



Date: February 28, 2023
Bill: SB 590 Reclaim Renewable Energy Act of 2023
Position: Favorable

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee:

The National Aquarium respectfully requests a favorable report for **SB 590 Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard - Eligible Sources - Alterations (Reclaim Renewable Energy Act of 2023)**, which correctly redefines Tier 1 renewable sources of energy.

Combatting climate change is one of the National Aquarium's three strategic conservation goals. We do this through a holistic, solutions-focused approach, which includes translating ocean and climate science, building resilience through community empowerment, implementing nature-based solutions, and reducing our own carbon footprint. The National Aquarium recently committed to achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2035. Our ability to reach net-zero depends on the state increasing its renewable energy using sources that are actually clean and renewable.

The current structure of the RPS funnels utility ratepayers' money to energy sources that not only produce more carbon than fossil fuels per unit of energy, but also threaten the health of Marylanders. These are not the objectives that the state's clean energy plan is meant to achieve. Yet the incentive created by including these dirty sources as "renewable" in our RPS allows them to increasingly occupy space on our grid that can and should be filled with clean renewable energy like wind and solar. Maryland ratepayers should not continue to spend millions of dollars on Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) inappropriately provided to trash incineration, factory farm methane and woody biomass.

Trash incineration is also linked to the plastic pollution crisis. Municipalities in Maryland, like others around the nation and the world, are unable to keep up with the increasing production of plastic and the resulting waste that primarily ends up in the environment, languishing in landfills or is incinerated. Incinerating trash creates greenhouse gas emissions as well as harmful local air pollution, and disincentivizes better waste management alternatives like source reduction, promoting reusable options, recycling and composting. To make matters worse, trash incinerators are often sited in underserved and overburdened communities. It is long overdue for the state to stop subsidizing smokestacks in communities where environmental justice must be a priority.

It is incumbent that governments at every level focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions rapidly while prioritizing a just transition away from fossil fuels. Maryland is a climate leader, however incentivizing energy derived from trash incineration and other polluting methods stands in contrast to the state's commitment to environmental justice and ambitious climate goals.

We urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 590.

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