



Protecting Our Rural Legacy

Linden Farm, 20900 Martinsburg Rd., PO Box 218, Dickerson, MD 20842 • Tel. 301-349-4889
www.SugarloafCitizens.org

Testimony for SB0590: Reclaim Renewable Energy Act
Favorable Report

2.27.2023

I am Lauren Greenberger, Vice President of Sugarloaf Citizens' Association in Dickerson.

We know that waste incineration is horribly polluting – Covanta will tell you they operate below EPA requirements but that still means they are putting over 600,000 tons of GHG in the air annually and dozens of other toxins including 24 pounds of mercury – one gram of mercury can render a whole reservoir undrinkable. Our incinerator is 5-25 times more polluting, depending on the toxin, per unit of energy produced than a coal-fired power plant. Would you consider subsidizing coal plants as clean energy?? This is the number one largest polluter in the county and number two in the whole state.

By keeping trash incineration in the RPS we are subsidizing this polluter and, more importantly, taking away from the expansion of wind and solar production – industries we desperately need to combat global warming.

While George Bush was still governor of Texas, he signed a Renewable Portfolio Standard bill into law. The Texas RPS law caused the dirty utilities to have to invest in truly renewable energy. They turned to wind power, making Texas second to California in wind generation and causing more wind power to be installed in Texas (912 MW) than in the rest of the U.S. combined (775 MW). This is the power of a CLEAN RPS.

Now I know there are rumors that taking away this subsidy will make electric bills go up. This is ludicrous – electric bills will go DOWN because PURPA charges will be reduced. The incinerator industry does not set the market price, they sell to the grid and can charge current market rates. If subsidies are eliminated, the incinerator industry will lose some revenue, but ratepayers will pay a little bit less – that's it. Market rates will not increase.



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This bill does not call for the closure of any incinerators. Just to stop allowing money earmarked for growing the clean energy sector to be sent to incinerators. No jobs will be lost, no new landfills will be built.

When Montgomery County does close its waste incinerator, as the County Executive has publicly announced he will do, there will be many more jobs in zero waste industries than incineration. Recology in San Francisco provides hundreds of well-paid union jobs to manage their waste and dramatically reduce the volume that must be landfilled. Residual waste that can not be composted or recycled will safely and economically go via rail or truck to one of several well-managed landfills the County has identified that meet the it's stringent environmental justice criteria including a 75% methane capture rate, low levels of rainfall, and sparse population nearby. This will be far safer for all those that breathe in the fine particulate matter and toxins from the current incinerator as well as for the majority black community that lives next to the landfill outside of Richmond VA that receives 200,000 tons of incinerator ash annually from Montgomery County.

It is also important to note that, because Montgomery County owns the Dickerson incinerator, Covanta has not been getting the REC's for it the past 12 years, the County has. They will lose nothing. County Executive Elrich has purposely NOT included the income from RECs in his current budget estimates because he fully supports removing incineration from the RPS. He recognizes how foolish it is for our community and our planet to be pouring money into dirty technology that could be going to clean.

Please support a truly clean energy industry across the state that provides good, well-paying jobs and a path forward for all our children that will mitigate the devastating effects of GHG emitting industries.

We ask for a favorable report on this bill.

Thank you so much for your attention.