

Agenda Item #2B
November 28, 2017
ACTION

Resolution No.: _____
Introduced: October 17, 2017
Adopted: _____

**COUNTY COUNCIL
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

Lead Sponsor: Council President Berliner
Co-Sponsor: Councilmember Elrich

SUBJECT: Support for Increasing Maryland's Renewable Energy Goal to 50% by 2030

Background

1. Maryland's Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) law is a tool intended to incentivize new and clean sources of renewable energy that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other hazardous air and water pollution.
2. The RPS, enacted in May 2004 and revised numerous times since, requires electricity suppliers in the state to procure a minimum portion of their electric retail sales by eligible renewable energy sources. In February 2017, state lawmakers overrode Governor Larry Hogan's veto to enact H.B. 1106, which increased the state's RPS to 25% by 2020.
3. Electricity production accounted for 29 percent of 2015 greenhouse gas emissions in the United States, the largest of any economic sector.
4. Maryland is a coastal state with more than 3,000 miles of tidal shoreline, thus making it one of the most vulnerable states in the United States to sea level rise caused by greenhouse gas emissions that fuel climate change. Climate change will cause more severe storms, increased flooding, more extreme heat and droughts, and other detrimental impacts.
5. California and New York have laws in place requiring a 50% RPS by 2030, while Washington, D.C. must meet that standard by 2032, and Oregon must meet that standard by 2040. Hawaii has enacted legislation requiring a 100% RPS by 2045.

6. Increasing Maryland's RPS to 50% would reduce 8.1 million metric tons of CO2 annually, which is the equivalent of taking 1.7 million cars off the road each year.
7. Fossil-fuel based energy emits pollution that creates a public health crisis. Increasing Maryland's RPS to 50% by 2030 would improve the air in our region, preventing up to 290 premature deaths and more than 3,000 asthma attacks per year.
8. Montgomery County has been a national leader in responding to the challenge of climate change and the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in favor of renewable energy sources.
9. In 2004, Montgomery County began procuring electricity from renewable sources. In 2016, the County began purchasing 100% of its electricity supply from renewable sources and is also purchasing additional carbon offsets for building fuel oil and natural gas use. Since 2004, Montgomery County has led a coalition of county agencies and municipalities to purchase electricity supply generated from wind energy. The County-led purchasing group currently ranks 4th among local governments and 15th among all national clean energy purchasers as tracked by the EPA's Green Power Partnership.
10. Maryland has more than 170 solar companies and more than 5,400 solar jobs while the wind energy industry has brought more than \$380 million in private investment into the state's economy. Increasing Maryland's RPS to 50% by 2030 would enable workforce development programs to train those across the economic spectrum for good-paying careers in the renewable energy industry and related economic sectors while increasing the state's gross domestic product as a result of the construction of new Maryland-based renewable energy projects.
11. Trash incineration inclusion as a Tier 1 renewable energy source in the current RPS law displaces cleaner renewable energy such as solar and wind.

Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following resolution:

The Council declares its support for the General Assembly of Maryland to:

1. Increase Maryland's RPS law for electricity to 50% renewable energy by 2030;
2. invest in clean-energy workforce development while targeting economically distressed communities and individuals who have historically experienced barriers to employment;

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3. increase funding for investment capital and loans to help minority-, woman-, and veteran-owned businesses enter and grow within the renewable energy industry; and
4. phase out incentives for the incineration of trash under Maryland's RPS law for cleaner renewable sources.

This is a correct copy of Council action.

Linda M. Lauer, Clerk of the Council