

Written Testimony in Favor of SB599 – On-Farm Organics and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Programs – Established

February 20, 2026

To: Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

I am submitting testimony in favor of SB599, On-Farm Organics and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Programs.

As a community volunteer very involved in composting programs, I have seen firsthand the need for increased composting infrastructure to meet Maryland's environmental sustainability goals. There is much community interest in composting, but that interest is frustrated by the lack of composting facilities and funding to implement new programs and composting facilities.

With sufficient composting infrastructure, Maryland could achieve great progress in reducing food waste, decreasing landfill emissions, and improving soil with the nutrient-rich compost that would be produced.

These grant programs would go a long way toward accomplishing these goals. It is important to pass this bill now, regardless of presently-available funding sources, as a step toward fully funding the grant programs. SB 599 will codify the grant programs and will facilitate effective allocation of funding once those sources are identified.

This legislation will advance momentum in Maryland for the state's already adopted policies that support organics recycling, food waste recovery, and healthy soils. It will offer a pathway and signify the state's commitment to funding for program infrastructure and implementation, the lack of which has been a significant obstacle to progress with these policies.

It will support Maryland's already adopted wasted food law, which requires large food residual generators—including schools, supermarkets, and food processing facilities—to separate and divert food residuals from landfills or incinerators if they generate at least one ton of food residuals per week and are located near an organic recycling facility. An increase in composting infrastructure would facilitate greater implementation of this law.

Passing this will bill will be an important step toward environmental, health, equity, economic, and food security benefits for all Marylanders.

Please give a favorable report to SB599.

Sincerely,

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