



**The Maryland Department of the Environment
Secretary Serena McIlwain**

House Bill 66 - Environment - Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative - Withdrawal (Restoring Energy Freedom Act)

Position: Oppose
Committee: Environment and Transportation
Date: February 10, 2026
From: Jeremy D. Baker, Director of Government Relations

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) **OPPOSES** HB 66.

Bill Summary

House Bill 66 would require the Governor to begin the process of withdrawing Maryland from participating in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), a market-based program that is aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The Governor would also be required to provide a report to the Maryland General Assembly thirty days after the State receives the withdrawal notice.

Position Rationale

RGGI is the country's first binding cap-and-trade system for the power sector. The program is a collaboration among 10 Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states to cap and reduce carbon dioxide (CO₂) pollution from power plants. Under RGGI, fossil fuel-fired power plants must purchase a credit, or "allowance," for each ton of CO₂ they emit, which is done through quarterly regional auctions conducted by the RGGI states. Maryland's share of the proceeds raised at auction go into the Strategic Energy Investment Fund (SEIF) and are invested in pollution reduction and ratepayer benefit programs.

MDE opposes legislation that would degrade the economic prosperity, human health, and environmental protection benefits that RGGI provides for Maryland. Over 16 years of implementation, it has cut carbon pollution from power plants in participating states in half - much faster than the rest of the country - and has produced billions of dollars in electricity bill savings and economic benefits, and tens of thousands of jobs across the RGGI region.¹ In fiscal year 2025, RGGI auction revenues provided \$267 million to SEIF for further investment in the state.²

Accordingly, MDE asks for an **UNFAVORABLE** report for HB 66.

¹ www.rggiprojectseries.org.

² Maryland Energy Administration, Strategic Energy Investment Fund, Activities for Fiscal Year 2025, Volume 1, Released January 2026. <https://energy.maryland.gov/Reports/SEIF%20Vol%201%20FY25.pdf>.