



Greenbelt GreenTEAM



Greenbelt is a Sustainable Maryland Certified Community

Subject: Testimony in support of SB0737/HB1520 Sustainable Maryland Program Fund – Establishment

Date: February 26, 2020

My name is John Lippert. I've been the chair of the Greenbelt Green Team since the Sustainable Maryland Certified program inception when I participated in the program training with Greenbelt's Sustainability Coordinator.

The City of Greenbelt's City Council is proud of the city's long history of sustainability. We are, after all, a bicycle-and pedestrian-friendly planned community established under Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Administration. It's one thing, however, to want to proudly boast that we are a leader in sustainability (and believe me, our past mayors have done so quite vocally), it's quite another thing to actually devise, implement, and support sustainability efforts, projects, and programs, and have it instilled within the government mentality. But it's starting to happen.

Our Public Works Department has come around to supporting a number of our composting endeavors so that we can earn points toward SMC recertification. It has given considerable support to our Green Team's Zero Waste Circle subgroup. Our Organics Task Force, a part of the Green Team's Zero Waste subgroup, submitted to Public Works the results of a comprehensive survey highlighting composting operations in the Washington, DC metropolitan area, and various composting technologies and techniques. The report provided 11 recommendations, several of which Public Works is currently undertaking. Following the construction of a three-bin community compost system, Public Works is building two more. The Public Works electrician supplied access to electricity for a vermicomposting project we are doing with our co-operatively owned New Deal Café. After collaborating with College Park, Public Works will be building a community compost drop-off location modeled after College Park's. Moreover, working with University Park, we are looking for a nearby location suitable for establishing a neighborhood composting operation using an in-vessel composting process. At this month's Route 1 Corridor Sustainable Maryland summit, we asked all those Green Teams present for help in locating a piece of property for this operation.

After our Green Team's Electric Vehicle subgroup contacted the Electric Vehicle Institute to install public charging stations, Public Works took over and has been working with the Electric Vehicle Institute to install charging stations throughout the city, starting first with one at the municipal building.

The program has encouraged other staff and departments to step forward. For the past several years we have zero wasted Greenbelt's Christmas tree lighting ceremony. Our Performing Arts Coordinator with the City of Greenbelt Recreation Department has seen that all of the beverages are served in compostable cups and he and staff wrapped all the candy and cookies in special compostable cellophane that he procured. (This is a major effort that we never expected!) Zero waste volunteers staff the compost bins to educate the public that everything there can be composted. Public Works then delivers the materials for industrial composting.

Greenbelt and all other municipalities still have a lot more to do to be truly sustainable. The Sustainable Maryland Certified program has given us a structure to examine our progress and plan new pathways to sustainability, and has provided venues for Green Teams to get together and collaborate with neighboring communities on joint projects/programs. The program is helping to raise the bar and introduce us to new approaches and higher goals.

The specter of global climate change makes it ever more pressing that we press ahead expeditiously. I hope you will agree that the Sustainable Maryland Certified program is a valuable tool for Maryland municipalities. Please vote to approve permanent funding for this program. Thank you.