

**Sign-on Testimony from 67 Groups**

**Committee: House 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**

Dear Maryland Legislators,

We, **the undersigned organizations**, urge you to support legislation to remove dirty energy sources from Maryland's Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) in order to allow our state's renewable energy plan to fully promote our region's plentiful clean energy sources.

Currently, Maryland's RPS allows for many polluting fuel sources to qualify as "renewable energy." Since 2008, more than \$200 million has flowed from utility ratepayers' pockets through the RPS program to energy sources that create local air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, instead of non-polluting energy sources like wind and solar.(1) We should be utilizing this program to better harness the abundance of clean energy within our reach. Polluting energy sources like poultry litter-to-energy, trash incineration, woody biomass incineration, methane from anaerobic digestion, and landfill-gas-to-energy pollute our environment and threaten public health, and should have no place in Maryland's clean energy plan.

The polluting energy sources that qualify as renewable are in direct contradiction to the overall goal of the RPS.

- Data shows that poultry litter incineration projects can emit higher levels of greenhouse gases and toxic chemicals than coal plants.(2)

- So-called "Renewable Natural Gas" manufactured from factory farm waste and other sources is just methane by another name, and promises to prop up both the pipeline system and the industrialized food system.(3)

- Power from woody biomass threatens forests and can turn traditional carbon sinks - forests - into perpetual carbon emitters, exacerbating their contribution to climate disruption.

- Landfill-gas-to-energy systems involve methane, a potent greenhouse gas; subsidizing such systems by the amount of energy they produce can incentivize landfill management strategies that increase methane production - while in contrast, diverting the organic waste that creates methane in landfills to compost instead actually sequesters carbon.(4)

- Trash incinerators create an especially dangerous set of compounds called dioxins, declared by the World Health Organization as a known human carcinogen; dioxins are also linked to diseases of the immune system, endocrine system, nervous system, and reproductive system.(5) Air pollutants from waste incinerators have also shown to increase the risk of pre-term births, and lung and blood

cancers.(6) To make matters worse, trash incinerators are often sited in low-income and minority communities already facing significant burdens of pollution and health inequities. Maryland's commitment to clean energy should not be funneling money to smokestacks in our most vulnerable communities.

The current structure of the RPS funnels utility ratepayers' money to energy sources that not only produce more carbon than fossil fuels per unit of energy, but also threaten the health of Marylanders. These are not the objectives that the state's clean energy plan is meant to achieve. Yet the incentive created by including these dirty sources as "renewable" in our RPS allows them to increasingly occupy space on our grid that can and should be filled with clean renewable energy like wind and solar. As Speaker of the House Adrienne Jones said in January: "Climate change is an existential threat and [removing another dirty energy source, black liquor, from the RPS] is our first step this session to address it."(7) It is time for Maryland to follow its 2021 measure to its conclusion, and make Renewable Energy Credits actually mean renewable energy in 2022.

Sincerely,

1199SEIU UHE

Assateague Coastal Trust

Audubon Mid-Atlantic

Aurora Energy, Inc.

Baltimore City Green Party

Blue Water Baltimore

Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church, Environmental Justice Ministry

Chapman Forest Foundation Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility (CPSR)

Chesapeake Climate Action Network

Clean Water Action Maryland

Compost Crew

Concerned Citizens Against Industrial CAFOs

Doctors for Camp Closure

Echotopia LLC

Environment Maryland

Envision Frederick County

Food & Water Watch

Frederick Zero Waste Alliance

Friends of the Earth

Glen Echo Heights Mobilization

Greenbelt Climate Action Network

Greater Baltimore DSA Ecosocialist Committee

Howard County Climate Action

Indivisible Howard County

Interfaith Power & Light (DC.MC.NoVA)

Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future

Locust Point Community Garden  
Maryland League of Conservation Voters  
Maryland Legislative Coalition  
Maryland PIRG  
Maryland Sierra Club  
Maxedoutsolar  
MD Campaign for Environmental Human Rights  
MOM's Organic Market  
Montgomery County Democratic Socialists of America  
Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club  
NAACP Maryland State Conference  
NAACP Wicomico County Branch  
Namati  
National Aquarium  
National Nurses United  
Neighborhood Sun Benefit Corp  
No Boundaries Coalition  
Our Revolution Baltimore City/County  
Our Revolution Maryland  
Progressive Democrats of Howard County  
Protectors of the St Martin River  
Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility  
Safe and Healthy Playing Fields  
Safe Skies Maryland  
Sentinels Of Eastern Shore Health  
Socially Responsible Agricultural Project  
South Baltimore Community Land Trust  
Southern Maryland DSA  
Sugarloaf Citizens Association  
Sunrise Movement Maryland  
Sunrise Movement Baltimore  
Sunrise Movement Silver Spring  
Sunrise Movement UMBC  
Sunrise Movement UMD  
Sunrise Movement Howard County  
Sunrise Movement Frederick  
Sunrise Movement McDaniel  
Strong Future Maryland  
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland  
Waterkeepers Chesapeake  
WISE

Sources:

(1) <https://www.peer.org/maryland-clean-energy-program-has-big-dirty-component/>

(2)

[https://foodandwaterwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/fs\\_1510\\_md-poultry-incineration-web.pdf](https://foodandwaterwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/fs_1510_md-poultry-incineration-web.pdf)

(3)

[https://foodandwaterwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/fs\\_2102\\_renewablenaturalgas-web\\_1.pdf](https://foodandwaterwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/fs_2102_renewablenaturalgas-web_1.pdf)

(4) <https://www.no-burn.org/landfillgasreport/>

(5) [https://www.who.int/ipcs/assessment/public\\_health/dioxins/en/](https://www.who.int/ipcs/assessment/public_health/dioxins/en/)

(6) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5637250/>

(7) <https://twitter.com/SpeakerAJones/status/1355173152716976129>