



# CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

Environmental Protection and Restoration  
Environmental Education

## House Bill 332

Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard - Eligible Sources

Date: February 4, 2021  
To: House Economic Matter Committee

Position: Support  
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Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS** HB 332 which removes greenhouse gas producing energies including waste-to-energy and refuse-derived fuel from the State's definition of a Tier 1 renewable energy sources.

In 2019, the General Assembly passed landmark legislation to increase Maryland's Renewable Energy Portfolio Standards. Removal of trash incineration from the Standards will rightfully require public utilities to purchase additional energy from wind, solar, and other renewable sources to fulfill their required renewable portfolio.

The State's Renewable Energy Portfolio Standards aim to confront greenhouse gas emissions and slow climate change. By removing trash incineration from Maryland's Standards, the State would acknowledge that trash incineration is not a renewable energy source but is rather a source of oxidized nitrogen – a climate-impacting greenhouse gas.

Climate change has immediate and drastic impacts on the Chesapeake Bay, many of which are already being witnessed. Warmer climates translate into warmer waters, which decrease dissolved oxygen, exacerbating the Bay's fish-killing "dead zones" and contributing to algal blooms. Rising water temperatures stress fish and reducing the populations from the Bay's iconic striped bass to brook trout. Other temperature-sensitive species such as eel grass, a critical habitat plant, are at risk.

Atmospheric deposition of nitrogen is the highest nitrogen input load in the Chesapeake Bay. Nitrogen pollution feeds algal blooms that block sunlight to underwater grasses and suck up life supporting oxygen when they die and decompose. The principal source of oxidized nitrogen, also called NOx, is air emissions from various emitters, including trash incinerators.

Studies have shown that fine particulate matter (PM) air pollutants emitted from trash incinerators is also damaging to human health.<sup>1</sup> Applying the U.S. EPA approved Environmental Benefits Mapping and Analysis Program (BenMAP) model, Thurston calculates the excess adverse human health impacts that occur each year if the Wheelabrator waste-to-energy plant continues its present operations and associated air emissions, as well as the annual economic valuation of those health impacts.<sup>2</sup>

**CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on HB 332.**

<sup>1</sup> [Written Report of George D. Thurston Regarding the Public Health Impacts of Air Emissions from the Wheelabrator Facility](#), November 20, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

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