



Maryland Chapter
P.O. Box 278
Riverdale, MD 20738

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Testimony on: HB 1318: Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant Programs - Established

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: March 26, 2024

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club urges the Committee to support HB1318. Reducing waste and its disposal in landfills and incinerators is a key strategy for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and fighting climate change. However, success at diverting waste depends critically on having in place the infrastructure for expanded composting and recycling. It requires investments in infrastructure by local government, farmers, businesses, schools, nonprofits, and other local entities. HB1318 would generate the resources for these needed investments, while encouraging waste reduction.

The bill would create a Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund to finance three grant programs aimed at increasing waste diversion, recycling, and composting infrastructure, financed by a \$2 per ton surcharge on waste disposal. Solid waste surcharges ranging from 50 cents per ton to \$13 per ton at landfills, incinerators, and transfer stations have been funding recycling and waste reduction programs in Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin, as well as in local jurisdictions, since as early as the 1980's. These investments pay for themselves by reducing the amount of waste disposed. In Maryland, the grants could total more than \$14 million per year to support local governments, small businesses, non-profits, schools, farmers, and others in their efforts to advance food waste prevention, rescue, recycling, and composting projects and infrastructure.

Earlier versions of this bill were introduced in 2022 (HB1070) and 2023 (HB1139). The current bill incorporates changes based on discussions with the Maryland Department of Environment and the Department of Agriculture to ensure that the bill fills programmatic gaps and is implementable by the agencies.

Waste diversion investments are critical, and a waste disposal surcharge has proven to be a highly effective way of funding them across the country. The Sierra Club respectfully requests a favorable report on HB1318.

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Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America's oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 70,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has over 800,000 members and nearly four million supporters.