



HB0164 – State Buildings and State Highways – Collection and Disposal of Yard Waste

**Testimony before House Environment & Transportation Committee
February 4, 2026**

Position: Favorable

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Guyton, and members of the committee, my name is Virginia Smith, and I represent the 1600+ members of Indivisible Howard County. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We are providing written testimony today in **support of HB0164**, which prohibits the disposal of yard waste collected on State property in a single-use plastic container, and ensures that the yard waste will be composted or turned into mulch. We appreciate the leadership of Del. Lehman and her colleagues for sponsoring this important legislation.

Methane is a powerful greenhouse gas that is produced when bacteria decompose organic plant matter in landfills. This bill will effectively reduce methane coming from yard waste collected on state-owned property and landfilled. It enables composting the organic waste on State property without further handling. It is an easy win for the environment.

Plastic bags are a huge problem for the environment on so many levels, from its production as a derivative of crude oil and natural gas, to litter, to wildlife harm. There is extensive research that demonstrates that plastic breaks down into smaller and smaller pieces that are ending up in human bodies, and both the plastic pieces and the chemicals plastics are made from are doing known and unknown damage to the human body. This bill will reduce single use plastic and help keep a bit more plastic out of landfills.

Howard County has been prohibiting home owners from using single-use plastic bags for lawn debris for years. It makes yard waste compostable without further handling, and it eliminates the use of plastic bags for this one usage. This bill allows the State to catch up with the Counties in mandating that plastic bags aren't used for yard waste.

The members of Indivisible Howard County support such common-sense measures to reduce waste and clean up our environment. Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

We respectfully urge a favorable committee report.

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