



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Delegate C.T. Wilson, Chair
Delegate Brian M. Crosby, Vice Chair
Economic Matters Committee Members

FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus

DATE: March 7th, 2023

RE: HB0718 Reclaim Renewable Energy Act of 2023

The MLLC supports HB0718 Reclaim Renewable Energy Act of 2023

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a crucial voice in the development of public policy that uplifts the Latino community and benefits the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of HB0718.

The Reclaim Renewable Energy Act is important because it prevents energy suppliers from benefiting off dirty energy sources that significantly harm the environment. Dirty energy sources such as waste-to-energy plants incinerate trash and release dangerous compounds, dioxins, into the atmosphere. Maryland taxpayers spend \$30 million each year to buy renewable energy credits from these dirty energy sources instead of cleaner, more renewable energy sources. This piece of legislation is pertinent to the Latino community because these polluting facilities are often located in communities of color, disproportionately impacting black and brown Marylanders.¹ Latino communities' proximity to these polluting facilities results in exposure to toxic chemicals and higher rates of asthma and cancer.² A 2016 report from the Clean Air Task Force reported that the air in many Latino communities violates air quality standards intended to protect human health, and Latino children are more likely to die from an asthma attack than white children.³ The bill's intent is to supplement renewable energy sources and protect our communities from the harms of toxic energy sources.

HB0718 amends the types of materials that the Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard (RPS) considers to be acceptable sources of renewable energy. The Reclaim Renewable Energy Act of 2023 will ensure that what is defined as a renewable energy source is sustainable and beneficial to the environment. Sources that produce greenhouse gases (such as waste, old-growth timber, animal waste, and the refuse and gas produced from the anaerobic decomposition of animal waste) would be removed from the state's RPS program, meaning that energy suppliers would no longer be able to use these energy sources to meet their renewable energy requirements. This will prevent further pollution of the environment, the effects of which disproportionately harm Latinx communities.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on HB0718.

¹ Barrett, J. F., Peters, M., Jacobs, H., & Rubinstein, J. (2015). *Environmental Justice in Maryland*.

² Griswold, M., & Miller-Travis, V. (2015). *Planning for Climate and Energy Equity in Maryland*. Prepared for the Town Creek Foundation by Skeo Solutions.

³ Fleischman, L., Kingland, D., Maxwell, C., & Rios, E. (2016). *Latino Communities at Risk: The Impact of Air Pollution from the Oil and Gas Industry*. Clean Air Taskforce.