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House Bill 589

To: Members of the House Environmental and Transportation Committee

From: Nicholas Blendy, Deputy Director of Government Relations

Re: House Bill 589 – Solid Waste Management – Organics Recycling & Waste Diversion – Food Residuals

Chairman Barve, Vice-Chairman Stein and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration **supports** House Bill 589.

House Bill 589 would require a certain person that generates food residuals to separate the food residuals from other solid waste and ensure that the food residuals are diverted from final disposal in a refuse disposal system in a certain manner. The requirements are applied to certain persons that generate certain amounts of food residuals.

House Bill 589 is addressing the prevalence of food residuals found in waste streams that could be separated and diverted to useful purposes rather than just discarding for final disposal. The legislation creates three categories of generators of food residuals by the amount of weekly tonnages, and applies a deadline by which these generators are to separate food residuals from other solid waste and ensure the residuals are diverted from final disposal in one or more of the following ways: reducing the amount of food residuals generated; donating servable food; managing the residuals in an onsite system; providing for collecting and transporting the food residuals for agricultural use, including animal feed; and collecting and transporting the residuals for processing in an organics recycling facility.

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These provisions only apply if the generator is within a 30-mile radius of an organics recycling facility that has the capacity to accept and process their food residuals and is willing to accept them for recycling. On or before December 1, 2021, and every December 1st thereafter, the Maryland Department of the Environment is required to report to the General Assembly on the implementation of these provisions, including the impacts on waste diversion in the State.

The City of Baltimore conducted two waste sorts in 2019 as part of a comprehensive solid waste operational study and found that between 15% (summer sort) and 25.5% (winter sort) of residential trash collected by its Solid Waste sanitation forces is comprised of food residuals. In addition, the study estimated that approximately 65,000 tons/year of food residuals waste are collected commercially. Current large scale composting and other similar waste diversion facilities in the region are at or near capacity now. Separating food residuals from the commercially-collected waste stream through the phased implementation schedule provided in HB 589 could help build the business case for new or expanded waste diversion facilities by providing a more predictable and measureable market demand. Removing food residuals as well as other organics from the waste stream will help Baltimore and other localities meet their waste reduction goals.

We respectfully request a **favorable** report on House Bill 589.