

Testimony on HB264
Dan Israel
Vice President of Sales & Marketing, Compost Crew
January 27, 2021

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 264. I am here on behalf of the employees of Compost Crew, and our CEO, Ben Parry, who sends his apologies that he could not join you today.

Compost Crew has almost 10 years of experience collecting and composting food scraps. We currently serve thousands of households in the State of Maryland. A growing number of businesses use our services, including apartment buildings, restaurants, grocery stores and senior living communities. These businesses have signed up with us to help reduce their trash bills, and because they recognize the importance of diverting their food waste from landfills, where it would create methane, a potent greenhouse gas. We have been serving some of these businesses for many years, and have learned a lot about how to implement organics recycling successfully, as have a number of other organics recycling companies in the state.

Compost Crew is proud to have built a healthy and growing business. In 2020, we diverted five million pounds of food and organic waste to area compost facilities. However, food waste still represents over 20% of the waste stream. Voluntary participation in organics recycling programs will not move the needle fast enough to address the challenge we face as a state and as a nation.

In order for organics recycling to grow quickly in Maryland a mandate for large-scale food waste producers is just one part of a recipe for success. The bill tasks the Department of Commerce to explore financial incentives for composting and the Department of the Environment to identify locations to develop additional organics recycling facilities. Those sections of the bill are essential ingredients.

The timeline proposed in the bill gives businesses sufficient lead time to take steps to reduce their food waste and plan for and implement the necessary changes to source-separate their food residuals.

We urge the delegates to support HB 264. Its balanced approach will incent more participation in organics recycling which will in turn extend the life of our landfills, boost the health of our local soils, and help the state do our part to combat climate change.