



**Testimony Supporting HB0166
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Thursday, March 7 2024**

Position: FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sonia Demiray, I am a resident of Frederick County, the founder of the Climate Communications Coalition, a member of MAJC, and several other coalitions that are active across Maryland.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak. I am here to support finally cleaning up the Renewable Portfolio Standard (“RPS”) and remove waste to energy from the list of sources that qualify for RPS subsidies, as stated in HB0166. This program is intended to accelerate clean energy (solar, wind, and geothermal) to fight climate change and ensure clean air for all. Letting trash incineration take up space in this program holds Maryland back from accomplishing these vital goals.

For over seven years, Frederick County residents fought hard and finally, in 2014, defeated the plans for a local waste-to-energy incinerator. We understood that such a facility pollutes the climate, harms our health, is expensive, and has a punishing effect on the communities that surround it. While activists were successful in halting a local incinerator, Frederick County citizens are still subsidizing this dirty energy because the subsidies paid to the polluters are hidden in everyone’s utility bills. Most people don’t know that they are –and would not agree to subsidize the three dirty incinerators located in Baltimore City, Montgomery County, and Lorton, Virginia – at the cost of \$51 MM over the last 3 years alone. Almost \$22 MM of this went out of state when these funds are intended to reduce climate impacting carbon emissions and increase the availability of clean energy sources in Maryland!

It is time to clean up the RPS: we need to get to zero emissions to halt the climate and extinction crises, protect all of our communities, and stop the unfair and unwarranted hidden taxation on Frederick County Citizens -and all Marylanders!- by passing the Reclaim Renewable Energy Act of 2024. Thank you.

###