



PROGRESSIVE MARYLAND

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Testimony on Maryland House Bill 718 Reclaim Renewable Energy Act

TO: House Economic Matters Committee
FROM: Sophia D'Alonzo, Member of Progressive Maryland
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 SB590**.

I am an undergraduate student at the University of Maryland studying Environmental Science and Policy. I'm a member of 17 for Peace and Justice, an environmental justice group on campus, and MaryPIRG, a student-led activism organization. Within MaryPIRG, I lead a campaign called 100% Renewable, through which we advocate for the equitable transition to renewable energy on campus and in our surrounding communities. I also conduct research with the Center for Community Engagement, Environmental Justice, and Health (CEEJH), specifically focusing on air pollution in BIPOC and low-income communities.

Including waste material in the RPS as a qualifying biomass for Tier 1 renewable energy credits has created a state-incentivized environmental justice crisis. The Wheelabrator Incinerator in Baltimore, Maryland is the city's largest stationary source of air pollution, emitting dangerous pollutants like dioxin. Dioxin is an extremely toxic chemical group that can harm human reproductive and developmental health. The EPA EJScreen indicates that the surrounding areas of the Incinerator are 95-100 percentile for Air Toxics Cancer Risk, 80-90 percentile for Air Toxics Respiratory HI, and predominantly POC.

Renewable energy sources that emit toxic chemicals and harm minority and low-income communities should never be incentivized. I urge the committee to consider alternative waste-management strategies.

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

Sophia D'Alonzo