

Testimony on SB0483
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Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB0483. I am the CEO of Compost Crew, a Maryland based food scrap recycling company.

Compost Crew has almost 10 years of experience collecting and composting food scraps. We currently serve thousands of households in the State of Maryland. A growing number of businesses use our services, including apartment buildings, restaurants, grocery stores and senior living communities. These businesses have signed up with us to help reduce their trash bills, and because they recognize the importance of diverting their food waste from landfills, where it would create methane, a potent greenhouse gas. We have been serving some of these businesses for many years, and have learned a lot about how to implement organics recycling successfully, as have a number of other organics recycling companies in the state.

Compost Crew is proud to have built a healthy and growing business. We've created over 25 new, permanent jobs in the last two years, and we are just one business in this fast growing industry. In 2020, we diverted five million pounds of food and organic waste to area compost facilities. However, food waste still represents over 20% of the waste stream. Voluntary participation in organics recycling programs will not move the needle fast enough to address the challenge we face as a state and as a nation.

In order for organics recycling to grow quickly in Maryland a mandate for large-scale food waste producers is one important part of the recipe for success. There are other parts of that recipe, and this bill tasks the Department of Commerce to explore financial incentives for composting and the Department of the Environment to identify locations to develop additional organics recycling facilities. Those sections of the bill are essential ingredients.

The timeline proposed in the bill gives businesses sufficient lead time to take steps to reduce their food waste and plan for and implement the necessary changes to source-separate their food residuals. We can implement composting programs that reduce trash bills for businesses in as little as a couple weeks.

We urge the delegates to support SB0483. Its balanced approach will incent more participation in organics recycling which will in turn extend the life of our landfills, boost the health of our local soils, and help the state do our part to combat climate change.