

February 28, 2024

The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee
Environment and Transportation
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: In Opposition to House Bill 163 and HB 1318

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

Gerber's Refuse is a Baltimore County-based refuse removal business that has been operating for more than 85 years. The company is against above the referenced bills which would create an On-Farm Organic Diversion and Composting Grant Program.

Our company and employees support greater sustainability in our industry, but this plan will make it more difficult and more expensive to provide services to our customers. Charging a \$2 fee for every ton of solid waste processed is a new cost of doing business for us. The fact the fee will change every two years based on the Consumer Price Index for this region means the cost will continue to go up. And since the Maryland Department of the Environment might also raise the surcharge, it's impossible to know just how much this is actually going to cost businesses like ours.

The proposal would allow individual counties to skip the state surcharge if they put their own surcharge in place. This could lead to a different operating cost for the same work in every county in Maryland. Who in our company is going to be able to track all this constantly changing information?

This kind of flexible surcharge model is the wrong way to promote on-farm composting and to reduce food waste. This proposal will make it a lot more expensive for waste management companies to operate. And since those costs will go up, households and businesses all over the state will end up paying more, which is tough when lots of families and businesses are already dealing with money challenges.

The surcharge plan will hit both public and private trash disposal systems the same way, making things harder for local governments that have trouble providing public services. This could lead to more trash being sent out of state, higher costs for collecting and moving trash, and more strain on the state's recycling centers.

Gerber's supports the idea of making waste management more sustainable, but we think above referenced bills would put too much financial pressure on waste management companies, local residents, and county governments.

Sincerely

Mike Gerber
President
William Gerber, Inc.