

**Testimony of Andrew Hinz for
HB0150 - Public Schools – Grant Program to Reduce and Compost School Waste**

Ways and Means Committee Members,

As a grandparent, parent, and lifelong Maryland taxpayer I am writing to express my support for HB0150, sponsored by Delegate Charkoudian, which will create a grant program to support schools in developing programs to prevent, reduce, and compost food waste.

Our children are losing hope. Active participation in sustaining our habitation of the planet is strong medicine.

- Over 25% of the overall food supply at the retail and consumer level goes uneaten and wasted.
- In September 2015, The U.S. set a national goal to reduce food waste by 50% by the year 2030. However, in Maryland almost a million tons of food waste is generated each year with only 15.5% of these scraps being diverted
- Composting provides a market for local business: we can responsibly dispose of our waste and generate a usable product on the other end.
- Compost sequesters carbon and rebuilds the microbiome when added to soils, providing resiliency benefits and reducing the need for fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides.
- As well as composting, food waste diversion means saving edible food from the trash and getting it into the hands of people who need it. 1 in 7 children in Maryland face hunger, and developing more efficient, less wasteful food programs can get usable food into their hands.
- Food waste suffocates in landfills creating highly potent greenhouse gases such as methane. In contrast, when converted into compost, food waste can sequester carbon in soils.
- 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 all of these reasons and many more, please support SB 124 and support a transition toward composting in Maryland.

Thank you.

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