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Committee on Education, Energy,  
and the Environment



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 27, 2023

Support of SB 590 – Reclaim Renewable Energy Act of 2023

The Honorable Brian Feldman

Education, Energy, and Environment Committee

Maryland Senate

11 Bladen Street, Room 302

Annapolis, MD 21401

Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and Esteemed Members of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee:

The Reclaim Renewable Energy Act of 2023 would alter the energy sources that the state includes in the renewable energy portfolio standard (RPS) program. Sources that produce greenhouse gasses would be removed from the state's RPS program, meaning that energy suppliers would not be able to use these energy sources to meet their renewable energy requirements. This bill will remove energy derived from trash incineration, factory farm methane or "biogas," and woody biomass.

Including dirty energy sources in the RPS harms ratepayers, impedes job growth, causes sickness, and pollutes the state. Maryland's ratepayers spend about \$17 million annually to buy renewable energy credits (RECs) from dirty energy sources. Moreover, these dirty energy sources are overwhelmingly located outside the state—we are funding trash incinerators in Virginia and anaerobic digesters in Delaware at the expense of wind and solar jobs in Maryland.

These dirty energy sources also present significant human health and environmental risks. Our RPS is littered with dirty energy; trash incineration took up 6.4% of RECs, woody biomass took up 3.4% of RECs, and factory farm biogas took up a negligible amount of RECs. Together, the ten facilities and three types of energy that would lose subsidies under this bill took up 10% of the RECs in 2021<sup>1</sup>. Rather than fulfilling its mission to transition the state to genuinely renewable energy, the RPS is bogged down by polluting fuel sources. The General Assembly already acknowledged that the Renewable Portfolio Standard will be more effective

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<sup>1</sup> Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard. Public Service Commission of Maryland. November, 2022  
[https://www.psc.state.md.us/wp-content/uploads/CY21-RPS-Annual-Report\\_Final.pdf](https://www.psc.state.md.us/wp-content/uploads/CY21-RPS-Annual-Report_Final.pdf)

with fewer polluters eligible for it. The legislature already eliminated black liquor from RPS eligibility in 2021.<sup>2</sup> Passing SB 590 is a continuation of that good work and will make the RPS even more effective at meeting its goals.

Dirty energy sources pose disproportionate impacts on communities of color, which are often chosen as sites for polluting facilities. For example, the state's two trash incinerators release a dangerous set of compounds called dioxins, which the World Health Organization has identified as a human carcinogen. Dioxins are also linked to diseases of the immune system, endocrine system, nervous system, and reproductive system. Air pollutants from waste incinerators also increase the risk of pre-term births and certain types of cancer.

Subsidizing dirty energy sources is a sweetheart deal for a handful of industries, mostly located out of state. However, it's a boondoggle for Marylanders, who are stuck paying higher utility bills for fewer jobs and more pollution. Reserving Tier 1 subsidies for legitimately clean energy will create new jobs and mitigate climate change.

I urge a favorable report.

Sincerely,



Senator Karen Lewis Young

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<sup>2</sup> <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/SB0065?ys=2021RS&search=True>