



# PROGRESSIVE MARYLAND

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## Testimony on Maryland House Bill 718 Reclaim Renewable Energy Act

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

**FROM:** Mara Barry, 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**.

My name is Mara Barry and I am testifying on behalf of Progressive Maryland. I support HB0718 and the proposed alterations to eligible Renewable Energy Sources. I have lived my whole life in Maryland and have many fond memories of driving into Baltimore to visit the aquarium, go to baseball games, and enjoy all of the wonderful and unique things Baltimore has to offer—I now know that those towering smoke stacks that always felt like the sign that we were almost to our exciting destination were at the same time polluting the air and damaging the lives of the families living most closely to Wheelabrator and causing grave environmental impacts in Baltimore City and beyond. It is important that we stand up for what we know is wrong, there are studies such as the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) study from 2017 that show the damage Wheelabrator Trash Incinerator is causing. The CBF found through their study that the pollution from Wheelabrator was “causing \$55 million annually in health problems”, this was 5 years ago so I can only imagine what that number looks like today.

There will be questions of what we do with the trash if it's not being incinerated or what happens to the individuals whose homes are powered by Wheelabrator? We must invest in other forms of renewable energy—both Solar and Wind are low impact options that Maryland and specifically Baltimore City could further invest in to create a cleaner and safer future for its residents. The other side of the coin is reducing waste all together, providing municipal composting and resources to learn about waste reduction will go a long way in the long term reduction of waste and the ‘need’ for an incinerator.

Once again, I ask you to consider the long term effects Wheelabrator Trash Incinerator has had on the communities closest to it and beyond and why we would continue to support an energy source that is directly negatively impacting Maryland residents and the environment. I support the proposed alterations to eligible Renewable Energy Sources in HB0718 and hope that you

will as well, for a bright, beautiful and healthy future for ALL of Maryland's residents.

For these reasons, **we respectfully urge a favorable report on HB718.**

Mara Barry