



**Olivia Bartlett, DoTheMostGood Maryland Team**

**Committee:** Economic Matters

**Testimony on:** HB0011 – Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard – Tier 1 Renewable Source – Alterations (Reclaim Renewable Energy Act of 2022)

**Position:** FAVORABLE

**Hearing Date:** March 4, 2022

**Bill Contact:** Delegate Vaughn Stewart

DoTheMostGood (DTMG) is a progressive grass-roots organization with more than 3000 members in all districts in Montgomery County as well as several nearby jurisdictions. DTMG supports legislation and activities that keep its members healthy and safe in a clean environment and which promote equity across all our diverse communities. DTMG strongly supports HB0011 because it will stop ratepayer and taxpayer subsidies of dirty energy sources that pollute our environment, damage our health, and contribute to climate change.

HB0011 will take Maryland's Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS) back to its original purpose to incentivize the production of clean renewable energy by removing the dirty sources of energy from the RPS. Using dirty energy sources, such as incineration of trash and chicken litter, burning wood and other biomass, and methane, harms the health of Marylanders, especially vulnerable populations such as the elderly, children, low-income communities, and communities of color, hurts our wallets, and hinders our ability to grow the truly clean renewable energy sources that we need to address climate change.

The latest reports from climate scientists around the world make it very clear that we must rapidly stop greenhouse gas emissions from burning things to make energy to avoid the most disastrous effects of climate change due to global warming. With more than 3000 miles of coastline, Maryland is one of the states most at risk from climate change, so we should be doing all we can to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, not incentivize production of them. We are in a climate crisis, and we cannot afford to be spending our renewable energy money on facilities that emit greenhouse gasses. Now is the time to double down on Maryland's commitment to truly renewable energy and subsidize only facilities that are emission-free.

In addition, Maryland has one of the highest rates of death from air pollution in the United States. The incineration industry has tried to rebrand incineration as "waste-to-energy" in recent years, but trash incinerators are a far cry from a clean, renewable energy source. Although we have a lot of trash, burning trash is even worse for Marylanders' health and our climate than burning coal and oil. Burning trash releases 90% more greenhouse gas emissions per unit of energy than coal and also releases high levels of mercury and other toxins, such as dioxins, furans, and nitrogen oxides (NOx), and harmful PM 2.5 (small particulate matter) into the air. NOx contributes to ozone pollution, which can cause chest pain, coughing, and increased risk of asthma attacks, and

exposure to PM 2.5 can cause lung damage and increased risk of heart attacks. Furthermore, burning trash creates a toxic concentrated ash that still needs to be disposed of.

Poultry litter may also be abundant but is anything but clean. It contains a mixture of poultry excreta, spilled feed, feathers, and material used as bedding in poultry operations that may include wood shavings, sawdust, peanut hulls, shredded sugar cane, straw, and other dry, absorbent, low-cost organic materials. Burning these materials also produces greenhouse gas emissions, toxic air pollution and residues.

Subsidizing these and other dirty energy sources has hurt Maryland residents financially. According to a report recently released by PEER (Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility), Maryland taxpayers have paid more than \$189 million to subsidize dirty energy facilities in Virginia and Maryland since 2008. The report further projects Marylanders will spend \$311 million more for such dirty energy between now and 2030, and much of it does not even provide energy to Maryland or jobs for Marylanders. Marylanders have spent more than \$26 million since 2014 purchasing energy credits from a facility in Virginia that burns wood waste to produce energy for Virginia.

Subsidizing dirty energy is a bad deal for Maryland. Every Renewable Energy Credit that goes toward a facility that emits greenhouse gasses is a Renewable Energy Credit taken away from a facility that does not - an egregious waste of public money. In 2020, about 25% of Maryland's Renewable Energy Credits came from polluting energy sources that are still a part of the RPS, such as municipal solid waste burned to produce electricity and woody biomass or debris burned in power plants and paper mills. The General Assembly finally deleted black liquor from the RPS in 2021 - now it's time to finish the job and remove the rest of the dirty energy sources from the RPS. The result will be cleaner air and a cleaner environment and new clean energy jobs for Maryland residents.

Maryland is the only state in the country that includes burning of trash in Tier 1 "renewable energy" and thus allows incinerator operators to receive millions of dollars in taxpayer subsidies from the state. In the past, incinerator operators showed up with soft-lens videos with soothing music and claimed that removing trash incineration from the RPS will put them out of business. Don't fall for their misinformation again - incinerators operated without taxpayer subsidies in the past and will continue to do so without RECs in the future.

DTMG therefore strongly supports HB0011 and urges legislators to stand up for the health of Maryland residents, the climate future we all need for our children and grandchildren, and taxpayers' wallets with a **FAVORABLE** report on this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

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