



PROGRESSIVE MARYLAND

P.O. Box 6988 Largo, MD 20792
www.ProgressiveMaryland.org
Contact@ProgressiveMaryland.org
[Facebook.com/ProgressiveMaryland](https://www.facebook.com/ProgressiveMaryland)
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Testimony on Maryland Senate Bill 146 Reclaim Renewable Energy Act

TO: Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the committee

FROM: Kamal Nkele, Progressive Maryland Environmental Task Force Member

Melanated Wellness, LLC business owner and ESYDA Community Organization Board Member

DATE: January 25, 2024

POSITION: Favorable

Good Afternoon, esteemed representatives. I am honored to have a chance to speak to you today as a concerned citizen of Gaithersburg Maryland here in Montgomery County. As a parent a progressive MD volunteer and a local rate payer, I am deeply invested in our state's energy future. Today, I wish to discuss the critical need to support the Reclaim Renewable Energy Act Bill for a more sustainable and scientifically aligned energy portfolio here in Maryland."

As a professional whose background gives me specialized experience in renewable energy generation as well as Climate Change risks, I believe it is crucial for our representatives to recognize the significant misalignment in categorizing waste generation as a renewable energy source. Waste generation is not backed as a renewable energy source under any scientific standard including the Science-Based Targets Initiative (<https://sciencebasedtargets.org/>) as well as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (<https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal7>) framework. As a voter and a rate payer here in MOCO I was very excited to hear Governor Wes and the Democratic party champion its belief in a **SCIENTIFICALLY BACKED** renewable energy mix and a push toward a 50% renewable energy portfolio through its Clean Energy Agenda . With that being said, this bill represents the next and most important step so far in that journey.

Maryland has the potential to be a national and global leader in clean, scientifically backed renewable energy. We all know transitioning to cleaner energy is not just an environmental imperative but also a significant economic opportunity, and a way to ensure that our economy is resilient and ready to capitalize on the great changes that are coming our way due to climate change. By continuing to support waste generation, we risk falling behind in the global race towards truly sustainable energy solutions. However, by taking these subsidies and investing in solar, wind, and other renewable technologies like vertical farming, we can create a sustainable closed loop energy infrastructure that's resilient, cost-effective, and beneficial for all Marylanders.

Choosing renewable energy is more than just an environmental choice; it's a statement about the kind of future we want to build for our families, creating jobs in emerging industries, reducing our carbon

footprint, and preserving the natural beauty of our state for generations to come.

A few questions to ask yourself in making your decision are;

- If we reach our 50% renewable generation targets on the back of all waste generation, would the environment be any more resilient?
- Would our kids breathe any easier?
- Would we be any closer to mitigating the worst effects of climate change we fear?

The answer to all three of these questions is **No**.

Continuing to classify waste generation as a renewable energy source creates a downward spiral where we will be inadvertently **incentivizing waste production** to keep the lights on under the guise of renewable energy.

In conclusion, I implore you, as our elected representatives, to be a proper steward of our taxpayer dollars and support new technologies and opportunities by voting to support the Reclaim Renewable Energy Act Bill. Your support can lead us towards a cleaner, brighter future for all Marylanders."

For these reasons, **I respectfully urge a favorable report on SB0146.**

Kamal Nkele, M.Fin. CISA

Gaithersburg, MD 20879