



**Testimony Supporting SB146
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
January 25, 2024**

Position: SUPPORT

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee,

As a concerned Maryland ratepayer, resident of downtown Baltimore residing in district 40 and representative of the *South Baltimore Community Land Trust*, I am writing to express my strong support of SB146, the Reclaim Renewable Energy Act.

It is encouraging to see Maryland State agencies, including the Maryland Department of the Environment and the Maryland Commission on Climate Change, publishing their further support in the State's [Climate Pollution Reduction Plan](#) and [2023 Annual Report](#) for efforts removing the renewable credits that fundamentally non renewable "trash" incinerating facilities currently receive under the state's compromised RPS.

Maryland must follow through and invest in climate solutions already accessible to us, and finding funding for the \$1 billion called for in Maryland's Climate Pollution Reduction Plan poses a significant challenge. Governor Moore recently [said](#) about his state budget proposal: "Where we choose to invest that actually defines our values and dictates the course of our future." Senate President Ferguson recently [said](#) about the budget: "I think this is a year about prioritizing the resources that we have." Passing the Reclaim Renewable Energy Act will not cost any money out of the state budget, and will better prioritize the money we already spend.

It is of growing concern that Maryland is wasting an increasing amount of money subsidizing trash incineration. Over the past three years, due to the market-based nature of the subsidy, understanding the amount of electricity produced by incinerators has not increased, the total subsidies to trash incinerators through Maryland's RPS ballooned from \$11.5 million in 2020 to \$24.7 million in 2022. This is an incredible windfall for the incinerators, and destructive for Marylanders and hard working ratepayers. We sincerely can't afford to keep wasting increasing amounts of money profiting something that's not putting renewable energy on the grid.

Instead, we need to be funding renewable energy development and taking the climate crisis seriously. The RPS is an important tool to support clean, renewable energy development and decrease emissions from the electricity sector, and it's important to ensure that our money is

being invested wisely. I want the next generation to experience the same natural wonder and beauty we have been lucky enough to experience in Maryland as climate change threatens our collective futures. Let the RPS serve the original emission reduction aims it purports to advance.

Specifically, passing SB146 serves of paramount importance, understanding trash incineration has been determined as a very polluting method of producing electricity. [A new 2023 study in PLOS Climate](#) found that “[trash] incinerators emit more greenhouse gas emissions per unit of electricity produced than *any* other power source,” including notoriously polluting coal plants. Additionally, the [EPA’s Emissions Inventory](#) indicates that in 2020, the three trash incinerators profiting from Maryland’s RPS emitted a staggering 2.5 million tons of CO2 into the atmosphere.

Subsidizing trash incineration also makes it harder for our local governments to transition to healthier infrastructure for managing our waste. Subsidies for trash incinerators give the companies that own them needless extra profits, making them artificially more competitive against the composting, recycling, reuse, and waste reduction initiatives and businesses that we actually need. Putting ‘renewable energy’ subsidies back into wind and solar power where they belong will also allow Zero Waste infrastructure to compete on an even playing field - but until we make that change, the state of Maryland is giving incinerators an nonsensical economic leg up over the truly renewable infrastructure we actually need. We at the South Baltimore Community Land Trust have been working for many years to move our region and the broader City of Baltimore to a healthier future, building a path ahead where we can receive our energy from truly renewable sources like the wind, solar power, and geothermal sources the RPS is supposed to credit.

Thank you for reviewing our testimony and for the favorable support of SB146.

Sincerely,
Toby Harris
South Baltimore Community Land Trust