



Committee: Environment and Transportation
Testimony on: HB0264 - “Solid Waste Management--Organics Waste Management and Waste Diversion--Food Residuals”
Organization: MLC Climate Justice Wing
Person
Submitting: Diana Younts, co-chair
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: January 27, 2021

Dear Mr. Chairman and Committee Members,

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of HB0264. We urge you to vote favorably for HB0264. The bill will serve to reduce methane and other greenhouse gasses and toxic pollutants emitted by landfills, incinerators, and agriculture; reduce run off to our waterways and the Chesapeake Bay; rebuild healthy soils; create jobs; and promote donations to food pantries.

Food Donations: HB 0264 allows food donation as a waste reduction strategy. When similar legislation passed in Vermont, **food donation increased by at least 30%**, taking usable food and getting it into the hands of food banks and hungry people.

More than 25% food supply wasted: 25% of the overall food supply at the retail and consumer level going uneaten and wasted. Large generators, those that produce more than one ton per week of food waste, produce more than half of Maryland’s organic waste. According to the EPA, food scraps and food waste are the largest portion of waste sent by municipalities to landfills and incinerators, accounting for as much as 51 % of waste.

Reduces greenhouse gas emissions: Diversion of food waste from landfills and incinerators will reduce landfill methane emissions and the toxic emissions from incinerators. Landfills account for 17% of Maryland’s methane emissions, a greenhouse gas that is 86 times more potent than CO₂ in its first 20 years after emission.

Builds Healthy Soils & Reduces Runoff: Food waste is an excellent source of material for

making compost and adding compost to our soils results in building healthy soils. Healthy soils and the plants that grow in them, hold and sequester carbon in the ground., are rich in microbes, high in organic matter, are stable, and retain water.

We need sustainable, long term solutions to managing our organic waste and supporting the growth of composting is a win-win strategy.

For these reasons we urge to vote favorably for HB0264.