



RE: Support Testimony on: SB590/ HB718

Committee: Economic Matters Committee

Testimony on: SB590/ HB718

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: March 9th, 2023

Dear Chair Wilson and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 718. My name is Maria Payan. I am Co-founder of Sentinels Of Eastern Shore Health, based on the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland and Sussex Health & Environmental Network in Sussex County, Delaware. Our coalition members unify a collective voice for positive solutions and inclusiveness in working towards healthy solutions. Our vision of healthy communities include environmental health, public health, economic health and social health.

I feel that it is important that you have an accurate picture of what is happening in our communities as large scale regional biogas facilities, untried and untested are being proposed across the Lower Eastern Shore in Maryland and in Sussex County Delaware.

There is a pattern of misrepresenting biogas projects as a way to help our small farmers with their litter and the runoff which is currently contaminating our wells and streams. Right now, the Bioenergy Devco project in Sussex County is part of a civil rights Title VI Administrative Complaint. This project is being sited in a community that is linguistically isolated with little political power or voice. The reality is that this project is proposing to take waste from the processing plants across the Delmarva region and beyond into Sussex County. **Of the 250,000 tons of waste, only 12 percent is broiler litter. The other 88 percent is processing plant waste from three other states across our region.**

Within three miles of the Project, residents of color make up 32% of the population, but only account for 17% of the population in Sussex County. Residents living in poverty make up 34% of those living within three miles of the Project, whereas only 12% of the population in Sussex County lives in poverty. And many community members near the site have limited English language proficiency. These disparities indicate environmental and economic injustices already exist.

These projects are about bringing waste into communities on the backs of Maryland ratepayers. If the industry has a waste problem - they need to be pushed to manage it through composting, nutrient management plans, and less concentration in residential communities.

The Reclaim Renewable Energy Act to remove biogas from the renewable portfolio standard will help to prevent the negative impacts of these harmful pollutants on the environment and public health. It will also encourage the development and implementation of true clean energy sources like wind and solar, which are much better for the environment and do not cause the negative impacts associated with biogas.

In conclusion, I urge you to support the proposed bill to remove dirty energy sources like trash incineration, biogas and biomass from the renewable portfolio standard. This will help to prevent environmental injustice and incentivize the development of true clean energy sources like wind and solar.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Respectfully

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More Information:

[Is Turning Chicken Poop Into Fuel a Good Idea?:](#)

“As the anaerobic-digester rollout continues on Delmarva, Morra feels ‘terrible,’ he said, about his tax dollars supporting projects that are poised to enrich poultry giants but fail to relieve the environmental and health burdens of those who live near chicken barns. ‘It’s like paying for my own problems,’ he said with a sigh. ‘It’s ridiculous.’”

[Dirty Delaware Project to Turn Poultry Slaughterhouse Waste into Pipeline Grade Methane](#)

“These digesters do not solve animal waste problems, and they do not reduce phosphorus or nitrogen levels in manure. Manure still needs to be managed through practices such as field application.”

[Public Comment](#) on the Bioenergy Development Company, LLC (“BDC”) Bioenergy Innovation Center Project, proposed to be located at 28338 Enviro Way, Seaford, Sussex County, Delaware. (Page 7 - Neighbors testimonials).

“I don’t like the idea of bringing the chicken waste near me and my kids. This gas could bring us harm in many ways. I don’t like the idea of so many trucks transporting gas that could possibly explode, close to any of the many kids that walk these roads. And there are many, many kids.”