



HB 589 – Solid Waste Management – Organics Recycling and Waste Diversion – Food Residuals
Environment and Transportation Committee
February 19, 2020
Position: Favorable

Delegate Charkoudian and distinguished members of this panel, my name is Joseph Richardson, I am a resident of Frederick County. I own Bar-T Holdings, a company that operates before and after school programs and summer camps. I am the founder of Mountainside Education and Enrichment, a non-profit that delivers environmental programs, one of those being Lunch out of Landfills.

Lunch out of Landfills began at Urbana High School in January 2018. Working with Elizabeth McCook, the Environmental Education teacher, and her students, we hired Key City Compost to haul the organics weekly to a facility in nearby Charlestown.

We achieved landfill diversion rates as high as 57% by removing organics and liquids from the waste stream while improving recycling.

The Rotary Club provided funding to maintain the program at Urbana High School and to start a compost program at Urbana/Sugarloaf Elementary in January of 2019. The results were staggering.

Of the 19,002 pounds of trash generated in the cafeteria from January 12th to June 3rd 2019, 9,735 pounds was food, 4,150 pounds was liquids, and 2,115 pounds was uncontaminated recyclables. This left just 2,994 pounds of landfill designated waste. An 84.2% reduction.

Students weighed and recorded the data each day. With the data from both schools I was able to secure \$10,000 of funding from Dr. Alban, Superintendent of Frederick County Public School and \$20,000 of funding from Frederick area Rotary Clubs.



Lunch out of Landfills is currently operating in fourteen Frederick County Schools and has assisted in the launch of three programs in Montgomery County Elementary Schools and just last week added Rocky Hill Middle School.

The data is consistent. 70% to 86% diversion rates are achieved at the elementary schools. Organics diverted from schools will average between five and ten tons per year.

In addition, Lunch out of Landfills encourages parents to make portion appropriate lunches, reduce single use plastics, create an uncontaminated recycling stream, promote share tables, and to recover uneaten food.

All that is required is to teach students to look at trash as a resource and to change behaviors. They are responding.

This inspired and forward-thinking bill will impact businesses and significant organic waste producers within a thirty-mile radius of a compost facility. What is lacking in this state right now is capacity. Prince George's county has the model facility, which other counties and cities must replicate.

Lunch out of Landfills has harnessed the energy of 10,000 environmental advocates ages 5 to 18. Presently, Frederick and Montgomery County are working to expand to more schools. Prince George's and Kent County are working to adopt pilot programs. Next year the number of those voices will increase threefold. School systems in this state will adopt waste diversion programs willingly or reluctantly because their students will demand it.

They will demand compost be adopted not only in schools, but also in their homes, in restaurants, in grocery stores, and in institutions. Lunch out of Landfills is creating a generation of environmental solutionists whose voices are being merged with substantive and measurable action with purpose.

Businesses and institutions that will not be impacted initially by this legislation will soon wish they were.



The 10,000 voices of students may yet be inaudible among the millions of Maryland residents. Make no mistake, students understand the causes of climate change and are demanding action and their numbers are growing.

The time to act is now. You are considering if this legislation should pass - change should to must.