

## **Statement of**

**Joseph M. Hinson, Maryland Licensed Forester #765**

### **In Support of SB 903**

I'm a consulting forester, located in Salisbury, and I work for forest products companies that qualify for and would take advantage of biomass thermal renewable energy credits (TRECs).

To date, no one has applied for TRECs in Maryland, to the best of my knowledge. The law can be interpreted as allowing the credits for only those biomass systems that burn a combination of animal manure and qualified biomass. No such system exists and, in the real world, a biomass system that uses such a combination for fuel is extremely unlikely.

Nevertheless, this definition in the law appears to be a barrier to TREC applications from companies who qualify for the credits. SB 903 removes any ambiguity in the statute and provides a clear path to gain access to the credits.

There are important, environmentally positive effects from the availability of TRECs. Many, probably most, sawmills and other forest product manufacturers already burn bark, chipped up tops and limbs, small low value trees and waste wood to generate heat and, in some cases, steam for their operations. The units that do the burning are high tech, with complex capture and re-burn mechanisms to reduce any pollutant discharges. They are not simply open fires and they operate in strict compliance with state air quality permits and regulations.

The value of TRECs changes the economics of the fuel stream for these systems by making it financially feasible to use additional sources of waste wood like the urban wood waste that is piling up in the greater Baltimore area. For example, the added value of TRECs makes it feasible for mills on the Eastern Shore to process and transport urban wood waste from Baltimore to be converted to energy or wood pellets. This wood includes trees removed or trimmed by tree care companies or that which results from storm damage. Another source of wood is the huge volume of wooden pallets that are beyond their useful life. Without the added value of TRECs, this wood remains unavailable and ultimately finds its way into landfills.

This is an important piece of clarifying legislation that will pave the way for more efficient and economical uses for waste wood. I urge the Committee's favorable report.