

## **HB0150 - Public Schools - Grant Program to Reduce and Compost School Waste**

**Date: January 27, 2022**

**Committee: House Ways and Means Committee**

**Position: Favorable**

**Victoria Venable, Maryland Director**

**Chesapeake Climate Action Network Action Fund**

On behalf of the Chesapeake Climate Action Network Action Fund, I urge a favorable report from the committee on **HB0150 - Public Schools - Grant Program to Reduce and Compost School Waste**. As we make efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Maryland, the reduction of waste in our food system will be crucial.

The CCAN Action Fund is the advocacy arm of Chesapeake Climate Action Network, a grassroots organization dedicated exclusively to fighting for bold and just solutions to climate change in the Chesapeake region of Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, DC. We are troubled by [reports](#) estimating that landfills in Maryland release about 51,500 tons of methane and 500,000 tons of carbon dioxide annually, significantly contributing to the warming of our planet.<sup>1</sup> It is clear that part of our greenhouse gas reduction plan must include efforts to reduce food waste and divert organic materials from landfills and incinerators.

HB0150 supports efforts to reduce food waste and encourage composting by creating competitive grant programs to support school-based initiatives, including:

- Training and educational opportunities for students, staff, parents and the community
- School infrastructure improvements
- Contracts with commercial composters
- On-site composting bins

Nationally, schools produce approximately 530,000 tons of food waste annually.<sup>2</sup> Increasing composting opportunities at schools will not only help divert this large

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<sup>1</sup> <https://environmentalintegrity.org/reports/greenhouse-gas-emissions-from-marylands-landfills/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.worldwildlife.org/stories/food-waste-warriors>

quantity of food waste from landfills but will also help educate communities, particularly children and their families, about the importance of composting

This bill is particularly important because Maryland is falling behind national efforts to reduce food waste. In 2019, only 15.5% of the nearly 1,000,000 tons of food waste generated was recycled or composted - sending the rest to landfills and incinerators. If we are going to meaningfully reduce our emissions, we must address the lifecycle of our food and the manner in which we handle our waste.

Thank you for your consideration of HB0150. For all the reasons stated above, we urge a favorable vote from the committee.



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