

Bill Title: HB0220 Reclaim Renewable Energy Act of 2025

Position: SUPPORT (FAV)

To: Honorable Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and the members of the Economic Matters Committee

From: Maryland Environmental Justice Collaborative

Date: 2/14/2025

The Maryland Environmental Justice Collaborative is submitting this **testimony in support of [HB0220 The Reclaim Renewable Energy Act \(RREA\) of 2025](#)**. We, the undersigned, are a collaborative of environmental and social justice focused organizations from across Maryland seeking to ensure that there is a process to inform, listen to, and amplify the communities who are most burdened by environmental harms and pollution, and most underserved by resources and infrastructure in the exploding green economy. We believe that environmental justice is social justice and that those whose voices have been systematically silenced or overlooked and have been harmed to the greatest extent should have the greatest voice when it comes to developing policies and projects that aim to heal our planet.

A significant portion of our membership organizes in Baltimore, making HB0220 an important priority bill for us. The low-income Black and Brown communities of Westport, Mt. Winans, Cherry Hill, Lakeland, Brooklyn and Curtis Bay in Baltimore, Maryland are disproportionately suffering at the hands of the Wheelabrator Baltimore Refuse Energy Systems Company (“BRESKO”) Incinerator operated by WIN Waste Innovations. Maryland’s current Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) legitimizes these adverse impacts on the environment and public health by including “waste-to-energy,” (i.e. trash incineration) as a viable renewable resource that is eligible for Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) which are subsidized. Trash incineration releases thousands of tons of greenhouse gases, toxic elements such as lead and mercury, and toxic ash into the atmosphere.^{1,2} The 2024 PEER Report on the RPS concluded that if “waste-to-energy” remains in the list of renewable energy sources, it will cost Maryland ratepayers an additional \$200,000,000 of RECs between 2023 and 2030.³ Maryland constituents, especially those that are underserved and overburdened, should not be financially contributing to their own demise.

Passage of the Reclaim Renewable Energy Act will:

1. Remove trash incineration from the list of renewable energy sources eligible for RECs without shutting down incinerators in Maryland and with **no additional cost to the state budget**; and
2. Redistribute the subsidy that would have otherwise been used to fund waste incineration to cleaner sources of energy such as solar, wind, and hydro.

HB0220 will help advance the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE)’s Climate Pollution Reduction Plan which aims to modify definitions of qualifying resources that are eligible for subsidies under the Renewable Portfolio Standard in order to achieve the 2031 greenhouse gas emissions reduction goal. Simultaneously, it will ensure that Marylanders, specifically those that are from underserved and overburdened communities, are no longer financially supporting investment into dirty energy sources that pollute the environment and adversely impact their health.

¹“Mercury exposure and children's health” (Bose-O'Reilly S, McCarty KM, Steckling N, Lettmeier B., 2010)

² “Lead in Food and Foodwares” (FDA, 2025)

³ PEER Report (PEER, 2024)

Rather, we are hopeful that these subsidies will instead be directed toward clean energy sources that improve the health and wealth of our communities at no additional cost to the state budget. As a coalition of organizations that advocate for and organize with working class, Black and Brown communities, the Maryland Environmental Justice Collaborative is committed to a clean energy transition that prioritizes these individuals and therefore favors the passage of HB0220.

Endorsing Organizations

Action in Montgomery
Baltimore Transit Equity Coalition
CASA
Caucus of African American Leaders
Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake
Interfaith Power and Light
NAACP MSC
No Boundaries Coalition
Progressive Maryland
South County Environmental Justice Coalition