

Chapter 363

(House Bill 817)

AN ACT concerning

Environment – Composting

FOR the purpose of requiring the Department of the Environment to maintain certain information on its Web site related to composting for certain purposes; requiring the Department, in consultation with the Department of Agriculture and the Maryland Environmental Service, to study certain matters related to composting and to make certain recommendations related to the promotion of composting, including certain information; requiring the Department, on or before a certain date, to report its findings and recommendations under the study to the General Assembly including a certain summary; and generally relating to composting.

BY adding to

Article – Environment

Section 9–1722

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2007 Replacement Volume and 2010 Supplement)

WHEREAS, Composting extends the life of landfills by diverting organic material from the landfills and providing a less costly alternative to conventional methods of treating contaminated soil; and

WHEREAS, Composting organic material that has been diverted from landfills reduces the formation of leachate and the production of methane in the landfills; and

WHEREAS, Composting filters pollutants in stormwater runoff, preventing the pollutants from reaching surface water resources; and

WHEREAS, Composting has been shown to prevent erosion and silting on embankments parallel to creeks, lakes, and rivers and to prevent erosion and turf loss on roadsides, hillsides, playing fields, and golf courses; and

WHEREAS, Composting reduces or eliminates the need for chemical fertilizers and promotes higher yields of agricultural crops; and

WHEREAS, The composting process degrades and in some cases completely eliminates wood preservatives, pesticides, and both chlorinated and nonchlorinated hydrocarbons in contaminated soils; and

WHEREAS, The average U.S. household generates 650 pounds of compostable material every year; and

WHEREAS, Individuals, businesses, and groups interested in composting or expanding a composting operation have expressed confusion about the current State laws and regulations governing these activities; and

WHEREAS, Better understanding of and communication about the laws and regulations governing composting may increase composting in the State; now, therefore,

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Environment

9–1722.

THE DEPARTMENT SHALL MAINTAIN INFORMATION ON ITS WEB SITE TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ABOUT COMPOSTING AND TO PROMOTE COMPOSTING IN THE STATE AS A PART OF THE DEPARTMENT’S EFFORTS TO ENCOURAGE WASTE DIVERSION.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That:

(a) The Department of the Environment, in consultation with the Department of Agriculture and the Maryland Environmental Service, shall:

(1) study composting in the State, including any laws or regulations governing composting by individuals or businesses, including businesses offering composting services; and

(2) make recommendations about how to promote composting in the State, including any necessary programmatic, legislative, or regulatory changes.

(b) On or before January 1, ~~2012~~ 2013, the Department of the Environment shall report its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly, in accordance with § 2–1246 of the State Government Article, including a summary of the laws and regulations governing composting.

SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2011.

Approved by the Governor, May 10, 2011.