

**TESTIMONY TO THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES COMMITTEE ON
ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORTATION**

HB1070 – Solid Waste Disposal and Diversion and On-Farm Composting and Compost Use

Position: Support

March 2, 2022 Public Hearing

Brenda Platt, Director, Composting for Community Initiative, bplatt@ilsr.org

Institute for Local Self-Reliance 1200 18th Street, NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20036

Dear Chairman Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Brenda Platt and I direct the Composting for Community Initiative at the Institute for Local Self-Reliance, a national nonprofit that has been advancing waste diversion in Maryland for many years.

The Institute for Local Self-Reliance urges a favorable report on HB1070 – Solid Waste Disposal and Diversion and On-Farm Composting and Compost Use. This bill would establish significant funding for waste diversion projects including reduction, reuse, repair, composting, and recycling.

Maryland has made significant legislative progress in promoting recycling and composting. What is still lacking is funding for more programs and infrastructure, for everything from education and outreach to equipment for farmers.

We thank Delegate Regina T. Boyce for bringing this legislation forward to establish funds and grant programs to support a wide range of eligible projects throughout the state of Maryland.

Key reasons to support this bill include:

- Maryland's recycling level has stagnated and landfills are approaching capacity.
- Maryland's landfills are emitting four times more methane than previously estimated
- More programs focused on waste prevention, reuse, repair, and composting are needed in Maryland. For instance, only 18% of wasted food in Maryland is recycled, and a major report found that funding and incentives for food waste reduction and composting in Maryland are limited.¹
- Last year's HB264 requires large food generators to divert their food waste if capacity exists. This bill creates a tremendous opportunity to support farmers in creating some of that needed capacity and in using compost produced in the state. An influx of diverted

¹ Source: [NRDC Mid-Atlantic Food Waste Policy Gap Analysis and Inventory](#). August 2021. (P. 13)

food waste will require expanded processing capacity at all levels (including community-scale and farm composters).

- We have heard first-hand testimony from other states (including Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Wisconsin, Indiana, Minnesota, North Carolina and Iowa) who have a similar disposal surcharge to waste diversion mechanism in place. These states have shared that their programs have had positive impacts on their local communities, economies, and the environment. Wisconsin's \$7 per ton recycling fee, for instance, generates \$37 million to \$40 million per year in funding. Iowa created \$8 million in grant funding based on its surcharge applied to 3.9 million tons of waste. In North Carolina, during the peak of its program, it provided funding for 35 to 80 public and private projects per year. Even states such as Indiana with a small per ton fee have had tremendous impact. In 2020, its \$1.8 million in grant funding created 47 new jobs and diverted 85,000 in new material from disposal. (See presentations from five of these state agencies on our February 2022 webinar, [Funding Recycling Infrastructure via Disposal Surcharges](#).) Why not Maryland too?
- The grant programs will help Maryland businesses develop and expand their waste diversion efforts. It will also provide direct funding to counties to fund a wide range of projects from waste prevention to repair, composting, and countering illegal dumping.
- The proposed grant programs have a built-in funding mechanism. This is not an unfunded mandate on the state.

Sincerely,



Brenda Platt
Director, Composting for Community Project
Institute for Local Self Reliance