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February 19, 2020

State of Maryland General Assembly
Environment and Transportation Committee
Del. Kumar Barve, Chairperson
Room 251
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Support for HB0589 Organics Recycling & Waste Diversion—Food Residuals

Dear Chairperson Barve:

On behalf of the US Composting Council and its local chapter, the MD-DC Composting Committee, I am pleased to submit this letter of support for HB 0589, a bill that would require large generators of food residuals to reduce and recycle those residuals.

This legislation:

1. Requires large-scale food waste generators (2 tons per week) to source-separate food residuals if an organics recycling facility that has the capacity and is willing to accept food residuals exists within a 30 mile radius
2. Gives facilities flexibility for disposing of waste. Instead of, or in addition to, sending food residuals to organics recycling facilities, they may: reduce waste, donate servable food, manage residuals in a system installed onsite, or divert food waste for agricultural purposes.

The USEPA estimates 25% of the wastes generated in the United States are food residuals. These bills would benefit Maryland by encouraging the management of its resources within the state and region, as well as providing jobs in a growing sector. Food processors, institutions and other large-scale generators of food scraps – the law’s targets – want their food scraps to be rescued or otherwise beneficially used locally. Investment in and expansion of needed capacity to handle recycling of food scraps and other organics in Maryland would be spurred by this bill. Expanding composting and local compost use could support almost 1,400 new full-time jobs in Maryland, according to a 2013 study by the Institute for Local Self-Reliance. Expanding compost would support both new and existing compost facilities, but also supports Maryland businesses that use compost for soil erosion control, stormwater management, green infrastructure, and other purposes.

The US compost manufacturing industry is a growing sector that will be positively affected by the proposed regulation. Compost is a soil amendment that has a wide range of benefits, including improving soil health, protecting against water pollution, limiting drought impacts, and assisting in soil remediation. It is also increasingly recognized for its climate protection benefits as it helps soils

store carbon and reduce methane emissions from landfills. California has acknowledged this by establishing that composting facilities can receive carbon credits. This bill will encourage capacity to process these materials into valuable products. To establish a sound composting system it is important to have markets for the compost. HB0589 sends a clear signal to investors, existing operators and potential facility owners that if they build or expand, the feedstock will be there. Compost manufacturers need to be sure that an adequate and reliable supply of raw material is available to them before they commit to open their doors for business. This bill will stimulate investment in the growing composting sector.

Maryland has already adopted and implemented the USCC Model Compost Rule Template for its state compost regulations, so the state is prepared to regulate new capacity.

The US Composting Council is pleased to support the passage of HB 0589 and will be happy to work with friends and allies to assist in its passage and implementation.

Sincerely,



Frank Franciosi
Executive Director