

Statement of Peter Oven  
Project Manager, Wilson Engineering Services, PC  
Before the Senate Energy, Environment and Education Committee  
February 28, 2023

Re: SB 0590- Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard- Alterations (Reclaim Renewable Energy Act of 2023)  
Position: Unfavorable

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

My name is Peter Oven and I am a project manager with Wilson Engineering Services in Meadville, Pennsylvania. I have worked with clients across the country to identify and implement dozens of economical and sustainable decarbonization projects using various technologies. Thank you for the chance to speak about why Senate Bill 590's exclusion of saw mill residue and soft wood thinning residue from the RPS is not a good policy for Maryland.

Having options for the beneficial use of these wood residues is critical to forest management and the survival of the forest products industry in rural and urban Maryland. The absolute worst fate for these residues is for them to have no beneficial use and be treated as waste with a fate such as being piled to rot, open burning, or landfilling. Substituting wood residue for fossil heating fuel is a market opportunity which has a co-benefit of helping the State meet aggressive GHG goals. Heating is a highly efficient use of this residue material, provides major GHG benefits, and gives the material value to enable more cost-effective forest management.

Beneficial use of wood residue for heating is part of the RPS in Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine and this has resulted in beneficial use of wood residues in these states to offset fossil fuel. Dozens of thermal projects in these states are a direct result of these Renewable Energy Credit incentives, that would have otherwise continued burning fossil fuel for heating.

Meeting carbon goals for Maryland requires immediately changing the major reliance on fossil fuel for all modes of energy, heat, and transportation. This requires leveraging all of the clean options because there is no one technology or pathway that can meet the carbon goals on its own. Wood residue produced in Maryland and used for heating in Maryland wants to be a part of that future—providing jobs, healthy forests, local wood products, and renewable heating.