



Bill Title: SB0010 Reclaim Renewable Energy Act of 2025

Position: SUPPORT (FAV)

To: Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

From: Yara Changyit-Levin, Community Member, on behalf of Progressive Maryland

Date: 02/05/2025

Dear, Honorable Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and the members of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee.

My name is Yara Changyit-Levin, and I'm addressing you as a supporter of the Progressive Maryland Environmental Justice Task Force. I'm a member of the Sunrise Movement, a youth movement organizing across race and class to stop the climate crisis and invest in Black, Brown, and working class communities. I live in Legislative District 40 and I am writing to **express my strong support of SB0010 the Reclaim Renewable Energy Act of 2025.**

This bill has become even more urgent than we assumed during the last legislative session, given the changes in leadership at the federal level. On January 15th of this year, I drove from my home in Baltimore to Washington, D.C., in freezing temperatures, to protest the nomination of Chris Wright, a fossil fuel executive, for Secretary of Energy. I watched my friends be dragged out of the Senate hearing room for standing up and calling attention to the Los Angeles wildfires. The federal government no longer takes the climate crisis seriously, but young people in Maryland do, because our lives are on the line.

It is now up to the state level to lead on clean energy. There is no time, and no money, to waste.

The Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) is a vital tool to support clean, renewable energy, but it is being misused as long as trash incineration is allowed to benefit from millions of dollars in subsidies. The Baltimore City incinerator pours lead, mercury, formaldehyde, particulate matter, nitrous oxides, and sulfur dioxide into adjacent South Baltimore communities. There is no safe level of exposure for these pollutants.^{1,2} Meanwhile, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation reports that the incinerator causes \$55 million in health damages each year, burdening Baltimore residents who already struggle to cope with healthcare costs.³

Not to mention, if trash incineration remains in the RPS, between 2023 and 2030, Maryland energy providers will waste an additional \$200,00,000 to buy Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) from trash incinerators.⁴ This is 200 million dollars used to subsidize the burning of trash.

It is the responsibility of this committee to correct this environmental injustice and instead, direct funds towards better renewable energy sources such as wind, solar, and geothermal energy. Passing the Reclaim Renewable Energy Act will reallocate money Maryland is already spending to more effectively tackle

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)



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³ “South Baltimore Advocates File Civil Rights Complaint on Incinerator Pollution Threats” (Chesapeake Bay Foundation, 2024)

⁴ PEER Report (PEER, 2024)

climate change, with no cost to the state budget.

Maryland’s RPS should be used to finance a just transition away from fossil fuels, not fund environmental injustice in Baltimore. I find it unacceptable that my monthly energy bill as a Baltimore resident in Remington is supporting the wealth of an incinerator that contributes to asthma and cancer hospitalizations in Cherry Hill, Brooklyn, and Westport. If this environmental injustice is similarly unacceptable to this Committee, I know that you will pass the Reclaim Renewable Energy Act.

Thank you to the Committee for your time.