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LMSW

**Testimony Supporting HB0332
House Economic Matters Committee
February 4, 2021
Bill Sponsor: Delegate Julian Ivey**

As Maryland resident of District 43 and a Social Worker with grave concern for the health of our communities, I strongly support HB0332 and the effort to remove trash incineration from Maryland's Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS). It is clear that burning trash is not clean energy. Maryland's renewable energy credits should be utilized as initially intended: to support the expansion of truly green energy, like wind and solar. **HB0332 is an opportunity to restore integrity to the RPS.**

Trash incineration is a poisonous archaic practice. In a time where we are reconfiguring our collective lives to protect the health of our lungs from COVID-19, we need to consider the health of the air surrounding us. Trash incineration emits higher levels of mercury, lead, nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide than coal energy plants. Locally these toxins, gases, and fine particulate matter are strongly linked with increased respiratory illnesses, cancers, and other measures of morbidity to Maryland residents.

Programs are meant to be reevaluated and to evolve to improve outcomes for Marylanders. The RPS as it was put together in 2003 shows promise and a commitment in moving us in a direction toward greater reliance on truly green energy as a state. Both waste incineration facilities will be able to continue their operations without the deliverance of public subsidies, but removing them from the RPS sends clear messaging that the health of our residents and our environment takes priority. This gives room to exploring the growing interest in reforming our approach to Municipal Solid Waste. We can reroute the subsidies to bolster contracts for more solar and wind generation of energy. Removing trash incineration from the RPS is essential to restoring integrity to the program.

Incineration is not our only option. In rerouting materials from the incinerator, Maryland can incentivize and bolster the support of green businesses and the subsequent job creation that stems from proper municipal waste management. According to recent studies and proposals, over 70 percent of materials currently incinerated in Baltimore's Wheelabrator could be used to generate businesses that create over 1,800 jobs for Baltimore area residents. Creation of green businesses from waste streams that currently fuel our incinerators could also have vast reaching opportunities to cut Maryland's greenhouse gas emissions, while remediating soil, increasing carbon sequestration and agricultural yield, and filling gaps in food security around the state.

For all of these reasons and many more submitted by coalition leaders and environmental agencies, please support HB0332 and end subsidies for trash incineration in Maryland.
Thank you.

Thank you for your time, your service and your consideration,

Sincerely,
Joanna Merry, LMSW