



Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor
Mary Beth Tung, Director

TO: Members, Senate Finance Committee
FROM: Mary Beth Tung – Director, MEA
SUBJECT: SB 903 (HB 1085) - Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard - Qualifying Biomass and Thermal Biomass Systems
DATE: March 1, 2021

MEA POSITION: FAV

MEA views the expansion of thermal biomass within the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) favorably, and this bill will make more renewable energy projects economically viable.

The bill will have an overall small-scale impact on the RPS. In other words, this will not derail current technology-specific statutory goals. In fact, “[t]here are currently no thermal biomass facilities in Maryland”¹, and, “contributions from qualifying biomass sourced from agricultural crops, geothermal, other biomass liquid and gas, and solar thermal are too small to [register in comparison to other Tier 1 sources]”².

The use of biomass as feedstock for onsite thermal generation is highly efficient. Pipeline-grade renewable natural gas (RNG) utilized to generate electricity for grid export results in a fuel use efficiency of approximately 33% when line losses from electricity transmission and distribution are taken into account³. This means that nearly two-thirds of the energy content of RNG utilized in this manner is wasted to the environment, versus the much more efficient option of successfully capturing and utilizing this renewable energy resource to offset onsite thermal demand.

Altering the definitions of "qualifying biomass" and "thermal biomass system" will create greater potential for the adoption of clean and renewable energy in a larger geographic portion of the state.

For these reasons, MEA urges a **FAVORABLE** report for SB 903.

¹ PSC 2020 RPS Report, 3.

² *Id.* at 13.

³ [epa.gov/chp/chp-benefits](https://www.epa.gov/chp/chp-benefits)