

Written Testimony in Support of HB1318 – Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant Programs

To: Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee

I am offering this testimony to urge the committee to support HB1318, and give it a favorable report.

HB1318 establishes a funding mechanism via a nominal \$2/ton surcharge on final waste disposal to provide needed support for developing infrastructure, programs, education, and other resources for wasted food diversion in Maryland through the:

- 1) Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Program
- 2) On-Farm Organics Diversion and Recycling Grant Program
- 3) Existing School Waste Reduction and Composting Program.

This legislation would establish needed funds and grant programs to support food waste reduction and diversion efforts in Maryland.

Maryland has numerous policies supporting food waste recovery, organics recycling, composting, and healthy soils already in place, but funding for implementation and support remains a significant obstacle to progress. **As a community volunteer active in food waste reduction efforts, I can testify first-hand to the great difficulty in finding funding and resources to establish organics recycling and composting programs in our communities. This bill will be a tremendous help in overcoming this obstacle.**

This legislation would provide funding for projects and infrastructure to recycle and compost organics, reduce foodservice waste, and support food rescue efforts. It also would provide funding for the needed education, technical assistance, labor, and wages to give these projects maximum effectiveness. Priority funding is dedicated to projects that directly benefit local Maryland communities, especially those that are overburdened and underserved, thereby addressing issues of environmental justice.

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. This, in turn, will lead to improved water and nutrient cycling, healthier food, and cleaner watersheds.

By keeping food waste out of landfills and incinerators, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions, this legislation also will help Maryland reach its emissions reduction goals.

All of this is doable with the infrastructure and resources that this bill will make possible. This is a win-win for the health of Maryland's citizens and our environment.

Please support HB1318 and give this legislation a favorable report. Thank you for considering my views.

Sincerely,

Tom Taylor
11-G Laurel Hill Road
Greenbelt, MD 20770
301-513-9524

