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The Honorable Delores Kelley and  
Members of the Senate Finance Committee

REPRESENTATIVES

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Local 1949  
ERIC BILSON

**RE: SB616 – OPPOSE**

As State Legislative Director for the Transportation Division of the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Worker's I am urging your committee to deliver an unfavorable report on SB616, "*Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard – Eligible Sources – Waste-to-Energy and Refuse-Derived Fuel.*"

Our members are employed by CSX in providing rail service to Covanta, the waste-to-energy facility in Montgomery County. We understand there are hundreds other union and non-union workers employed in the operations of this and other waste-to-energy facilities throughout the state. We believe these jobs are at risk if this legislation to eliminate waste-to-energy from Maryland's Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard (RPS) is passed into law.

We had been involved in the issue of eliminating biomass from the RPS for several years. When testifying on the legislation, we always proclaimed that the jobs associated with the industries that would be affected by that legislation were at risk. The supporters of the legislation always took the position that the jobs were not at risk as the industry would continue to operate afterward.

Of course, no one can predict the future, but one must look no farther than what happened to the Verso Paper Mill that was in Allegany County Maryland. After being constantly attacked year after year by legislation to eliminate their ability to receive credits for generating electricity under the RPS, this wayed heavily in their decision to close the plant and move production to other facilities in other states where they were not under constant attack.

The result was the loss of over 800 direct union jobs in the plant that paid excellent wages and had great health care and pension benefits. All told, over 3000 jobs were lost when considering the ancillary jobs associated with the production facility. This has been a severe blow to the economy of Allegany County.

We understand renewable energy policies are important and are related to addressing climate change. But sometimes the goals of these legislative efforts result in unintended consequences. Closing of the Verso Paper Mill is an example. The lateral movement of the production line did not result in less making or use of biomass, nor did it lessen the amount of exhaust into the air. It just took place in another state who benefited from the increase in jobs.

In addition, it was reported that part of the production line equipment was sold to a company in Poland for their use in their production of paper. The demand for the product does not go away just because the plant closes. I would venture to say that Poland does not have the same air quality standards as Maryland, which then results in the opposite affect desired.

Until the state takes responsibility for the jobs they are responsible for eliminating with their policies, we cannot support legislation such as SB616. These facilities and the jobs associated with their processes are middle class family sustaining jobs that pay good wages and benefits that cannot be replaced easily, if at all. Moreover, they provide economic benefits for communities through suppliers, service providers, educational resources, and tax payments.

**We therefore urge your committee to give SB616 an unfavorable report!**


Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Lawrence E. Kasecamp

MD State Legislative Director

 Transportation Division