



Olivia Bartlett, DoTheMostGood Maryland Team
COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and the Environment

TESTIMONY ON: SB0146 - Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard – Eligible Sources - Alterations (Reclaim Renewable Energy Act of 2024)

POSITION: FAVORABLE

HEARING DATE: January 25, 2024

BILL CONTACT: Senator Karen Lewis Young

DoTheMostGood (DTMG) is a progressive grass-roots organization with members in all districts in Montgomery County as well as in several nearby districts. DTMG supports legislation and activities that keep all Maryland residents healthy and safe in a clean environment. DTMG therefore supports legislation aimed at addressing climate change so that our children and grandchildren will have a better future. DTMG strongly supports SB0146 because trash incineration is not “clean energy”, contributes to climate change and air pollution, and wastes taxpayer money.

The Maryland General Assembly has passed several bills in recent years committing Maryland as a leader on addressing climate change. To fulfill these promises, Maryland needs to be funding truly clean renewable energy. Maryland’s Renewable Energy Portfolio Standards (RPS) are an important tool to support clean, renewable energy development and decrease greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and air pollution from the electricity sector. However, trash incineration is a very dirty energy source. Burning trash releases 90% more greenhouse gas emissions per unit of energy than burning coal. The 2023 Annual Report of the Maryland Commission on Climate Change and Governor Moore’s Climate Pollution Reduction Plan, released in December, 2023, both recommend removing trash incineration from the RPS as proposed in SB0146.

In addition to undermining Maryland’s GHG reduction and climate change goals, keeping trash incineration in the RPS also wastes Maryland taxpayer money. Maryland is the only state in the country that includes burning of trash in Tier 1 “renewable energy” and thus allows incinerator operators to receive millions of dollars in taxpayer subsidies from the state. These Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) help to prop up a dirty energy source, make it more profitable, stifle new clean energy development, and disincentivize other ways to reduce trash in Maryland.

Due to the market-based nature of the RPS subsidy (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, for a total of about \$51 Million for the three years ending in 2022. This is an incredible windfall for the incinerators, and bad for Marylanders. Furthermore, most of this Maryland taxpayer subsidy has actually gone to an incinerator in Lorton, Virginia. SB0146 will allow this subsidy, which is now wasted on trash incinerators, to go to clean renewable energy sources like solar and wind facilities in Maryland.

In summary, Maryland needs to invest in real climate solutions, and finding funding for the \$1 billion called for in Maryland’s Climate Pollution Reduction Plan will be a significant challenge. Passing

SB0146 will better prioritize the money we already spend and ensure that taxpayer subsidized RECs support truly clean energy and incentivize investment in solar, wind and other clean sources of renewable energy in Maryland.

For all these reasons, DoTheMostGood strongly recommends a **FAVORABLE** report on SB0146.

Respectfully submitted,

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