



Testimony in SUPPORT of HB1318
Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant Programs - Established

Senate - EEE

Jose Coronado-Flores , On Behalf of CASA

March 26th, 2024

Dear Honorable Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee,

CASA is pleased to offer **favorable testimony in support of HB1318**, because it is important legislation that will address the burden and quantity of food waste and solid waste. In our transition to an emissionless and sustainable state, it is critical to offer concrete solutions to reduce the amount of waste that ends up in landfills and trash incinerators. The working-class immigrant community that comprises our membership acknowledges the intertwined relationship between food and solid waste, emissions caused by the burning or landfilling of this waste, the associated emissions that result from transporting this waste, and the local burden of pollution in our communities.

Two components of this bill that I want to highlight are the Reuse, Recycle, and Remanufacture Fund and the Food Waste Reduction and Diversion Grants Program. These funds create grants to be procured by a variety of entities with the goal of funding projects that aim to reduce solid and food waste through community projects and education. The immigrant community, especially individuals who are coming from sustainable rural communities, wants to bring and engage in our best practices of zero-waste and composting here in our new communities.

We envision communities that compost their food waste and utilize the produced fertilizer for community gardens where carriers of sustainability wisdom lead and execute these projects. Furthermore, these grant programs also promote edible food waste diversion. According to the MD Food Bank, 1/3 Marylanders are food insecure, yet MDE reports that much of the over 1 million tons of food waste produced in 2021 could have been eaten. Food is a gift that some people struggle to obtain, yet many of us carelessly waste it.

For these reasons, CASA urges a favorable report.

Jose Coronado-Flores

Research and Policy Analyst

jcoronado@wearecasa.org, 240-393-7840