

**To: Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and members of the Economic Matters Committee**

**From: Brother Merrick Moses, OSB, on behalf of **Progressive Maryland Environmental Justice Campaign**, District 40, Baltimore City**

**Date: March 7, 2023**

**Position: Support**

*Job 12:7-10, NIV Ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds of the air, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish of the sea inform you. Which of these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind.*

Greetings to the illustrious members of this committee:

My name is Brother Merrick Moses. I am a Benedictine monk living in Baltimore City. I have been in ministry since 2004 and have had the blessing of ministering to people from all walks of life in the City. To that end, many of the folks that I have helped in Baltimore complain about their respiratory issues from asthma to COPD. Many of these persons blame poor air quality and pollution for their ailments, particularly trash incineration in Westport. Congregants in that area have complained that they believe the Wheelabrator is making them sick with asthma and even with cancer. Although this is anecdotal in nature, I do believe them. I believe these hard-working people are hurting because their quality of life is being adversely affected by trash incineration in their own backyards.

As a monk, I am keenly aware of our Higher Power's command to care for the creatures and other sentient beings on this planet. Burning trash for energy is ruining the health of human beings, animals, and plants. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there are new and innovative ways to provide energy to the masses without polluting and destroying the planet. We need to safeguard the future for our kids but earnestly looking for alternative methods to power homes and business. Dropping trash incineration from the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) is a good way to begin to repair what has already done to the people of Westport and the surrounding areas. We are called to care for creation, not only because creation was deemed as good by God in the Bible (**Genesis 1:31**, "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good."), but also to preserve the beauty and bounty of this planet for a future humanity. The time is now to make amends and end trash incineration.

With great appreciation,

Br. Merrick Moses, OSB

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