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Budget and Taxation Committee



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**Testimony in Support of SB 10: Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard – Eligible Sources –
Alterations (Reclaim Renewable Energy Act of 2025)
Date Here**

Chairman Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and distinguished members of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee:

It is my pleasure to offer testimony in support of **Senate Bill 10 - Reclaim Renewable Energy Act of 2025**. If enacted, this bill will **remove the dirty energy sources of trash incineration and refuse-derived fuel from eligibility for the state’s renewable portfolio standard**.

Maryland’s Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) was created with the goals of decreasing long-term emissions and working toward a healthier environment. But due to the present inclusion of trash incineration and refuse-derived fuel in our definition of “renewable energy sources”, the RPS is subsidizing energy sources that actually *increase* emissions and *harm* environmental health. **These dirty energy sources 1) pollute Maryland, 2) cause sickness, 3) harm ratepayers, and 4) impede job growth.**

First, dirty energy sources are polluting our state and preventing our progress toward our clean energy goals. In 2020, approximately 25 percent of Maryland’s “renewable” energy came from dirty sources. Indeed, many of the substances emitted by dirty energy are considered the “worst of the worst.” These persistent pollutants do not break down, allowing them to move without confinement and build up in people and wildlife. For example, some of these toxins, such as PFAS, dioxins, and mercury compounds are found even in arctic marine mammals, as far from industrial sources as possible. One study found that past municipal waste incineration in the U.S. has been responsible for 70-80% of dioxins found in the far North.

Given that range, imagine the damage caused by these dirty sources to the *local* environment. The impact of dirty energy is caustic, but right now these sources make up 10 percent of renewable energy credits. Rather than fulfilling its mission to transition the state to genuinely renewable energy, the RPS is bogged down by polluting fuel sources. To protect our

state and have a hope of meeting the Governor's goal of 100 percent clean energy by 2035, we must remove these detrimental fuels from the RPS.

Second, dirty energy sources are dangerous to Maryland citizens. Dioxins, one of the toxins generated by dirty energy, has been identified by the World Health Organization as a human carcinogen. Dioxins have also been found to cause "a range of adverse health effects were identified, including significant associations with some neoplasia, congenital anomalies, infant deaths and miscarriage," according to a 2020 study in the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*. Often, low-income and communities of color bear the brunt of this toxic burden. Over 80 percent of U.S. dirty energy sources are located in communities where more than 25 percent of people identify as "minority," live below the federal poverty rate, or both.

Third, dirty energy sources harm ratepayers. Maryland's ratepayers spend about \$17 million annually to buy renewable energy credits from dirty energy sources. By 2030, that amount will have reached half of a billion dollars - all towards energy sources that could ravage their health and land. In fact, over \$100 million has been spent in the last decade on subsidizing waste incineration falsely labeled as 'renewable energy' even though incinerators produce more greenhouse gas emissions per unit of energy produced than any other power source. The Maryland RPS program currently supports a trash incinerator which is single-handedly one of the top sources of pollution in the D.C. metro area. Local leaders continue to attempt to close trash incinerators in Montgomery County and Baltimore due to the damage they cause.

Finally, dirty energy sources are preventing Maryland's job growth. An overwhelming amount of renewable energy credits paid for by Maryland ratepayers go to dirty energy sources outside of the state. For example, one Virginia facility has received millions through Maryland's renewable energy credits, but is too dirty to qualify for Virginia's own RPS. Those subsidies would remain in Maryland if they were instead granted toward funding new, in-state clean energy projects. We are funding trash incinerators in Virginia and anaerobic digesters in Delaware at the expense of wind and solar jobs in Maryland.

In conclusion, we must remove the dirty energy sources of trash incineration and refuse-derived fuel from qualification in the state's renewable portfolio standard. Dirty energy sources **pollute our state and prevent us from reaching our clean energy goals**. Their emissions do not break down, cannot be contained, and cause widespread **damage to the health of our constituents and our state's beautiful wildlife**. Granting Tier 1 subsidies like renewable energy credits to dirty energy sources **costs Maryland ratepayers** - costs that currently leave the state, when they could be going toward **creating jobs and lead to new sources of actually clean energy**. It is time to take action and reclaim our renewable energy portfolio standard program.

I urge a favorable report of **Senate Bill 10**. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Karen Lewis Young". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Senator Karen Lewis Young