



POSITION STATEMENT

Opposition of HB0718

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

As Director of the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC), I am requesting that you provide an **unfavorable report** for HB0178.

As our forests are one of our greatest renewable resources and a key component of the agricultural industry in Maryland, they deserve a place in Maryland's RPS. Biomass energy provides Maryland taxpayers with a sensible return on investment in their environment and community. Unlike fossil fuels, biomass energy must be sourced locally from forestry projects or urban wood waste. The price of biomass residues has been consistent over the years and does not fluctuate like the price of oil or gas. Expanding the biomass energy sector has also been found to support local economies and job growth since money spent on wood residues remains in the community, particularly in rural areas of the State.

This bill, as written, would eliminate the future potential for biomass systems to qualify for "renewable energy credits" with severe implications for forestry, wood waste, and bioenergy operations. The opposition to wood energy is often based on misconceptions that biomass systems are "dirty" and cannot meet Maryland's stringent air quality standards or question the sustainability of the wood supply. Neither of these claims is factual.

In summary, HB0718 would, if passed, increase the amount of waste (both wood and municipal) that is sent to landfills and/or trucked out of State to locations with less stringent environmental regulations for disposal, increasing methane emissions from landfills and CO2 emissions from transportation, reduce jobs in sectors such as renewable energy, logging, transportation, chipping, waste management, and forestry, and prevent Maryland from reaching its environmental goals by 2030 and beyond.

I humbly request that the committee members give an UNFAVORABLE REPORT to HB0718 and urge the Committee to continue to look for more sustainable options that encourage a diverse renewable energy portfolio while Maryland divests itself from fossil fuels, becoming energy independent.

Thank You,

Shelby Watson-Hampton

Director, Southern Maryland Agricultural

Development Commission (SMADC)

swatsonhampton@smadc.com

www.smadc.com

(240) 304-8535

The Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission
is a division of the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland
P.O. Box 745 Hughesville, MD 20637
Phone - 240-528-8850 ~ Email – info@smadc.com

