

# Taking Out the Trash in the Renewable Portfolio Standard

Support House Bill 961, Senate Bill 548, and Senate Bill 516

## Maryland and Incineration

The BRESKO facility in Baltimore operated for decades before it was added to the Renewable Portfolio Standard:



2019 The year we pass the Clean Energy Jobs Act

2011 Trash incineration added to the RPS

2004 Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) created

1985 BRESKO built in Baltimore

Baltimoreans know that the waste incinerator operated by Wheelabrator's Baltimore Refuse Energy Systems Co. (BRESKO) is a big polluter. Thirty-six percent of all industrial air pollution in Baltimore comes from BRESKO. Baltimore has a signed contract with the BRESKO facility, and that agreement explicitly does not include the revenue from Renewable Energy Credits (REC).

In Montgomery County, the Dickerson Generating Station is the largest source of air emissions in the county, even more than a coal-fired power plant.

Using dirty energy sources contributes to climate change, hinders our economy, and harms the health of Marylanders—especially vulnerable populations such as the elderly, children, low-income communities and communities of color.

Removing trash incineration as a Tier 1 “renewable energy” source would remove the unearned benefit of state dollars being used to subsidize dirty energy. Instead, these subsidies should be used for only truly clean sources like wind power and solar power.

## RECs and the RPS

Removing waste incineration from the Renewable Portfolio Standard will not affect the contract between Baltimore and BRESKO in any way. The loss of revenue from selling Renewable Energy Credits will not be borne by Baltimore City ratepayers. The loss of revenue is expected to be less than one million dollars a year in the long term, a small fraction of BRESKO's operating costs.

Revenue from REC sales helps to reduce Montgomery County's Solid Waste Services budget. However, far more significant changes in recent years—namely the elimination of the incinerator's debt service—have significantly lowered the program's budget by more than the value of RECs.

As a result, even if waste incineration facilities were phased out of the RPS starting in 2020, waste incineration program costs in the county will

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still be 30% lower than they have been historically. Montgomery County residents will still be paying 30% less than they did for waste disposal even if subsidies are removed, because the county will no longer pay a debt service for the facility.

Passing the Clean Energy Jobs Act would not shut down incinerators. Incineration facilities like BRESKO in Baltimore and the Dickerson incinerator in Montgomery County were able to operate in Maryland for decades before its addition into the RPS, and they would continue operating even without the RPS subsidies. Rather, this bill would remove unfair financial incentives that allow polluting sources to continue to operate unchecked, leveling the playing field for cleaner energy sources to thrive.

### **Three Ways to Take Out the Trash in Maryland's Clean Energy Policy**

- Pass House Bill 961, which would remove incineration from the Renewable Portfolio Standard.
- Pass Senate Bill 548, which would remove incineration from the Renewable Portfolio Standard.
- Pass Senate Bill 516, the "Clean Energy Jobs Act," which would double the state's RPS while removing incineration as a qualifying resource.

A growing number of counties and cities across the country have switched to other means of waste removal, reuse and disposal. Some are achieving rates of 85% or higher for recycling and reuse, with a resultant sharp reduction in the burning or landfilling of waste.

Removing subsidies for waste to energy incineration would incentivize investments in wind energy in our state by freeing up 500MW of REC revenue that would go to waste incineration. A 500MW wind farm would create 400 permanent jobs and over 2,000 construction jobs in the areas near the wind farm. Maryland's General Assembly will be voting on the Clean Energy Jobs Act this legislative session. If passed, this bill will remove public subsidies for trash incinerators like BRESKO and direct more money toward the development of clean energy like wind and solar in our state. For Maryland, the Clean Energy Jobs Act is an important step toward a zero-waste future powered by 100% renewable energy.



For more information, please visit [ccanactionfund.org/maryland/fighting-toxic-incinerators/](https://ccanactionfund.org/maryland/fighting-toxic-incinerators/)