



Maryland Department of Agriculture

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Agriculture | Maryland's Leading
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Maryland Department of Agriculture

Legislative Comment

Date: March 26, 2024

BILL NUMBER: HB 1318

SHORT TITLE: Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant Programs - Established

MDA POSITION: LETTER OF SUPPORT

House Bill 1318 would establish the On-Farm Organics Diversion and Recycling Grant Program (“Program”) at the Department of Agriculture (MDA), a novel and innovative new initiative to further support Maryland farmers.

Maryland farmers are the original stewards of the land. As our farms look to diversify their operations while also supporting the state’s climate change goals, the diversion and recovery of food waste for proper composting will support the state in achieving its organic recycling goals. HB 1318 would establish a revenue source for farm and farm organizations and other stakeholders that may receive the materials, and advance the land application of compost materials that when properly managed and applied can increase carbon and soil health benefits.

HB 1318 allows MDA and MDE (MD Department of the Environment) to coordinate to administer the Program to provide the grant to a wide range of eligible persons, including:

- Traditional farmers and urban farmers
- Soil Conservation Districts
- Nonprofits, small businesses, and consortiums

Eligible projects are those that:

- Reduce the amount of wasted food generated
- Rescue edible food for redistribution
- Recover wasted food as animal feed (registered by MDA)

- Compost or recycle food residuals
- Transition from single-use food serviceware to durable/reusable food serviceware

In addition, as amended, House Bill 1318 would increase the estimated annual revenue that shall be used for administrative costs from “no more than 10%” to “no more than 25%”, which will assist the Departments in covering the additional administrative costs associated with implementing this program.

Thank you for your consideration. MDA welcomes additional discussion or questions from the Committee and requests a favorable report on HB 1318.

If you have additional questions, please contact Rachel Jones, Director of Government Relations, at Rachel.Jones2@maryland.gov or (410) 841-5886.