

Testimony for HB 0332: Removing trash incineration from the RPS
Sponsor: Delegate Ivey

Good afternoon, I am Lauren Greenberger, President of Sugarloaf Citizens' Association in Dickerson. The Montgomery County waste incinerator is visible right outside my window.

We know that waste incineration is horribly polluting – Covanta will tell you they operate below EPA requirements but that still means they are putting over 600,000 tons of GHG in the air annually and dozens of other toxins including 24 pounds of mercury – one gram of mercury can render a whole reservoir undrinkable. Our incinerator is 5-25 times more polluting, depending on the toxin, per unit of energy produced than a coal-fired power plant. In fact, it is the number one worst polluter in our county. Would you consider subsidizing coal plants through the RPS??

Montgomery County, not Covanta, owns this incinerator. County Executive Elrich and our County Council have affirmed that despite the loss of revenue they will incur, they fully support the removal of incineration from the RPS. To meet our carbon reduction goals in the county we are working on many fronts to bring more clean energy to our residents and businesses. All investment and subsidies for clean energy must go to truly clean energy providers. Pretending that incineration will help mitigate climate change is a deadly charade. We as a county have asserted that we want no part of that.

By keeping trash incineration in the RPS we are subsidizing this polluter and, more importantly, taking away from the expansion of wind and solar production – industries we desperately need to combat global warming.

While George Bush was still governor of Texas, he signed a Renewable Portfolio Standard bill into law. The Texas RPS law caused the dirty utilities to have to invest in truly renewable energy. They turned to wind power, making Texas second to California in wind generation and causing more wind power to be installed in Texas (912 MW) than in the rest of the U.S. combined (775 MW) in 2001 (!) This is the power of a CLEAN RPS.

Now I know there are rumors that taking away this subsidy will make electric bills go up. This is ludicrous – electric bills will go DOWN because PURPA charges will be reduced. The incinerator industry does not set the market price, they sell to the grid and can charge ongoing market rates. If subsidies are eliminated, the

incinerator industry will lose some revenue and rate-payers will pay a little bit less
– that's it.

Thank you for your attention.

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