



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB248

Condominiums and Homeowners Associations - Rights and Restrictions - Composting

Statement in SUPPORT

Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein and members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB248, which will prohibit a common ownership community from restricting residents from engaging in composting practices. This bill idea came from a constituent who lives in a common ownership community and was prohibited by his homeowners association from placing a small composting bucket, the size of a large paint bucket, onto his balcony.

Composting is a practice of diverting certain organic yard waste and food residuals that can be safely decomposed either in an individual's yard or in a composting facility like the premier facility in Prince George's county. Food waste is the largest component of waste in municipal landfills.¹ Per the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization, 30 percent of food is wasted globally across the supply chain, contributing 8 percent of total global greenhouse gas emissions. Per a 2018 Washington Post article, "if food waste were a country, it would come in third after the United States and China in terms of impact on global warming."² A recent study showed that if composting were implemented worldwide, it could reduce emissions by 2.3 billion tons over the next 30 years. By incentivizing composting and removing barriers to doing so, we can significantly reduce methane gas production, which is at least 28 times more potent than carbon dioxide.³ This compost can then be used as a fertilizer on cropland, which improves soil health.

HB248 would prohibit a common ownership community from restricting residents from engaging in composting practices -- whether by following best practices in backyard composting, or like the constituent referenced above, privately hiring a commercial compost pick up company, like Compost Crew located in my district, to pick up weekly residential compost. What this bill does not do is require individuals or HOAs to compost. It also does not provide any state or local funding for composting. It takes inspiration from the existing law passed 12 years ago in 2008 which restricts, with limited exception, common ownership communities from prohibiting residents from installing solar panels. Since that law passed, the adoption of solar panels on homes across the state has significantly increased. Maryland now has a solar capacity of 1,293.9 MW as of 2020, ranking us 17th nationally for solar

¹Schultz, J. (2017). Fighting food waste. Retrieved from <https://www.ncsl.org/research/agriculture-and-rural-development/fighting-food-waste.aspx>

²Frischmann, C. (2018). The climate impact of the food in the back of your fridge. Retrieved from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/theworldpost/wp/2018/07/31/food-waste/>

³Food composting. Retrieved from <https://www.drawdown.org/solutions/food/composting/>

installation.⁴ Adding composting to the 2008 law will further assist Maryland in reaching our climate change policy goals.

Other states and localities have begun to examine ways to incentivize this practice as well. Kentucky offers 50% of installation costs for composting/recycling equipment,⁵ and a number of other states offer incentives for businesses and farms that use sustainable practices surrounding food waste.⁶ Middlebury College in VT implemented a composting program in 2011 and saved \$100,000, \$270 per ton of waste.⁷

Local jurisdictions save significantly by incentivizing composting. Per Montgomery County's DEP director, it costs \$47/ton to Montgomery County to dispose of garbage in a landfill vs \$35/ton for recycling vs break even OR \$5-10 generated for composting. Anything the state can do to incentivize composting and remove barriers to engaging in composting will help Maryland reach our climate change goals while saving our local governments money.

Respectfully, I request a favorable report on HB248.

⁴ Solar Energies Association, 2020, "Maryland Solar" <https://www.seia.org/state-solar-policy/maryland-solar>

⁵ Recycling or composting equipment tax credit. Retrieved from <https://revenue.ky.gov/Business/Pages/Recycling-Composting-Tax-Credit.aspx>

⁶Frandsen, J. (2017). More than a third of food is wasted: Will tax breaks, new labels and 'ugly' produce help? Retrieved from <https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/2017/07/02/food-waste-could-tax-breaks-new-labels-and-ugly-produce-fix-it/444032001/>

⁷Roknich, E. (2018). Scraps to savings: Composting in communities. Retrieved from <http://efc.web.unc.edu/2018/01/31/scraps-to-savings-composting-in-communities/>

Letter of Support for HB248 - Condominiums and Homeowners Associations - Rights and Restrictions - Composting

Chairman Barve, Vice-Chair Stein, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

The undersigned individuals and organizations respectfully submit this letter of support for HB248 - Condominiums and Homeowners Associations - Rights and Restrictions - Composting, sponsored by Delegate Shetty. HB248 would prohibit a condominium or a homeowners association from restricting residents from engaging in composting practices.

Composting is a practice of diverting certain organic yard waste and food residuals that can be safely decomposed either in an individual's yard or in a composting facility. Food waste is the largest component of waste in municipal landfills. Per the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization, 30 percent of food is wasted globally across the supply chain, contributing 8 percent of total global greenhouse gas emissions. By incentivizing composting and removing barriers to do so, Maryland can significantly reduce its methane gas production, which is at least 28 times more potent than carbon dioxide. This compost can then be used as a fertilizer on cropland, which improves soil health.

HB248 does not require individuals or common ownership communities to compost, nor does it provide any state investment in composting; HB248 only prohibits condominiums and homeowners associations from preventing residents who wish to compost from doing so. Local jurisdictions save significantly by incentivizing composting. Per Montgomery County's DEP Director, it costs \$47 per ton to Montgomery County to dispose of garbage in a landfill and \$35 per ton for recycling. In comparison, composting leads the County to break even or generate \$5-10 per ton for composting. Anything that the state can do to incentivize composting and remove barriers to engaging in composting will help Maryland to reach our climate change goals while saving our local governments money.

We respectfully request a favorable report of HB248.

- ◆ Safe Healthy Playing Fields Inc.
- ◆ Silver Spring Garden Club
- ◆ Washington Gardener Magazine
- ◆ Institute for Local Self Reliance
- ◆ Montgomery County Food Council
- ◆ MOM's Organic Market
- ◆ Ben Parry; CEO, Composting Crew
- ◆ Christopher Branford; Organic Agriculture Recycling, LLC