



SOUTH MOUNTAIN MICROFARM

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February 27, 2023

Senator Brian Feldman, Chair
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate
11 Bladen Street, Annapolis, MD 21401
Subject: Strong Opposition of SB0590

Dear Senator Feldman and Committee Members,

I ask that you oppose SB0590. This bill alters the definition of "Tier 1 renewable source" for purposes of excluding energy derived from qualifying biomass, methane from the anaerobic decomposition of organic materials, fuel cells, poultry litter-to-energy, waste-to-energy, refuse-derived fuel, and thermal energy from a thermal biomass system from being eligible for inclusion in the renewable energy portfolio standard.

SB590 is a grave mistake as it not only clearly favors two very specific industries, but creates barriers and challenges for so many existing Maryland business, citizens, communities, and municipalities. Additionally, SB590 diminishes opportunities for new and improved, creative and sustainable methods of producing energy in Maryland.

SB590 is detrimental to Maryland farmers, entrepreneurs, citizens, jurisdictions, or progressive minded think-tanks who may be focused on combatting climate change in new and more efficient, organic ways using biomass and other organic materials already available or yet to be cultivated in Maryland. It is my strong belief that this bill serves to elevate specific industries only while oppressing others.

SB590 poses negative impacts to Maryland agriculture, farmland, renewable power innovation, and municipalities. This bill forces municipalities and Maryland institutions to sell their REC's out of state and to potentially lose value for their REC's altogether.

Please note that farms are currently producing eligible biomass and could potentially produce tons of biomass in the future with viable, existing and future agricultural crops and livestock. Agriculture provides natural and organic waste material from sustainable farming practices and Maryland is poised for innovation with our new governor's focus on renewable resources, food security and social equity. Our farms provide food to our own citizens and the future of renewable energy and farming's inclusion thereto is of utmost importance for clear and present threats and needs.

Since one of our state's clear initiatives is food security and food availability for all communities, this bill could not only minimize Maryland's opportunities for future innovation, but also to de-incentivize the forestry and agricultural industry even more:

- 1) Minimizing the value of organic waste material thereby decreasing the opportunity to offset the quickly rising costs of farming
- 2) Minimize tillable lands by littering our viable farm land with industrial uses including solar or wind manufacturing on productive soils, thereby decreasing Maryland's ability to produce food, fiber, fuel, and animal feed for our own sustainability as food security and biofuels become more and more important in the face of climate change and social equity.
- 3) Devaluing agricultural land in the future due to enormous environmental impacts caused by the decommissioning of toxic waste materials from the wind and solar equipment including batteries, heavy metals, and toxic chemicals and massive amounts of plastics, vinyl, glass, and metal materials that will be cost prohibitive to decommission and then to transport to Ocean dumps or other landfills. Or, most likely, on-farm "newly approved" toxic dumps.
- 4) Minimize forest farming and re-forestation opportunities in Maryland by removing agriculturally zoned land from inventory by covering and coating these acres with solar and wind equipment that will require decommissioning in the future.
 - a. Forest Farming not only feeds generations to come, but also cleans the air and provides for the reforestation credits and provides organic biomass in the for energy production.

I see SB590 as a major threat to Maryland's existing and future farms, farming, farmers, municipalities, small renewable energy businesses, Maryland entrepreneurs, reforestation, food security, social equity, innovation for renewable energy from organic materials and biomass, agriculturally zoned lands, open spaces, and sustainability.

I hereby respectfully request that you oppose SB590.

Sincerely,



Matthew W. "Levi" Sellers

MD Ag. Commission Representative & Manger of Operations- South Mountain MicroFARM