



House Economic Matters Committee
Biomass Bill HB 718 Oppose

Mr. Chairman and members My name is *Gary G Allen, President, Maryland Forestry Foundation*. *The Foundation coordinates the work of the state's forest District Conversancy Boards with volunteers appointed by the state forester in every county. We also manage the state's largest tree planting program outside of state government. Working with the 5 million tree program we will plant over 75,000 trees on private lands in Maryland this year. We support forests and working lands managed for ecological services such as carbon sequestration.*

The Foundation opposes HB718 We think it ultimately fails to adequately address the likely driver behind its introduction climate change.

I want to call your attention to the latest, 2022 report the Climate Change Commission the legislature created managed by the Maryland Dept of the Environment.

Specifically, recommendation #24, which highlights using wood for thermal energy- For a program to facilitate the decarbonization of the building sector. The Commission recommends a new revised "climate sensitive renewable energy tax program that would absorb the state's existing Thermal Renewable Energy Credits (TREC's) from the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) electricity program and allow for various clean heat solutions to compete for renewable energy credits, with a prioritization of clean heating solutions that are not associated with on-site emissions. Credits in this expanded program should be made available to support measures that decarbonize heating fuel supplies, reduce methane leaks from natural gas distribution systems, improve the energy efficiency of homes/buildings, install a thermal or combined heat and power system that runs on qualifying biomass fuels,"

Mr. Chairman and the Foundation would be pleased to work with MFA and other stakeholders in the development of such a program to strengthen the climate benefits of our forests for all our citizens.

Two years ago, in an effort educate citizens about biomass we hosted a webinar series and a white paper (show). Hundreds attended. the series highlighted the science, and national, and international examples of the efficient use of biomass as a RENEWABLE energy source compatible with climate planning and commitments around the nation. HB 718 is not consistent with that science. It is not consistent with the long-term management of our states working forests and the markets that even some of our smallest landowners consult.

The Foundation believes the General Assembly should not modify requirements for woody biomass-to- energy systems to qualify for TRECs during the time before a new renewable thermal energy program takes effect consistent with the recommendations of the Climate Change Commission. HB 718 is not that way forward. We urged an unfavorable report and further, more comprehensive reflection on a climate sensitive RPS Standard in the year ahead.

Thank You.