



**TESTIMONY TO THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORTATION**

House Bill 264 (Delegate Charkoudian)

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

January 27, 2021

Dear Chairman Barve, Vice Chair Stein and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony in support of House Bill 264 on behalf of Waterkeepers Chesapeake, a coalition of seventeen Waterkeepers, Riverkeepers, and Coastkeepers working to make the waters of the Chesapeake and Coastal Bays swimmable and fishable.

Waterkeepers Chesapeake resoundingly supports this bill, and its overall goal to reduce food waste and convert it into valuable products like compost. Improving soil health is critical, and this initiative will have a positive impact on water quality, ecosystem health, and public health. Healthy soils can act as a carbon sink to help balance out greenhouse gas emissions. They are rich in microbes, high in organic matter, store carbon, are stable, and retain water. The addition of well-made compost can contribute to soil health by delivering the following benefits:

- Adding organic matter to soil,
- Enhancing plant growth,
- Adding microbial populations and activity to soil,
- Decreasing disease and pest issues,
- Retaining nutrients and water in soils,
- Helping urban, suburban, and rural soils, and
- Storing carbon and cutting landfill methane emissions.

HB 264 will encourage increased composting and composting infrastructure in the state, and we urge a favorable report on this key bill.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M.A. Johnson".

Morgan A. Johnson, Esq.
Staff Attorney
Waterkeepers Chesapeake