April 2, 2026

The Honorable Marc A. Korman
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
House Office Building, 6 Bladen St.,
Annapolis, Maryland

Dear Chair Korman and Members of the Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the US Biochar Coalition to express our enthusiastic support for SB 625 / HB 0817 – Carbon Removal Technology and Practices – Regulations and Use of Funding. We testified before this committee in support of the bill in February, and did the same before the Maryland Senate last month.

The U.S. Biochar Coalition is a trade association unifying the voice of the biochar industry to catalyze development of the market, policy, and economic conditions necessary to expedite industry growth in the United States. A core part of our mission is advancing state policies that accelerate durable carbon removal while strengthening local economies. SB 625 and HB 0817 are exactly the type of forward-looking framework that can position Maryland as a national leader in carbon removal.

Biochar is produced by heating biomass—such as waste wood, agricultural residues, and forestry byproducts—in an oxygen-limited environment. The resulting material is stable, carbon-rich, and capable of permanently removing atmospheric carbon dioxide when applied in durable uses. One ton of high-temperature biochar can sequester up to three tons of CO_2 equivalent. Today, biochar represents the majority of delivered, durable engineered carbon removal credits globally.

Maryland is uniquely positioned to benefit from biochar deployment. The state's agricultural base, forestry resources, and ongoing Chesapeake Bay restoration efforts create strong alignment with biochar's capabilities. When applied to soils, biochar improves water retention, increases soil health, and can reduce nutrient runoff—directly supporting Bay water quality goals. Emerging applications also include incorporation into asphalt and concrete mixes, which may improve material durability while embedding long-term carbon storage in public infrastructure. Additionally, biochar has demonstrated promise in addressing contaminants such as PFAS in soils and water, an issue of growing importance in Maryland.

SB 625 and HB 0817 are important because they establishe a technology-neutral framework for carbon removal funding. By avoiding mandates that favor specific pathways, the bill allows innovation to compete on measurable environmental performance. That approach ensures Maryland can deploy the most effective and scalable solutions as the sector evolves, while attracting private capital and complementary federal investment.

The economic implications are equally significant. Biochar production facilities are typically small- to mid-scale operations located near biomass sources, supporting rural communities, farmers, foresters, equipment operators, and local construction and logistics providers. A predictable, inclusive state framework can catalyze private-sector investment and job creation across multiple regions of Maryland.

SB 625 and HB 0817 strike the right balance: environmentally sound, economically practical, and adaptable to technological advancement. We respectfully urge the Committee to advance this legislation and position Maryland at the forefront of durable carbon removal policy. Thank you for your consideration. We would be pleased to serve as a technical resource to the Committee as needed.

Sincerely,

Maureen Walsh
Executive Director