

KATIE FRY HESTER
Legislative District 9
Howard and Montgomery Counties

Education, Energy, and
Environment Committee

Chair, Joint Committee on
Cybersecurity, Information Technology
and Biotechnology



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of SB56: Food Waste and Solid Waste Reduction

February 5, 2024

Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

Thank you for considering Senate Bill 56, which will provide resources to support the reduction, reuse, and recycling of our most critical waste streams to align with our recycling and carbon reduction goals.

Despite significant progress in passing composting legislation, Maryland has work to do to reach the national goal of a 50% recycling rate by 2030. In 2019, Maryland generated 1.86 million tons of compostable materials and 927,926 tons of food waste, with only 15.5% recycled.¹ As food waste accounts for significant methane from landfills, which is 28 times more detrimental than carbon dioxide, its reduction is important to achieve our climate goals.

This legislation creates the Reduce, Recycle, Remanufacture Fund to support various programs and initiatives focused on reducing food and solid waste, promoting composting and compost use, and developing methods for upcycling and remanufacturing materials. The fund can be capitalized with federal or private funds, philanthropic funds, the state operating budget, or through a solid waste disposal surcharge or tipping fee, which this legislation enables. Furthermore, the fund will enable Maryland to leverage funds from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act provided to states working to reduce food waste and loss.²

The Reduce, Recycle, Remanufacture Fund is then used for four key programs:

- The On-Farm Organic Diversion and Composting Grant Program provides grants for on-farm composting, compost use, food waste prevention, and food rescue projects.

¹ <https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/land/RecyclingandOperationsprogram/Pages/FoodScraps.aspx#Introduction>

²

https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2023-12/draft_national_strategy_for_reducing_food_loss_and_waste_and_recycling-organics.pdf

- The Grant Program to Reduce and Compost Food Waste develops and implements programs to measure and reduce food waste in public schools.
- The Food Waste Reduction and Diversion Grants Program develops infrastructure programs that reduce, reuse, and compost food waste.
- The Circular Economy Incentive Program stimulates upcycling and remanufacturing materials in the state that would otherwise be disposed of.

Senate Bill 56 represents a significant opportunity for Maryland to improve its waste management practices. This bill will close the gaps in our current waste diversion efforts by establishing local solid waste disposal surcharge programs and encouraging the reduction, reuse, and recycling of critical waste streams. Supporting this bill ensures Maryland's progress toward climate and recycling goals while preventing food waste during times of food insecurity for Marylanders.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report on SB56.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Katie Fry Hester".

Senator Katie Fry Hester
Howard and Montgomery Counties