



John Hartline, Chairman

50 Harry S. Truman Parkway • Annapolis, MD 21401  
Office: 410-841-5772 • Fax: 410-841-5987 • TTY: 800-735-2258  
Email: [rmc.mda@maryland.gov](mailto:rmc.mda@maryland.gov)  
Website: [www.rural.maryland.gov](http://www.rural.maryland.gov)  
Charlotte Davis, Executive Director

Testimony in Support of  
Senate Bill 549– Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard - Thermal Biomass Systems  
Finance Committee  
February 23, 2021

The Rural Maryland Council supports SB 549 – Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard – Thermal Biomass Systems. The purpose of this bill is to authorize thermal biomass systems, for purposes of the State’s Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard (RPS), to use food waste, qualifying biomass, or animal manure as a source of fuel, regardless of the relative mix of fuel sources.

In 2015, the US Environmental Protection Agency and the US Department of Agriculture announced a national goal to reduce food waste by 50% by 2030. According to the Maryland Department of the Environment, over nine hundred thousand tons of food waste is generated annually and only a small portion is recycled with the majority ending up being disposed in landfills or incinerated. Including food waste as a renewable fuel source can provide significant contribution towards on farm energy use, revenue generation, and climate change mitigation. An example of this is a partnership between West Nottingham Academy and Kilby Farm Creamery located in Cecil County, Maryland. In partnership, the School diverts nearly 7 tons of food waste annually from their dining hall to the Farm digester where it becomes compost and energy to run the farm.

The Rural Maryland Council requests your favorable support of Senate Bill 549 – Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard – Thermal Biomass Systems.

*The Rural Maryland Council (RMC) is an independent state agency governed by a nonpartisan, 40-member board that consists of inclusive representation from the federal, state, regional, county, and municipal governments, as well as the for-profit and nonprofit sectors. We bring together federal, state, county and municipal government officials as well as representatives of the for-profit and nonprofit sectors to identify challenges unique to rural communities and to craft public policy, programmatic or regulatory solutions.*

“A Collective Voice for Rural Maryland”