



MARYLAND LEAGUE
OF CONSERVATION VOTERS

February 18, 2021

**SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS- HB875: Electricity – Renewable
Energy Portfolio Standard – Qualifying Biomass**

**Maryland League of
Conservation Voters**

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Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee

The below-signed organizations strongly support HB875: Electricity – Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard – Qualifying Biomass, and we thank the Sponsor for his leadership on this issue.

“Black liquor,” is a byproduct of the paper mill industry used as an energy source that has a carbon content on par with, or greater than, coal. It generates health-hazardous emissions of carbon dioxide, arsenic, and lead at levels greater than or equal to fossil fuels. This legislation will remove black liquor, a toxic energy source as a tier one resource within Maryland’s Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS), which was designed to incentive the green energy economy provided by actual clean and renewable sources of energy such as wind and solar. We strongly support removing dirty energy sources from the RPS so that state funds are used as intended and not used to subsidize these toxic pollutants.

It is in this same spirit that we also respectfully ask the committee to amend HB875 to include the removal of waste to energy incineration facilities as Tier one sources and thereby complete the work of cleaning up the RPS.

As with “black liquor,” trash incineration is harmful to both the natural environment and human health. It emits both significant nitrous oxides and particulate matter which, when mixed with volatile organic compounds and sunlight creates ozone pollution. The effects of these pollutants can cause chest pain, coughing and throat irritation, lung damage, increased risk of heart attack, and mortality. A study commissioned by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation concluded that the harm caused by a single trash incinerator, the BRESKO plant in Baltimore City, causes as much as \$55 million annually in health costs to local communities, which are predominantly both black and low-income. The South Baltimore neighborhood surrounding BRESKO has the highest hospital rates for asthma, and lower life expectancies than those of other areas of the City.

Neither of these toxic pollutants belong in the RPS, a standard specifically designed to create incentives for energy sources that reduce our climate pollution and their adverse health impacts, not sources like black liquor and waste incineration that contribute to it.

We urge a favorable report on HB875, amended to remove waste incineration, as well.

Respectfully,

Maryland League of Conservation Voters

Annapolis Green

Chesapeake Climate Action Network

Clean Water Action

Climate Law and Policy Project

Climate Justice Wing

Environment Maryland

Indivisible Howard County

Maryland Legislative Coalition

Preservation Maryland

Safe Skies Maryland

Sunrise Movement Baltimore

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