



## TRASH INCINERATION

Poor air quality from burning fossil fuels – like coal and oil – is bad for Marylanders. But burning trash for energy is even worse for our climate.

Compared to coal, burning trash releases **90% more** greenhouse gas emissions per unit of energy.<sup>1</sup> Maryland should remove trash incineration from our Renewable Portfolio Standard.

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Removing trash incineration from Maryland's renewable portfolio standard (RPS) will make our RPS cleaner and do more to incentivize solar, wind and other clean sources of renewable energy. A new proposal would ensure that waste incinerators could no longer sell renewable energy credits (RECs) to Maryland electricity suppliers, starting in 2019. These RECs help to prop up incineration and make it more profitable - by changing the law, we'll make sure that RECs are supporting truly clean energy. In addition to stifling new clean energy development, trash incineration also has significant negative impacts on climate change, air quality, and human health. As we work to **put Maryland on the path to 50% clean electricity by 2030 and 100% by 2040**, we must also remove harmful trash incineration.

### Burning trash harms our health

- Populations living close to trash incinerators have been found to be at least twice as likely to experience respiratory difficulties and health symptoms.<sup>2</sup>
- Trash incineration is a leading emitter of dioxins which cause an increased risk for all forms of cancer, with an especially large increased risk of breast cancer.<sup>3</sup>

### The toxic trash ash still goes to the landfill

- Burning trash does not eliminate it. Rather, it creates a toxic ash that still needs to be disposed of – AND it adds pollution to the air.
- Trash ash leaches toxins into the ground water many times faster than unburnt trash, similar to how running hot water over coffee beans will not make coffee but running hot water over coffee grounds will.
- Trash ash needs to be spread out to decrease the concentration of toxins, and as a result it actually takes up more landfill space than regular landfill disposal.

### Reducing air pollution will help Marylanders:

Maryland can be a national renewable energy leader with cleaner air, healthier people and a robust economy that provides well-paying jobs to a large and diverse renewable energy workforce. But we need our electricity generated from truly clean and renewable sources. In 2013, Maryland held the highest rate of deaths from air pollution in the United States – an estimated 113 deaths per year. Reducing trash incineration will mean fewer Marylanders will suffer from health problems caused by dirty air.



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK233619/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.cleanwateraction.org/features/incineration>

<sup>3</sup> <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/i.1600-0463.2001.tb05771.x/full>