited in environmental justice communities and cause significant numbers of premature deaths, illness, and additional health costs. Methane extraction and consumption pollutes the air and is dangerous. Wood pellet sourcing is harming environmental justice communities throughout the southeast United States.
4. **Electricity produced by Waste-to-Energy schemes is very expensive.** Electricity produced from municipal waste incinerators, methane extracted from organic waste, and burning wood is more expensive than electricity produced from solar, wind, or water driven generators, by far.
5. **Two-hundred million dollars is a lot of money to waste.** More than 200 million dollars has been diverted from subsidizing truly clean and truly renewably generated electricity to enrich dirty, harmful, and expensive schemes to subsidize mismanaged waste issues (burning things that must be composted). Imagine the number of community solar farms or electric buses we could have right now with that lost money.
6. **Baltimore City has a waste solution ready that does not require incineration.** The environmental justice community in South Baltimore is working with the city to host a municipal-scale composting facility and a state-of-the-art recycling facility. Their community will be free of the toxic BRESCO incinerator and will host sustainable, living wage jobs composting and recycling.
7. **The Delmarva Peninsula cannot afford a false solution like methane extraction.** Our eastern shore waters are already over polluted with nutrients from industrialized agriculture that is bad for family farmers and bad for the land and water. The real solution for our eastern shore is sustainable, family and community centered agriculture. Like our atmosphere, our eastern shore waters need

centuries to heal as we compost and more responsibly land spread the nutrients from chicken waste.

8. **Trees are our lungs.** A recent Harvard School of Public Health Study found that biomass and wood have the fastest-growing share of early deaths in the major energy-consuming sectors; burning wood for electricity produces as much or more pollution than fossil fuels, including coal. Biomass facilities emit high levels of particulate matter (PM), nitrogen oxides (NOx), carbon monoxide (CO), sulfur dioxide (SO₂), lead, mercury, and other hazardous air pollutants. Although trees regenerate, newly planted trees have far less benefit to the climate and local air quality than a mature tree or a fully-functioning forest ecosystem. Burning trees releases CO₂ into the air immediately, and the carbon isn't recaptured unless and until newly planted replacement trees grow to maturity over many decades.

There are no fact-based, science-based, or economically-based arguments that can be made for subsidizing dirty, harmful, and expensive waste solutions (schemes) as 'renewable' energy.