



PROGRESSIVE MARYLAND

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Testimony on Maryland House Bill 166 Reclaim Renewable Energy Act

TO: Chair C.T. Wilson, Vice Chair Brian M. Crosby, and members of the committee
FROM: Michael Blain
DATE: March 7, 2024
POSITION: Favorable

Dear Members of the Economic Matters Committee,

As a concerned resident of Takoma Park in District 47B and a member of the Progressive Maryland Environmental Justice Task Force, I submit this written testimony in strong support of HB0166, the Reclaim Renewable Energy Act. I am also a videographer and small business owner, and a Maryland ratepayer.

I am staunchly opposed to subsidizing dirty energy such as trash incineration with my utility fees.

Currently, Maryland includes trash incineration in its Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard (RPS), inaccurately labeling incineration as a “renewable” energy source. Like George Orwell’s infamous “War is peace” from his book *1984*, this is truly a false and deceptive labeling of reality. Trash incineration is **not** renewable energy and, in fact, burning trash produces serious environmental and public health risks.

According to a peer-reviewed study by Neil Tangri, published in the journal *PLOS Climate* in June 2023, “Incinerators emit more greenhouse gas emissions per unit of electricity than any other power source.” They also emit highly reactive and poisonous nitrogen oxide (NO_x) and sulfur dioxide (SO₂) gasses, as well as heavy metal pollutants such as mercury and lead that increase rates of cancer, asthma, and other respiratory and neurological illnesses in nearby communities.

To make matters worse, in recent years Maryland has increased the amount of money it spends on subsidizing trash incineration, due to the market-based structure of our state’s renewable portfolio standards (RPS). Total subsidies to trash ballooned from \$11.5 million in 2020 to \$24.7 million in 2022. This wastes more taxpayer money that would be better spent supporting actual renewable energy sources. As members of the Economic Matters Committee, I hope you share my outrage that major companies such as BRESKO, which poison people and undermine our climate goals, receive any portion of the limited RPS monies that we desperately need to address climate change and reduce air pollution.

I ask you to redirect our state’s resources toward truly renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and geothermal. Please vote in support of HB0166 and demonstrate Maryland’s commitment to clean energy, environmental justice and a healthy future for our state.

Best,

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