



**HB1318: Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant Programs - Established**  
**House Environment and Transportation Committee**  
**March 1, 2024**

Position: Favorable

Dear Chairman Korman and Members of the Committee,

Clean Water Action urges a favorable report on HB1318.

Maryland has commendable goals to reduce food waste and increase organic recycling. These efforts have significant co-benefits, improving food security for our residents, reducing greenhouse gas emissions from food rotting in landfills or burning in incinerators, and enables our farmers to diversify their income and reduce climate-polluting synthetic fertilizers. But we know that a major limiting factor for the expansion of infrastructure and programs reducing food waste and recycling organics is cost. Maryland has no dedicated funding streams for reducing and diverting food waste.

Maryland has made great strides reducing methane emissions from landfills, with more stringent methane regulations on landfills. Controlling the amount of methane from a landfill is great, but another effective strategy is to reduce the amount of methane-producing organic waste from entering the landfill in the first place.

Funding practices like cold storage for food rescue, on-farm compost, school grants, and upcycling through a modest \$2 per ton surcharge on waste disposed of at landfills and incinerators will provide tangible benefits and fund Maryland's goals and its unfunded programs, like school grants for food waste reduction and composting, which passed in 2022 but requires an annual appropriation.

SB56 funds food waste and organic diversion through three grant programs:

**Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Program (MDE)**

This fund will give MDE the ability to fund infrastructure, programs, and education that reduces, rescues, and diverts wasted food in the state. Examples of these could be rescuing food to feed people or animals, like expanding cold storage or connecting farmers with suitable food waste generators.

**On-Farm Organics Diversion and Composting Grant Program (MDA)**

While farmers may be interested in generating their own compost or using compost, the practice does require specialized equipment, training, and has other costs. These grants will help defray those start-up costs and enable MDA to better support farmers as they seek to incorporate compost and organic recycling into their operations.

**School Waste Reduction and Composting Program (MSDE)**

These grants were created in 2022 and funded in 2023. Applications for 2024 closed in early January and are currently under review. These grants fund school waste reduction (like share tables and food

donation) as well as composting. HB1318 sunsets the funding for this program in 2027, which is when the grant program sunsets. We suggest that language be amended to continue funding if the program is reauthorized.

Thank you and we urge a favorable report,

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