



STATE AND LOCAL ADVISORS, LLC

March 28, 2023

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman, Chair
The Honorable Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice-Chair
Maryland Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: HB1214- Residential Retail Electricity- Green Power- Renewable Energy Credits & Marketing Claims

Dear Chairman Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee,

Worcester County has significant concerns about HB1214, which requires sellers of electricity to residential customers to disclose the source of that energy. While notifying electric consumers of how much of their power is derived from renewable sources seems worthwhile, the language of the bill represents a back-door approach to limiting "green power" to only wind, solar, geothermal, or hydropower.

The definition of "green power" focuses on wind, solar, or hydropower, to the exclusion of the other sources of renewable energy as defined in Section 7-701 in the Maryland Code. These sources exclude qualified biomass and anaerobic digestion. While the legislation does not modify the definition of Tier 1 sources that are now in the law, it does build the presumption that such sources as biomass should not be acceptable.

This bill represents a more subtle approach to removing biomass or, in fact, any source of renewable energy that includes combustion, from Maryland's strategy for achieving very challenging renewable energy goals. Other bills have more blatantly addressed this question including measures that included outright repeal of biomass from the RPS. With Worcester County surprisingly being home to much forestry, agriculture, and other economic development sectors, we know that biomass can play a role in reaching environmental goals and supporting energy independence all while improving forest health and local economies.

We are perplexed over what appears to be an outright bias against biomass energy when it has so well been embraced by neighboring states where it has been proven to be clean and effective. Any effort to remove biomass from the RPS also flies in the face of proper forest management in Maryland, where we have an over-abundance of forests crowded with small, slow-growing trees that have no other value than for biomass energy.

If we are to achieve Maryland's goals for renewable energy, it will be necessary to include biomass as part of the strategy. HB 1214 sets the stage for removing this important part of renewable energy in the state and we urge an unfavorable report on the bill. Our forests are our greatest renewable resource and can help provide clean, "green power" to the state.

Sincerely,

Paul Ellington

State and Local Advisors

On behalf of Worcester County Commissioners