



SB 0056

Food Waste and Solid Waste Reduction – Grants, Fund, and Surcharge

Testimony before Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

February 6, 2024

Position: FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, Sponsor Hester, and members of the committee, our names are Elizabeth Fixen and Barbara Matheson. We represent the 700+ 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 SB 0056.**

Maryland has 40 municipal waste landfills that produce methane and carbon dioxide. According to analysis by The Environmental Integrity Project (in consultation with the Maryland Department of the Environment) these 40 landfills release as much ghg pollution as about 975,000 passenger vehicles driving for one year or about four times the ghg emissions as the average Maryland coal-fired power plant.* This makes landfills the largest source of methane in the state, not the natural gas industry. In keeping with these facts, the Maryland Department of the Environment has ruled to cut methane emissions in landfills by 50%. The best way to reduce emissions from landfills is to reduce the amount of waste. Food is the most prevalent type of waste in Maryland landfills.

SB 0056 establishes the On-Farm Organic Diversion and Composting Grant Program. The purpose of the program is to award grants for infrastructure, programming and education focused on reducing, rescuing, and diverting food waste in the state. It provides assistance with the costs of developing and implementing composting and compost use, food waste prevention, and food rescue projects. The bill establishes a statewide solid waste disposal surcharge to be collected at disposal systems. The bill offers definitive solutions to the landfill ghg emissions problem.

The Maryland General Assembly's ambitious goal of 60% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions cannot be achieved without reducing food waste.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

We respectfully urge a favorable report.

Barbara Matheson and Elizabeth Fixen
Columbia, Maryland

*<https://www.environmentalintegrity.org/news/report-finds-mds-landfills-release4-x>