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March 7, 2024

Support: HB166 - Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard - Eligible Sources - Reclaim Renewable Energy Act

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Maryland LCV supports HB166 - Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard - Eligible Sources - Reclaim Renewable Energy Act and we thank Delegate Stewart for his consistent leadership on this issue. Removing municipal waste incineration from the Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard (RPS) is listed as a Legislative Action in the Maryland Climate Pollution Reduction Plan.

In 2011, Maryland added waste incineration to our state's RPS, making it eligible for the same state investments and renewable energy credits as truly renewable energy, such as wind and solar. Byproducts of waste incineration include particulate matter, heavy metals like lead and mercury, and dioxins. This burden of toxic air pollution is borne most heavily in the communities surrounding an incinerator, leading to significant negative health impacts and higher costs for already overburdened and underserved communities.

The [Maryland Climate Pollution Reduction Plan](#) written by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) was released on December 28, 2023. Among the policy recommendations included in the plan are revising the definitions of "qualifying resources in the RPS program to align with definitions of clean power resources under the forthcoming Clean Power Standard, **including the elimination of eligibility for municipal solid waste incineration.**"

In addition, the [Maryland Commission on Climate Change 2023 Annual Report](#) includes the following recommendation: "Remove municipal solid waste incineration as an eligible source in the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) due to the energy source's contributions to the state's GHG emissions, the General Assembly should adopt legislation to remove municipal solid waste incineration as an eligible generating source from the RPS."

While more details on a Clean Power Standard are forthcoming, we have the opportunity now to implement a key piece of this recommendation by removing municipal solid waste incineration from the RPS definition. This would make the credits and investments available for truly renewable energy and in particular has the potential to support solar energy deployment to meet the RPS carve out of 14.5% solar by 2030.

Maryland LCV urges a favorable report on this important bill.