



Maryland Arborist Association, Inc.

Danielle Bauer Farace
Executive Director

SB 0590 – Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard – Eligible Sources - Alterations (Reclaim Renewable Energy Act of 2023)

Committee: Education, Energy, and Environment

Date: February 27, 2023

MAA Position: **OPPOSE**

The Maryland Arborist Association, Inc. (MAA) works to promote the importance of proper tree care, education in the field of arboriculture, and support the accomplishments of arborists. We urge you to oppose SB 0590 – Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard – Eligible Sources – Alterations (Reclaim Renewable Energy Act of 2023), which would exclude energy derived from certain forest-related resources from being eligible for inclusion in the renewable energy portfolio standard. Wood energy is a small part of Maryland’s current Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard (RPS) but provides significant benefits to the environment, reduces dependency on fossil fuels, and helps the local economy by investing in Maryland energy production and jobs. Additionally, it has been recognized by entities such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change as an immediate solution to decarbonize our fuel supply.

Creating Thermal Renewable Energy Credits is crucial to renewable energy in Maryland because:

- **Reach Environmental Goals:** The 2030 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Act Plan (GGRA Plan) requires reducing GHG emissions by 50% before 2030. The GGRA Plan recommends replacing fossil fuel systems and deploying clean, renewable energy through the Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard such as Combined Heat and Power (CHP) systems and power plants that use qualifying biomass.
- **Support Energy Independence:** Currently, 75% of the energy consumed in Maryland is from fossil fuels, and 40% of its energy is imported. Wood residues are sourced locally from abundant forest and urban wood waste, competitively priced, and have similar efficiencies.
- **Maintain and Improve Forest Stands:** Sustainable active forest management practices on private land are encouraged by providing landowners market for low-value, small diameter wood waste from logging and thinning. In addition, it provides an economic incentive for landowners to not only participate in forest management but also to retain ownership and resist conversion to other uses.
- **Increase Utilization:** Residues used in wood energy systems are diverted from alternative methods of disposal that would have a far more significant impact on the environment,

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such as landfilling, which releases methane, or open burning, which has the same emissions as bioenergy but without filters or carbon capture technology.

- Develop a Resilient System: Wood energy is the most efficient in thermal applications and can be accessed on demand. These qualities complement other forms of renewable energy, such as solar and wind, which are the most efficient at generating electricity and have intermittent access.

With the closure of sawmills, specifically in Western Maryland and the Eastern Shore, arborists have had to find alternative disposal avenues, such as landfills, to dispose of brush and wood waste. Passage of this bill would eliminate a sustainable market for the byproducts of tree care work. Due to the impact on Maryland's tree care industry, MAA requests your unfavorable report on SB 0590.

Sincerely,

Danielle Bauer Farace
Executive Director