

Committee: Finance

Testimony on: SB903 - RPS-Qualifying Biomass & Thermal Biomass

Submitting: Rhonda Kranz (5 Montgomery Ave, Takoma Park, MD)

Position: Oppose

Hearing Date: March 1, 2022

Dear M. Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing my testimony in strong opposition of SB903 - RPS-Qualifying Biomass & Thermal Biomass. As a biologist and environmental professional, I am very concerned about how this bill would move us backward in our efforts to mitigate climate change and decrease pollution of our air and water.

Maryland's Renewable Portfolio is among our state's most important programs for substantially reducing our greenhouse gas emissions. The RPS' increased importance under the 2019 Clean Energy Jobs Act means it should be focused on incentivizing new, renewable energy facilities which will support Maryland's efforts to mitigate climate change. This bill will, instead, expand the RPS to incentive burning trees and lead to the release of a significant amount of CO₂ and other pollutants.

As Maryland attempts to remove dirty fuels from its renewable portfolio standards (this committee took the lead in removing black liquor from the RPS), this bill takes us in the opposite direction and would increase the amount of dirty, greenhouse gas producing fuels in Maryland's "clean" renewable portfolio standards.

SB903 modifies the provisions of Maryland's Renewable Portfolio Standard to provide Tier 1 status to qualifying biomass burned as a sole feedstock to produce thermal energy. Currently, the RPS law only provides Tier 1 status to thermal energy generators that primarily combust animal manure. Qualifying biomass may be combusted only as a secondary component of the feedstock.

The bill circumvents Maryland's progress towards alternative uses of animal manure and food waste. Incineration of biomass for heat production also produces greenhouse gases into the air and to the deposition of nitrogen oxide into the Bay when it rains. The diversion of animal litter and food waste to a cheaper, more polluting process would *increase* our greenhouse gas emissions and would undermine truly renewable sources like wind, solar and geothermal in the renewable energy portfolio.

Last year the House committee referred SB549 for study rather than take immediate action. A report from is expected to be completed in Fall, 2023. The committee should respect their mandate.

For these reasons, I urge you to vote UNFAVORABLE for SB903.