



**Bill Title:** HB0220 Reclaim Renewable Energy Act of 2025

**Position:** SUPPORT (FAV)

**To:** Economic Matters Committee

**From:** Iman Habib, Climate Policy Analyst, Progressive Maryland

**Date:** 02/14/2025

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

As a resident of the City of Baltimore and a Maryland ratepayer concerned about public health and the environment, I am writing to express my **strong support for HB0220, the Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard - Eligible Sources - Alterations (Reclaim Renewable Energy Act of 2025)**. Although I am new to the city, I have lived here long enough to pick up on the stark health and environmental inequities unfolding across neighborhoods and the role that the built environment plays in contributing to these inequities. The built environment is described as the man-made aspects of the environment such as buildings, parks, streets, etc.<sup>1</sup> The Wheelabrator Baltimore Refuse Energy Systems Company (“BRESKO”) Incinerator in Baltimore, operated by WIN Waste Innovations, is one example of this environment and it is evident that this man-made structure contributes to the health and well-being of the communities that surround it.

It baffles me that in 2023, it cost Maryland ratepayers like myself over \$24 million to subsidize waste incineration with almost \$9 million being direct toward BRESKO!<sup>2</sup> The state’s current Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) is partially responsible for this gratuitous investment in energy sources that are not clean in nature and are unnecessarily costing Marylanders. The RPS currently includes “waste-to-energy” as a Tier 1 renewable resource eligible for subsidization and this must change. Burning trash is not clean or renewable by any means and this practice emits carbon dioxide, mercury, lead, along with other toxic pollutants into the environment, which are not safe at any level of exposure.<sup>3,4</sup> It is abhorrent that community members and ratepayers who are disproportionately plagued with these pollutants and subsequently suffering the health impacts of exposure to those pollutants are then economically burdened with financing BRESKO.

The 2024 PEER Report states that if waste incineration continues to remain in the RPS, between the years 2023 and 2030, Maryland energy providers will waste \$200,000,000 to buy Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) from incinerator companies to fulfill their renewable energy derivation requirements.<sup>5</sup> RECs should not be wasted on dirty energy sources like waste incineration but rather should be invested in authentic, clean, renewable energy sources like solar power, wind power, and/or hydropower.

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<sup>1</sup> “Built Environment” (Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment, 2025)

<sup>2</sup> PEER Report (PEER, 2024)

<sup>3</sup> “Mercury exposure and children's health” (Bose-O'Reilly S, McCarty KM, Steckling N, Lettmeier B., 2010)

<sup>4</sup> “Lead in Food and Foodwares” (FDA, 2025)

<sup>5</sup> PEER Report (PEER, 2024)



# PROGRESSIVE MARYLAND

P.O. Box 6988, Largo MD 20774

ProgressiveMaryland.org

Info@progressivemaryland.org

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Passage of HB0220 will:

1. Remove “waste-to-energy” from the list of renewable energy resources 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 finance waste incineration to cleaner sources of energy like solar, wind, and hydropower.

HB0220 will also 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, this bill will ensure that Maryland ratepayers, particularly those that are low-income, Black and Brown community members, are no longer financing dirty energy sources that deteriorate the environment and exacerbate health outcomes in their communities.

I strongly urge you to pass HB0220 and demonstrate to Marylanders that the committee is passionate about economic investment in clean energy and environmental justice for the health and well-being of our communities.

Thank you for your consideration,

Iman Habib

Climate Policy Analyst | Progressive Maryland

[iman@progressivemaryland.org](mailto:iman@progressivemaryland.org)