



## PROGRESSIVE MARYLAND

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**Bill Title:** HB220 Reclaim Renewable Energy Act

**Position:** Favorable

**To:** Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, Economic Matters Committee

**From:** Aaron Knishkowy, Member of Progressive Maryland

**Date:** 2/18/25

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB220, the Reclaim Renewable Energy Act (RREA) of 2025. My name is Aaron Knishkowy, and I am a proud member of Progressive Maryland, which is a statewide advocacy group that builds power in working-class communities in Maryland. I volunteer with Progressive Maryland's Environmental Justice Task Force, a team that engages in grassroots organizing in South Baltimore and has focused on the RREA for several years.

I first learned about the public health and environmental impacts of Baltimore's Bresco Incinerator a year and a half ago as a student at the University of Maryland. I had previously been unaware that the electricity bills of everyone in the state have contributed to the financial gain of incinerator operators thanks to a program that was designed to reward the production of clean and healthy renewable energy.

From 2012 to 2022, electricity bills paid by Maryland ratepayers contributed over \$100 million to incineration efforts<sup>1</sup>. These funds ought to be directed towards genuine renewable energy sources like solar, geothermal, and hydro power. This aligns with the original intent of Maryland's Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS).

As a ratepayer, I am furious about this state-sanctioned form of financial exploitation. Ratepayers should not be subsidizing an industry that has caused cancer and asthma in frontline communities. The practice of incineration is in clear contradiction to the original intent of the RPS, and must be removed. Once incineration is removed from the RPS, ratepayer dollars will support truly clean energy projects. The writing is on the wall: it's time to pass the RREA and remove incineration from the RPS.

<sup>1</sup>Report: Maryland's energy subsidies are going up in flames." peer.org. Last modified March 5, 2024.  
<https://peer.org/report-maryland-energy-subsidies-in-flames/>.