



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education

House Bill 718

Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard – Eligible Sources – Alterations
(Reclaim Renewable Energy Act of 2023)

Date: March 9, 2023

To: House Economic Matters Committee

Position:

From:

Favorable With Amendment

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Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS WITH AMENDMENT** HB 718 which would make several changes to Maryland's Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS). As introduced, the bill would remove several sources of qualifying biomass and gas produced from anaerobic digestion as a Tier I renewable energy source. CBF supports the bill with anticipated amendments that would retain these sources in the RPS.

CBF has worked diligently with Md. Department of Agriculture and the Delmarva Poultry industry to create multiple alternatives to land disposal of poultry litter in places saturated by legacy phosphorus. Excess phosphorus leaches into shallow surface waters through agricultural tile drainage systems to become a significant water pollutant to the Bay. The Maryland General Assembly approved the Phosphorus Management Tool (PMT) in order to address this ongoing source of bay pollution. Under a comprehensive PMT implementation plan which includes on farm practice changes and a state subsidized manure transport program, generation of biogas is an important component to address excess manure and limit transportation costs to the program. Qualifying biomass fuel sources not only convert what was once a waste product into energy that can replace fossil fuels, but the remaining by-products can also be further separated into useful soil amendment products that do not harm the environment and cost less fuel to transport.

While we understand that methane is a potent greenhouse gas, these sources of biomass from existing Maryland industries are controlled and quantified as a Tier I source. These byproducts would still be emitting methane, carbon dioxide and nitrous oxides in an uncontrolled fashion if there was no market for biogas or wood waste. For these reasons, at this time, CBF would prefer they remain within the Tier I portfolio.

By contrast, trash incineration creates a market for energy with tremendous health, environmental, and economic cost. As nitrogen washes out of the air in rain, it falls into our waters, starting a deadly chain reaction: The oxides of nitrogen and mercury contribute to algal blooms that cloud the water and absorb the oxygen. Without oxygen, underwater grasses, crabs, fish, and other marine life suffocate and die. These dead zones can be truly devastating to biodiversity and are an ongoing cause for concern.

CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENT report on HB 718.

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney at mstegman@cbf.org.

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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.