



March 15, 2022

**Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard – Eligible Sources – Waste-to-Energy and Refuse-Derived Fuel (SB616)**  
**Position: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENT**

Dear Chairperson Kelley and Members of the Finance Committee:

Blue Water Baltimore is a nonprofit organization with a mission to restore the quality of Baltimore's rivers, streams, and Harbor to foster a healthy environment, a strong economy, and thriving communities. **We write today in support of Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard – Eligible Sources – Waste-to-Energy and Refuse-Derived Fuel (SB616)** with amendments to also remove every other energy source that emits greenhouse gasses from the Renewable Portfolio Standard.

We strongly support removing trash incineration from the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS): it is not sustainable or renewable; harms the health of nearby communities through its emissions of carcinogens and neurotoxins; and pollutes more greenhouse gasses per unit of energy than coal, the dirtiest of fossil fuels. We encourage you to amend SB616 to also remove other sources of energy that emit greenhouse gasses from the RPS.

To face the climate crisis, especially in light of this month's IPCC report that says that our current mitigation efforts are not enough to stave off climate disasters, we must ensure that our subsidies for renewable energy through the Renewable Portfolio Standard are going toward actual renewable energy. We cannot afford to be spending our renewable energy money on facilities that emit greenhouse gasses - now is the time to double down on Maryland's commitment to truly renewable energy and subsidize only facilities that are emissions-free.

Trash incineration should never have been included in Tier 1 of the RPS. Maryland's trash incinerators pollute more than Maryland's coal plants per unit of energy each produces, and emit significant quantities of greenhouse gasses and local harmful air pollution: much of their energy comes from burning plastic, a fossil fuel. In the original design of the RPS program, incinerators were included in the Tier 2 category, which was supposed to phase out in 2019. But in 2011 as community pressure was mounting against two new proposed incinerators in Baltimore and Frederick, the industry successfully lobbied to be added to Tier 1. Ultimately, the community opposition won, and neither facility was built, but \$36 million in RPS subsidies is still wasted on incineration each year.

Burning other types of waste, from chicken litter to wood products, and manufacturing methane all pollute the environment, harm nearby communities' health, and contribute to climate change: a bad investment of public dollars that every Maryland utility ratepayer contributes to. Every Renewable Energy Credit that goes toward a facility that emits greenhouse gasses is a Renewable Energy Credit taken away from a facility that does not: an egregious waste of public money. And right now,

communities on the Eastern Shore are actively fighting against new factory farm methane plants: let's not go down the road with factory farm methane that we went down with trash incineration. Let's get that industry out of the RPS from the start.

Because of the inclusion of these polluters in the Renewable Portfolio Standard, Maryland ratepayers paid over \$30 million to buy Renewable Energy Credits from facilities that emit greenhouse gasses in 2020, and over \$246 million since 2008. The Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility estimates that if nothing changes, those costs will mount to half a billion dollars subsidizing polluters by 2030. Please support SB616 with amendments expanding it to cover all polluters in the RPS, so that those dollars can go toward supporting wind and solar - not greenhouse gas emissions.

For all of these reasons and many more, please support SB616 with amendments and end "renewable energy" subsidies for all greenhouse gas emitting energy sources in Maryland. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Taylor Smith-Hams".

Taylor Smith-Hams  
Advocacy & Outreach Senior Manager