



## HB 1318

### Solid Waste Reduction Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant - Established

#### Testimony before the Environment and Transportation Committee

March 1, 2024

#### Position: FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair and Sponsor Boyce, and members of the committee, my name is Barbara Matheson. I 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 HB1318**. The purpose of this bill is to create a grant program to encourage on-farm solutions to wasted food. It establishes a funding source by charging fees at waste collection sites.

Food waste in landfills produces methane as it rots. About 6%-8% of all human-caused greenhouse gas (ghg) emissions could be reduced if we stop wasting food. Maryland has 40 municipal waste landfills that produce as much methane and carbon dioxide as about 975,000 passenger vehicles driving for one year. This makes landfills the largest source of methane in the state. 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.

The Waste Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Program would encourage the development and implementation of on-farm recycling, diversion, prevention, and reduction of wasted food. Specifically,

grants would be given for programs that do the following:

1. Reduce the amount of food generated,
2. Rescue edible food for purpose of redistribution,
3. Recover wasted food as animal feed,
4. Compost or recycle food residuals, including at-home, community, and on-farm, and
5. Transition from single use food service ware to durable and reusable food service ware.

Funding for the program would come from a surcharge on solid waste, proposed to be \$2 per ton. Waste collection sites would be responsible for submitting funds to the Department of Environment. Fees could be passed on to haulers and depositors.

The Maryland General Assembly ambitious goal of 60% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions cannot be achieved without tackling methane emissions from landfills. HB 1318 establishes a means to reduce solid waste at landfills.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

**We respectfully urge a favorable report.**

Barbara Matheson  
Columbia, Maryland