



**TESTIMONY TO THE MARYLAND SENATE
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, HEALTH, & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
Senate Bill 483 (Senator Hettleman)
Solid Waste Management - Organics Recycling and Waste Diversion - Food
Residuals**

Position: Support

February 10, 2021

Dear Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee:

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 483 – Solid Waste Management - Organics Recycling and Waste Diversion - Food Residuals and its overall goal to reduce food waste and convert it into valuable products like compost.

The Million Acre Challenge works with farmers, policy-makers, and consumers to support healthy soils on Maryland farms and across the greater Chesapeake region. Our collaborative aims to catalyze the growing movement to achieve no fewer than one million acres of healthy soils in Maryland by 2030. The Million Acre Challenge is a collaborative project of:

- **Chesapeake Bay Foundation**
- **Fair Farms** (a project of Waterkeepers Chesapeake)
- **Future Harvest**
- **Hatcher Group**
- **Institute for Energy and Environmental Research**
- **Institute for Local Self-Reliance**

Healthy soils can act as a huge carbon sink to help counteract greenhouse gas emissions. They are rich in microbes, high in organic matter, store carbon, are much less prone to erosion, and help buffer against both the excess and lack of water. The addition of well-made compost can contribute to soil health by delivering the following benefits:

- Adding organic matter to soil
- Enhancing plant growth
- Adding microbial populations and activity to soil

- Decreasing disease and pest issues
- Retaining nutrients and water in soils
- Helping urban, suburban, and rural soils
- Storing carbon and cutting landfill methane emissions

SB 483 will encourage increased composting and composting capacity/infrastructure in the state. To help build healthy soils, farmers need not only access to high-quality compost but also assistance in composting onsite at farms. This bill allows large food waste generators to implement any number of strategies to reduce waste, such as providing for the collection and transportation of food residuals for agricultural use, including as animal feed and in composting operations. We urge you not only to pass this bill but also to take up future legislation to support on-farm composting and farm use of high-quality compost.

Thank you for your consideration,

Amanda Cather

Project Director, Million Acre Challenge

amanda@millionacrechallenge.org • millionacrechallenge.org

Additional Supporters:

Bart Yablonsky, *Dawson's Market*

Bonnie Raindrop, *Central Maryland Beekeepers Association*

Carolyn E. Ricketts, *Climate Stewards of Greater Annapolis*

David Pearman, *Kindread Organix*

Devora Kimelman-Block, *KOL Foods*

Ellen Polishuk, *Plant to Profit*

Emily Ranson, *Clean Water Action*

Gabriel Bustos, *Elemental Education*

Heather Bruskin, *Montgomery County Food Council*

JoAnn Coates-Hunter, *Fox Haven Organic Farm & Learning Center*

Kate Medina, *Charles Koiner Conservancy for Urban Farming*

Kathy Phillips, *Assateague Coastal Trust*

Meghan Ochal, *Dicot Farm*

Melanie Smith-Bell, *Community FARE*

Mike Houston, *Takoma Park Silver Spring Food Cooperative*

Peter Elmore, *Star Bright Farm*

Samuel White, *Leaning Pine Farm*