

OMHS Climate Activism Club

January 27, 2021

**Testimony on HB 264
Organics Recycling and Waste Diversion – Food Residuals Act
Environment and Transportation**

Position: Favorable

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

The **Oakland Mills High School Climate Activism Club** is a student-led organization that works to mitigate climate change in our county and state, and we **strongly support HB 264, the Organics Recycling and Waste Diversion Food Residuals Act.**

Methane is a greenhouse gas that is 86% more potent than carbon dioxide, and 17% of Maryland's methane emissions come from landfills. Some of the biggest contributors to these landfills are restaurants and grocery stores. HB 264 would address landfill emissions directly by requiring major producers of food waste to divert their excess material to alternative sites like composting facilities and food banks instead of sending it to landfills or incinerators.

Not only would this **reduce the amount of greenhouse gases emitted by landfills**, but it would **improve soil quality for Maryland farmers** and the environment through compost production, **provide food for those in need**, and **create up to 1400 new green jobs**. It would *not* be detrimental to businesses impaired by the pandemic since it only applies to those that produce over 2 tons of food waste, are within 30 miles of a composting or food recovering facility, and have the resources to comply.

As high school students, we are constantly under pressure to fix the climate crisis for ourselves and the planet's future. And, some parts are getting fixed, with mountains of green bills in committee and Congress, waiting to be passed. But often, landfills and the food waste that feeds them are overlooked despite their incessant and significant contributions to Maryland's greenhouse gas emissions. This bill would change that, in a way that **preserves the autonomy and stability of local businesses**. It is a small alteration in MD laws, but wholly necessary.

We respectfully encourage you to look favorably at the Organics Recycling and Waste Diversion Act this session, HB264, to address this crucial issue for ourselves, the environment, and the future. Thank you for your time and consideration!