



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education

House Bill 264

Solid Waste Management - Organics Recycling and Waste Diversion - Food Residuals

Date: January 27, 2021
To: House Environment and
Transportation Committee

CBF Position: SUPPORT
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The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) SUPPORTS HB 264. This bill would require producers of large amounts of food waste in the vicinity of an organics recycling facility to use those facilities, helping to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions stemming from traditional waste management.

Food waste diversion may reduce greenhouse gas emissions from landfills and incinerators

Food waste diversion from landfills and incinerators helps reduce the amount of carbon dioxide and methane released by those traditional methods of waste management. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions helps confront climate change, an additional stress on the Chesapeake Bay. One of the many negative impacts from climate change is that the Bay's waters are getting warmer. Warmer water holds less oxygen, and a drop in dissolved oxygen means a rise in the dead zones that suffocate marine life.

Composting and using food waste residuals for agricultural use can help mitigate climate change

Some methods of composting add nutrient-rich product to soils, replenishing the bacteria needed to improve soil health for growing plants and nutrient rich food. HB0264 takes reasonable steps to increase organic recycling, composting, and food waste diversion in Maryland. With a phased-in approach, the legislation requires first only those producing more than two tons of food waste a week, and who are within 30 miles of a food recycling facility to divert their food residuals from traditional disposal in landfills and incinerators. The legislation also provides those producing large amounts of food waste with the option to use food residuals for agricultural use.

Encouraging food donations may help at-risk communities

This bill also encourages donating servable food to those in need as an option for food waste diversion. For the past 30 years, CBF's own Claggett Farm has supported the Capital Area Food Bank by donating about 35,000 pounds of produce annually to lower income communities. Efforts to make use of excess food through donation may help reverse social inequities and provide at-risk communities with fortifying local produce.

CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on HB 264.

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