



Committee: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Testimony on: SB483 - "Solid Waste Management--Organics Waste Management and Waste Diversion--Food Residuals"

Organization: Greenbelt Climate Action Network

Person Submitting: Lore Rosenthal, Program Coordinator

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: February 10, 2021

Dear Mr. Chairman and Committee Members,

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of SB483.

Greenbelt Climate Action Network is a local organization, which educates residents about climate change, "systemic" solutions, how they can change their behaviors to be more sustainable, and take personal, local, systemic, and political action.

We urge you to vote favorably for SB483. The bill will serve to reduce methane and other greenhouse gasses and toxic pollutants emitted by landfills, incinerators, and agriculture; reduce run off to our waterways and the Chesapeake Bay; rebuild healthy soils; create jobs; and divert otherwise wasted food to food pantries.

Bill Requirements: This Organics Recycling bill would require entities that produce more than two tons of food waste per week AND that are within 30 miles of a compost or other food recovery facility to compost or otherwise divert this material from the waste stream through donations, reduction, or anaerobic digestion. In 2024, the requirement would apply to entities that produce more than one ton of food waste per week.

Food Donations: SB483 also allows food donation as a waste reduction strategy. When similar legislation passed in Vermont, food donation increased by at least 30%, taking usable food and getting it into the hands of food banks and hungry people.

More than 25% food supply wasted: Food waste is a persistent problem, with more than 25% of the overall food supply at the retail and consumer level going uneaten and wasted. Large generators of food waste produce most of the organic waste in the state. This bill addresses that group of waste generators.

Stimulates economic development: Moreover, the Organics Recycling and Waste Diversion bill will stimulate investment in and expansion of new facilities, to handle recycling of food waste as well as encourage economic development by bringing businesses to Maryland.

Creates jobs: It will help to accomplish these goals while at the same time supporting local food systems and creating green jobs in Maryland. 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, and also support Maryland businesses that use compost for soil erosion control, stormwater management, green infrastructure, and other purposes.

Reduces greenhouse gas emissions: Diversion of food waste from landfills and incinerators will reduce landfill methane emissions and toxic emissions from incinerators. Landfills account for 17% of Maryland's methane emissions, a greenhouse gas that is 86 times more potent than CO₂ in its first 20 years after emission.

According to the EPA, food scraps and food waste are the largest portion of waste sent by municipalities to landfills and incinerators, accounting for as much as 51 percent of waste. According to the 2017 book *"Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming,"* reducing food waste offers solutions to the number three cause of global warming.

Builds Healthy Soils & Reduces Runoff: Food scraps and waste are an excellent source of material for making compost and adding compost to our soils results in building healthy soils. Healthy soils and the plants that grow in them, hold carbon in the ground, sequestering carbon.

For all these reasons (food recovery, food waste, economic development, good green jobs, reduction in greenhouse gas (ethane) emissions, building healthy soils, and carbon sequestration), **we urge you to vote favorably for SB483.**

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