



## PROGRESSIVE MARYLAND

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**Bill Title:** SB10 Reclaim Renewable Energy Act

**Position:** Favorable

**To:** Chair Feldman, Vice chair Kagan, Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

**From:** Richard Gray, Member of Progressive Maryland

**Date:** 2/11/25

Members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide personal testimony in support of SB10, the Reclaim Renewable Energy Act (RREA) of 2025. My name is Richard Gray, and I am a proud member of Progressive Maryland, which is a statewide advocacy group that builds power in working-class communities in Maryland.

For 40 years, the Wheelabrator (formerly Bresco) Baltimore Incinerator has been polluting our skies. The incinerator's theft of ratepayers' bills needs to end. In 2017, Dr. George D. Thurston ran a study to tally the financial impact of the negative health effects as a result of Wheelabrator's pollution. His study took into account respiratory and cardiovascular hospital admissions, acute bronchitis visits, ER visits, asthma visits, chronic bronchitis, and more. Dr. Thurston found the total sum of these health costs to be around \$55 million per year. That's \$55 million taken from the people of Baltimore for the brazen incineration of waste.<sup>1</sup> From 2012 to 2022, electricity bills paid by Maryland ratepayers contributed over \$100 million to incineration efforts.<sup>2</sup> These funds could better be used in good faith of Maryland's renewable portfolio standards by investing in solar, wind, or hydroelectric projects, domains typically understood as renewable energy. This incinerator's theft from ratepayers' bills has gone on long enough, and I am proud to lend my voice in solidarity with Baltimore's working-class to support the RREA.

I leave you all with this, just as a wise man plants trees, under whose shade he knows he will never sit, a wise senator supports removing incineration from their state's Renewable Portfolio Standards, the clean air from which they might be able to breathe.

Respectfully,  
Richard Gray

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<sup>1</sup> "Written report of George D. Thurston regarding the public health impacts of air emissions from the Wheelabrator facility." cbf.org. November 20, 2017. <https://www.cbf.org/document-library/cbf-reports/thurston-wheelabrator-health-impacts-2017.pdf>.

<sup>2</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/>.