

**TESTIMONY TO THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES COMMITTEE ON
ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORTATION**

**HB 1318 – Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion
Fund and Grant Programs**

Position: Favorable

March 1, 2024 Public Hearing

Institute for Local Self-Reliance, 1200 18th Street, NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20036

Dear Members of the Committee,

The Institute for Local Self-Reliance and the undersigned 26 organizations support HB 1318 and encourage the committee to pass this bill. We thank Vice Chair Boyce for once again bringing this legislation forward to establish needed funds and grant programs to reduce, rescue, and divert wasted food from disposal in Maryland.

Maryland's stagnant recycling rate, high landfill emissions, shrinking landfill capacity, and increasing demand for alternatives to food waste disposal indicate the need for investment into wasted food diversion in a way that benefits local communities, NOW. Maryland has numerous policies supporting healthy soils, food waste recovery, organics recycling, and composting (e.g. HB 264 on Large Food Waste Generators in 2021, SB 124 on School Waste Reduction and Composting, and HB 1063 on the Maryland Healthy Soils Program) but funding for implementation and support remains a crucial obstacle to progress.

HB1318 establishes a funding mechanism via a nominal \$2/ton surcharge on final waste disposal to provide tangible support for developing of infrastructure, programs, education, and other support for wasted food diversion in Maryland through the (1) Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Program, the (2) On-Farm Organics Diversion and Recycling Grant Program, and (3) the existing School Waste Reduction and Composting Program.

This bill would not only fund projects and infrastructure to rescue food, recycle and compost organics, and reduce foodservice waste, but also the necessary education, technical assistance, labor, and wages to make projects effective. Priority funding is dedicated to projects that directly benefit local Maryland communities, particularly those overburdened and underserved, by addressing community needs, providing education, creating local green jobs, providing living wages, and preventing local environmental contamination.

Expansion of composting and organics recycling infrastructure and the availability of high-quality, non-contaminated compost is crucial to supporting Maryland farmers in building and maintaining healthy soils to increase soil organic matter, improve water and nutrient cycling, and grow healthy food, contributing to cleaner Maryland watersheds, increased resilience to extreme weather, and stronger Maryland food systems.

This model is successful in numerous other states (such as New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Iowa, Ohio, Indiana, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and North Carolina) and has had positive impacts on their local communities, economies, and the environment. States like New York and Rhode Island are moving to implement similar programs as well. We strongly believe this model will work successfully in Maryland.

A \$2/ton surcharge on waste disposed to keep organics out of landfills and incinerators, where harmful greenhouse gases are produced, and moving Maryland toward its goal of 60% emissions reductions by 2031 and net-zero in 2045, is a nominal and reasonable cost in comparison to the future costs of ‘business as usual’ that all Marylanders will have to bear if we do nothing.

We urge the Committee to support HB 1318.

Sincerely,



Sophia Jones
Policy Lead, Composting for Community
[Institute for Local Self-Reliance](#)

Signed-On Organizations:

Beaverdam Creek Watershed Watch Group
[Catoctin Conservation Club](#)
[Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist](#)
[Environmental Justice Ministry](#)
[Clean Water Action](#)
[Coker Composting & Consulting](#)
[Compostology](#)
Cub Scout Pack 436: Wolf Den
[Denali Water Solutions](#)
[DoTheMostGood](#)
[Envision Frederick County](#)
[Felt Board Lady](#)
[Gnatt Medical Associates](#)
[Go Green OC](#)

[HxH Architects](#)
[Lunch out of Landfills](#)
[Maryland-DC Compost Council](#)
[Maryland Legislative Coalition Climate Justice Wing](#)
[Montgomery County-Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions](#)
[Mountainside Education and Enrichment](#)
[National Aquarium](#)
Our Zero Waste Future, Inc.
[Porch View Farm LLC](#)
[Regenerative Solutions](#)
[Terra Solutions LLC](#)
[Zero Waste Montgomery County](#)