



**SB599: On-Farm Organics and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Programs - Established
House Environment and Transportation Committee
February 24, 2026**

Position: Favorable

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee,

Clean Water Action urges a favorable report on SB599.

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.

SB599 will establish grants that, when funded, will provide opportunities for small businesses, non-profits, and local governments to pursue policies and practices that divert food waste from the waste system through activities like food rescue (getting usable food to people), composting, and preventing the food waste in the beginning. This could be cold storage to improve the capacity of our food banks, share tables and refrigerators at schools so uneaten food can be offered to a hungry child, or equipment on a farm to help a farmer incorporate food scraps into their manure compost piles and create high quality fertilizer.

SB599 reflects HB42 which passed the House in 2025. The substantive change from the bill as introduced is, as amended, it does not include the \$2 surcharge on trash that would have created a dedicated funding stream for the grants. Instead, SB599 establishes the grant framework, so it is available as the budget allows.

Thank you and we urge a favorable report,

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