



Testimony on SB590/HB718
Reclaim Renewable Energy Act
Position: **Favorable**

To Chair Feldman and members of the Senate Energy, Education, and Environment Committee;
To Chair Wilson and Members of the House Economic Matters Committee:

My name is Ricarra Jones. I'm the Political Director of 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East. We are the largest healthcare workers union in the country, representing over 10,000 members in Maryland/DC. Our union supports the Reclaim Renewable Energy Act, and we urge a **favorable** report. Passing this bill is crucial not only for the health of our planet, but also for the health of our communities.

Maryland has a Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard (RPS) which provides renewable energy credits (REC). This is important because it provides incentives for clean energy in Maryland. Unfortunately, there are polluters who use dirty energy-- trash incineration, bio-gas from factory farms, and woody biomass -- benefiting from REC because they are misclassified as "clean" energy. The Reclaim Renewable Energy Act seeks to rectify that problem and ensure that RECs go to real clean energy like wind and solar.

There is a dangerous short staffing crisis across the healthcare industry in Maryland, including in our hospitals. Maryland also has the longest Emergency Department wait times in the entire country. We are in urgent need of safe staffing ratios, higher wages for healthcare workers, and better recruitment and retention practices to make sure our facilities are properly staffed. When our healthcare facilities are short staffed, it is a lose-lose for everyone. Healthcare workers are overworked and underpaid, and patient care can suffer when there aren't enough workers to care for them. **Passing this bill can help reduce the burden on healthcare workers, particularly in our hospitals, by alleviating the number of patients that flood healthcare facilities due to preventable illnesses caused by toxins in our environment from dirty energy sources. Toxins from trash incineration, bio-gas from factory farms, and woody biomass are linked to healthcare ailments such as asthma, cancer, reproductive disorders, and other negative health impacts.**

The majority of 1199SEIU members are People of Color. Dirty energy sources tend to be concentrated in low-income and/or Black and Brown neighborhoods -- where many of our members live -- and this concentration of dirty energy leads to greater health disparities based on income and race.

For the sake of our people and our planet, please vote YES on this bill. Thank you.

In Unity,
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