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clean, renewable & local

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## Press Release

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## Legislator and Clean Energy Advocate to Champion Bill to Help Families Lower Heating Bills and Support Renewable Energy

ANNAPOLIS, Maryland – John Ackerly, President of the Alliance for Green Heat, joined Delegate Heather R. Mizeur (D-Montgomery) today to champion the Renewable Energy for All Act during a speech at the Maryland Clean Energy Center Legislative Reception. This common-sense measure will give low- and middle-income families the opportunity to heat their homes with renewable wood and wood pellet stoves.

In 2008, the legislature created grant programs to assist Marylanders with purchasing solar, wind, and geothermal energy systems. Unfortunately, the cost of these systems is out of reach for many Maryland families. The Renewable Energy for All Act would create a residential heating grant program that provides financial incentives for families to purchase the cleanest renewable wood and wood pellet stoves on the market today.

“Tens of thousands of low and middle-income Marylanders are already renewable energy leaders for reducing fossil fuels usage with wood and pellet stoves. Their leadership deserves our support,” said John Ackerly of the Alliance for Green Heat, a Maryland-based non-profit group.

This initiative would make Maryland a national leader in progressive renewable energy policy because it targets moderate-income residents with the highest heating bills. Modern, clean wood stoves cost a

fraction of what other renewable systems cost, and rural families that heat with the most expensive fuels – electricity, propane and oil – would be most likely to invest in these heating systems if they are made more affordable.

“Our current solar, wind and geothermal grant programs leave out a critical alternative energy source. Biomass heating options are key to assuring that all Maryland residents can participate in our renewable energy future,” Mizeur said.

Generating heat energy via wood and pellet products – known as biomass – is critical for renewable energy production. Wood/pellet stoves are three to ten times cheaper on the front end and generate as much or more carbon offsets as solar energy systems.

Expanding biomass incentives for Maryland would also generate green jobs and investment in the state’s economy. There are more than 150,000 private woodland owners in Maryland, many of whom sell their forest products for biomass energy generation and would benefit from this initiative. Governor O’Malley also announced last year that a Swedish bioenergy firm that produces pellets and biomass systems plans to base its US headquarters in Maryland.

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*The Alliance for Green Heat promotes biomass heat as a low-carbon, sustainable, local and affordable heating solution. The Alliance for Green Heat educates the public, the media and local, state and national policymakers about the potential of wood and pellet heat. The Alliance is a non-profit Maryland organization and is tax-exempt under section 501c3 of the tax code. For more information: [www.forgreenheat.org](http://www.forgreenheat.org).*