



Bill No. HB875 “Electricity - Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard - Qualifying Biomass”
Name: Peter Alexander, PhD
Position: Favorable With Amendments
RE: Testimony before the House Economic Matters Committee
Date: February 18, 2021

Mr. Chairman, Madame Vice Chair, and members of the Committee,

I represent the 700+ members of Indivisible Howard County. I am writing in support of HB875, which removes Black Liquor and some forms of Biomass from the RPS. We thank Speaker Jones, Madame Chair Kelley and Chairman Davis for their leadership in elevating this issue.

HB875 will remove Black Liquor from Maryland’s Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS). Removing Black Liquor from the Tier 1 list would be a great improvement to the RPS, since the Luke Mill in Allegany County closed and currently all Black Liquor RECs go to support out-of-state generation. Further, Black Liquor is toxic, causing skin irritation and respiratory problems if inhaled.

Burning Black Liquor is not clean energy and should not qualify for RPS subsidies which are intended for energy sources such as wind and solar. Black Liquor generation currently receive the same subsidies as these truly clean energy sources. The fact that Black Liquor receives ANY utility ratepayer-funded subsidies is a misappropriation of those utility bill dollars.

Burning and burying our waste are not the only options. Recycling, composting, re-use, and source reduction can eliminate the need to burn or bury so much waste. Composting and other zero-waste strategies are a sustainable alternative to landfills and incinerators, with many benefits to air and water quality, soil health, local business development, and fighting climate change.

Let’s stop subsidizing Black Liquor generation as a so-called clean energy source and use those subsidies to support truly clean energy sources while developing viable alternatives for diverting waste from our landfill. We respectfully urge an amendment to this bill *if politically feasible*, to remove incineration

from the RPS as well. This will have additional benefits outlined above, including better air and water quality, improved public health, and additional, truly clean, renewable energy for our state.

We urge a favorable report from the ECM with the amendment to remove Incineration from the RPS.

Peter Alexander
Woodbine, MD

References

- (1) <http://www.energyjustice.net/incineration/climate>
- (2) Tait, et. al., (2020). The health impacts of waste incineration: a systematic review. Australian New Zealand J. Publ. Health. **44**(1):40.48.
- (3) EIP Report: Waste-to-Energy Incinerators Pollute More Per of Hour of Energy than Coal-Fired Power Plants and Are Not Renewable; Oct 2011.
- (4) Thurston, G.D. (2017). Written Report of George D. Thurston Regarding the Public Health Impacts of Air Emissions from the Wheelabrator Facility.
- (5) SCS ENGINEERS (2016). Waste Characterization Study Summary of Results 2014/2015, File No. 02201056.95. June 2016.
- (6) <https://frederickcountymd.gov/1739/Composting>
- (7) https://www.fredericknewspost.com/news/education/schools/public_k-12/elementary/food-waste-biggest-hurdle-still-to-come-as-fcps-expands/article_a6d398f5-0bee-54bf-9524-254e6f4331e5.html