



**Committee: Ways & Means**

**Testimony on: HB150 - Public Schools-Grant Program to Reduce and Compost School Waste**

**Organization: MLC Climate Justice Wing**

**Submitting: Diana Younts, Co-Chair**

**Position: Favorable**

**Hearing Date: January 27, 2022**

Dear M. Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of HB150. The MLC Climate Justice Wing, a statewide coalition of over 50 grassroots and professional organizations, urges you to vote favorably on HB150. In Maryland almost a million tons of food waste is generated each year with only 15.5% of these scraps being diverted and the remainder is sent to the landfill or incinerators where it produces greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to climate change.

This bill goes towards solving that problem, while at the same time educating our children about the value of diverting food waste, by creating a competitive grant program to support school-based initiatives to prevent, reduce, and compost pre- and post-consumer food waste.

Initiatives can include:

- Education for students, staff, parents
- School infrastructure improvements
- Training and education on food waste reduction and composting for staff
- Training and education on Offer-Versus-Serve (OVS) in cafeterias
- Developing innovative systems to maximize opportunities to serve food that has already been prepared such as during after school activities or as take-home meals
- Contracts with commercial composters
- Purchase of On-site composting bins
- Other innovative techniques for managing school-based food waste

**Food Waste Diversion Feeds Hungry Children.** The primary goals of these initiatives is to feed hungry students and reduce plate waste before the food becomes inedible. Allowing edible food to go to waste creates missed opportunities in the school food value chain. 1 in 7 children in Maryland face hunger. Diverting otherwise wasted food to these children could be

an essential source of nutrition.

**Food Waste Suffocates in Landfills Creating Highly Potent Greenhouse Gas Emissions.**

Food waste in landfills produces methane, a greenhouse gas that is 86 x more potent than carbon dioxide in its first 20 years of release to the atmosphere. In contrast, compost is a valuable soil amendment that enhances soil fertility, soil water-holding capacity, soil organic matter, and soil structure. In addition to farming and gardens, compost can be utilized for managing stormwater run-off and preventing soil erosion (for example, via rain gardens, green roofs, bioswales, compost filter socks, and other "green infrastructure" projects.

For these reasons, we recommend a FAVORABLE report in committee.

**MLC Climate Justice Wing:**

Assateague Coastal Trust  
Maryland Legislative Coalition  
MD Campaign for Environmental Human Rights  
Chesapeake Climate Action Network  
WISE  
Frack Free Frostburg  
Mountain Maryland Movement  
  
Howard County Sierra Club  
Columbia Association Climate change and sustainability advisory committee  
HoCo Climate Action  
Howard County Indivisible  
CHEER  
Climate XChange - Maryland  
Mid-Atlantic Field Representative/  
National Parks Conservation Association  
350 Montgomery County  
Glen Echo Heights Mobilization  
The Climate Mobilization Montgomery County  
Montgomery County Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions  
Montgomery Countryside Alliance  
Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee  
Audubon Naturalist Society

Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church  
Environmental Justice Ministry  
Coalition For Smarter Growth  
DoTheMostGood Montgomery County  
MCPS Clean Energy Campaign  
MoCo DCC  
Potomac Conservancy  
Casa de Maryland  
Nuclear Information & Resource Service  
Clean Air Prince Georges  
Laurel Resist  
Greenbelt Climate Action Network  
Maryland League of Conservation Voters  
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland  
Concerned Citizens Against Industrial Cafos  
Wicomico NAACP  
Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility  
Chispa MD  
Climate Law & Policy Project  
Maryland Poor Peoples Campaign  
Labor for Sustainability  
The Nature Conservancy  
Clean Air Prince Georges  
350 Baltimore  
Maryland Environmental Health Network

Climate Stewards of Greater Annapolis  
Talbot Rising  
Aadat Shalom Climate Action  
Mid-Atlantic Earth Holders  
Climate Parents of Prince Georges  
Echotopia  
Maryland NAACP State Conference,  
Environmental Justice Committee