



*Dorchester
Citizens For
Planned
Growth*



March 10, 2022

The Honorable C. T. Wilson, Chair
The Honorable Brian M. Crosby, Vice Chair
Maryland House Economic Matters Committee
Room 231
House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re-: HB 11 - Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard - Tier 1 Source - Alterations (Reclaim Renewable Energy Act of 2022)

Dear Chairman Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and Members of the Committee,

The Wicomico Environmental Trust (based in Wicomico County, Maryland), the Friends of the Nanticoke River (based in Delaware and Maryland), and the Dorchester Citizens for Planned Growth (based in Dorchester County, Maryland), all grassroots environmental nonprofit organizations, are writing to express our opposition to House Bill 11, "Reclaim Renewable Energy Act of 2022."

The bill proposes to alter the definition of "tier 1 renewable source for the purpose of excluding energy derived from qualifying biomass, methane from anaerobic decomposition of organic materials, poultry litter-to-energy, waste-to-energy, refuse-derived fuel, and thermal energy from a thermal biomass system such that these systems are no longer eligible for inclusion in the renewable energy portfolio standard."

We oppose this bill for the following reasons:

1. If the bill takes effect and inhibits the use of processes such as anaerobic digestion and other biomass-to-energy systems, the net effect on the environment will be negative because:
 - more of the biomass will wind up in landfills, where it releases a large fraction of methane, a powerful greenhouse gas, or

- biomass will undergo open burning, releasing carbon dioxide and particulates.

This bill does nothing to incentivize the use of solar, wind, or geothermal energy.

2. The current system of applying renewable energy credits to qualifying thermal biomass systems does not discourage the use of solar, wind, or geothermal energy.

3. The bill would discourage the production of certain end products of the biomass-to-energy systems such as biochar, which is a potent ecological tool (adsorbent) when applied to environmental cleanups that involve heavy metal pollution contained in mining waste, and removal of toxic chemical residues such as PFAS.

Parties interested in this bill should keep in mind that when **biomass or biological waste** (whether wood waste, chicken litter, or animal renderings) decompose in landfills, on fields, in DAF tanks or elsewhere, they release a large fraction of methane, a potent greenhouse gas that contributes to climate warming.

To the extent that biological waste can be managed in a way that avoids the release of greenhouse gases and other toxic emissions, we should encourage and incentivize practices such as anaerobic digestion, waste-to-energy, and other comparable biomass-to-energy systems. Indeed, studies have shown that biomass-based energy production systems have lower net greenhouse gas emissions than traditional methods of biomass disposal.

For all of these reasons, we urge a vote *against* HB 11.

Thank you for your consideration of our opinion.

Sincerely,

Madeleine Adams
President, Wicomico Environmental Trust

Jay Martin
President, Friends of the Nanticoke River

Fred Pomeroy
President, Dorchester Citizens for Planned
Growth