



Testimony Supporting SB590/ HB718
Senate Education, Energy, and the
Environment Committee:
February 27, 2023

Position: **SUPPORT**

Reclaim Renewable Energy Act of 2023

My name is Carlos Orbe. I am the Public Affairs Specialist for Maryland Latinos Unidos (MLU), an association housed at MD Nonprofits of over 300 Latino community leaders, business owners, and Latino-led nonprofits. MLU's mission is to unify efforts across the state to advocate and organize for the benefit of Maryland's Latino community. Our vision is that the Latino community in Maryland thrives, achieves excellence, innovates, and continually makes progress economically, socially, and environmentally. We utilize data-driven and evidence-based approaches to build coalitions to advocate and create a space for every Latino to have a voice. In doing so, we look to create or advocate for a network of resources to support Latino-initiatives that positively impact the community overall. For these reasons, I am writing to express my support for the Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard – Eligible Sources (Reclaim Renewable Energy Act), SB590/ HB718, sponsored by Senator Lewis Young.

Established in 2020, MLU has become one of the most involved non-profit organizations within Maryland's Latino community. From its inception and as a civil right, MLU's members have embraced environmental health measures, including equity across the state as a principle for our minority communities at-risk. This bill will make sure that our subsidies for renewable energy through the Renewable Portfolio Standard are going toward actual renewable energy, not being wasted on things that emit greenhouse gasses. We are in a climate crisis, and we cannot afford to be spending our renewable energy money on facilities that pollute. Now is the time to double down on Maryland's commitment to truly renewable energy and subsidize only facilities that are emissions-free.

This bill will eliminate three types of energy from Maryland's RPS: trash incineration, woody biomass, and factory farm methane gas. All three of these pollute the environment, harm nearby communities' health, and contribute to climate change. Subsidizing them takes money away from the real renewable energy that we need, and it also tilts waste markets toward the worst methods of managing our waste. Subsidies exist to support the things we want, so why are we subsidizing things we don't want in our communities? Let's put those subsidies toward wind and solar power and let the waste sector work on managing waste.

For all of these reasons and many more, please support SB590/ HB718 and stop sending Maryland's renewable energy money to facilities that emit such enormous amounts of greenhouse gasses. Doing so would have a such a long-lasting impact on minorities and at-risk communities.

Respectfully,
Carlos Orbe, Jr.
Public Affairs Specialist
Maryland Latinos Unidos

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