



## **HB150 - Public Schools - Grant Program to Reduce and Compost School Waste**

**Testimony before**

**House Ways and Means Committee**

**January 27, 2022**

**Position: Favorable**

Madame Chair, Mr. Vice Chair and members of the committee, my name is Elizabeth Fixsen, and I represent the 750+ members of Indivisible Howard County. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We are providing written testimony today in ***support of HB150***, to establish a grant program to reduce and compost waste in Maryland schools. We appreciate the leadership of Del. Charkoudian and Del. Solomon in sponsoring this bill.

This bill will establish grants to be awarded to county boards of education and public schools to develop and implement programs for reducing food waste and to establish composting of pre- and post-consumer waste. The bill will require the Maryland Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education to review grant applications and select recipients to be awarded grants by the State Department of Education.

This bill will help Maryland get on track to meet the U.S. national goal to reduce food waste by 50% by the year 2030. 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 being sent to the landfill or incinerators where it produces greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to climate change. When converted into compost, food waste can sequester carbon in soils. Compost also enhances soil fertility, soil water-holding capacity, soil organic matter, and soil structure.

Among other things, the program will educate students, staff, and parents on the connection between food waste, climate, environment, and hunger. Composting is an activity that can be integrated into school curriculum, providing hands-on learning opportunities in science, math, and other disciplines, and enabling students to contribute to environmental improvement.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

**We respectfully urge a favorable report.**

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