



Testimony On: HB1318 Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant Programs - Established
Committee: Environment and Transportation
Organization: Zero Waste Montgomery County
Submitting: Kelly Doordan
Position: Support
Date: March 1, 2024

Honorable Chair Korman, Vice-Chair Boyce, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this statement for the record. Zero Waste Montgomery County strongly SUPPORTS H.B. 1318 (Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant Programs).

Maryland has enacted laudable policies to reduce food waste and increase food recovery and recycling. A barrier to expanding these programs further has been a lack of dedicated funding for infrastructure to expand some of these programs. A \$2 per ton surcharge on waste disposed of at incinerators and landfills can help fill the identified need for investments in programs like cold storage for edible food recovery, infrastructure to expand on-farm composting, and other means to reduce wasted food all along the supply chain. This model for funding waste reduction projects has successfully been used in numerous states and local jurisdictions across the United States.

We know that reducing food waste benefits the climate by helping to avoid emissions from generation to disposal. This legislation helps us achieve climate benefits as well as significant social and economic co-benefits by reducing food waste through expanded infrastructure for edible food recovery and food security, as well as expanded opportunities for farmers to benefit from on-farm composting and compost use.

Expanding on-farm composting and the availability of high-quality compost supports agriculture and regenerative food systems in Maryland by building healthier soils to reduce the need for non-organic chemicals. Grants from this program will provide community benefits and a funding mechanism to help Maryland meet existing and new

goals for climate and zero waste while supporting food security, local farmers and agriculture, and a transition to durable and reusable food serviceware as part of a circular economy where materials can be maintained for as long as possible at their highest and best use rather than incinerated or landfilled or contaminated during processing.

Please approve HB 1318 to provide a mechanism to support zero waste, edible food recovery, Maryland farmers, and climate progress.