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PROGRESSIVE MARYLAND

P.O. Box 6988 Largo, MD 20792
www.ProgressiveMaryland.org
Contact@ProgressiveMaryland.org
Facebook.com/ProgressiveMaryland
@Progressive_MD

Testimony on Maryland House Bill 718 Reclaim Renewable Energy Act

TO: Chair Wilson, Speaker of the House Jones, and members of the committee
FROM: SirJames Weaver, Progressive Maryland: Environmental Justice Organizer
DATE: March 7, 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**.

For 38 years a tall-rocket-shaped poisonous facility, that looks over interstate 95, gets fed 2,250-tons of Baltimore city's trash per day, and violently spews eternal death from its mouth onto the black souls of south Baltimore. This part of the city has become "cancer alley."

As a PM Environmental Justice Organizer, based in Baltimore D 46, I've had conversations with Cherry Hill (CH) community members concerning the effects of the Wheelabrator trash incinerator: Baltimore's top polluter. On a cloudy and windy day in CH, in mid-January, I spoke to a 33-year old mother about the incinerator, at her doorstep. That said, she mentioned having a 2-year-old child born with a heart defect; as we continued our conversation, her eyes lit up like diamonds, once she learned that her utility bills, each month, helped maintain the incinerator's wealth. Her body jerked suddenly, as she began to understand the health impacts of living close to a poisonous incinerator that could, one day, potentially take the life of her child.

A noted expert of the analysis of human health effects of air pollution, Dr. George D. Thurston, in his 21-page study authorized by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, reported that incinerators are responsible for 5.5 deaths per year. All told, the incinerator's round-the-clock burning of trash has placed South Baltimore communities in roach-like conditions, and paying utilities to give their child cancer one day. With each breath in cancer valley life expectancies are reduced, I strongly urge you to support HB718.

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

SirJames