



Date: March 2, 2024

Committee: House Economic Matters Committee

Testimony on: HB166, the Reclaim Renewable Energy Act

Position: Support: HB166

Dear Chair Wilson and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Maryland Ornithological Society (MOS), I am writing to express our strong support for HB166, the Reclaim Renewable Energy Act. Our support is based on the following three factors.

1. Pollution

Trash incineration is a very polluting way of generating electric power. A 2023 study in PLOS Climate¹ concluded that this method released significantly more greenhouse gases per unit of electric power than any other method. The three incineration plants subsidized by Maryland's RPS released 2,500,000 tons of CO₂ in 2020. In addition, trash incineration releases lead and mercury. By contrast solar and wind energy do not release any greenhouse gases or the two aforementioned heavy metals. The funds currently subsidizing the incineration method should be diverted to projects which use such clean energy methods.

2. Maryland in Supporting a Virginia Facility

More money (\$11,700,000) goes to the Covanta facility in Virginia, than to either of the two Maryland facilities (\$4,200,000 to BRESKO in Baltimore and \$8,700,000 to the Dickerson facility in Montgomery County). Maryland taxpayers are subsidizing Virginia!

3. Higher Incinerator Subsidies but Power Output Unchanged

The subsidies for trash incineration via the Maryland RPS have doubled from \$11.5 million in 2020 to \$24.7 million in 2023, but the amount of electricity generated has remained the same. So Maryland is getting much less value for its money, while the incinerators' income has doubled. Maryland taxpayers should no longer be saddled with this commitment.

MOS asks that the Education, Energy and Environment Committee give a favorable report on HB166

MOS is a Maryland-based volunteer organization, founded in 1945, and now with some 2000 members, in 15 chapters throughout the state. MOS is devoted to the study, conservation and enjoyment of birds that spend at least part of their lives in Maryland.

Sincerely,



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¹PLOS Climate 2023. At:

<https://journals.plos.org/climate/article?id=10.1371/journal.pclm.0000100>