



GLEN ECHO HEIGHTS MOBILIZATION

Committee: Appropriations
Testimony on: HB566 - “School Construction-Design Documents-Waste Disposal Infrastructure”
Organization: Glen Echo Heights Mobilization
Submitted By: Lisa Hemmer, Member
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: February 17, 2022

Glen Echo Heights Mobilization – a community organization in Montgomery County Maryland with 50 members or more -- submits testimony in support of HB566, a bill that would create the infrastructure in Maryland schools necessary for students to separate their waste into trash, for recycling, and for composting food scraps to divert them from the waste stream.

HB 566 would

- Significantly reduce the close to a million tons of food waste generated each year and sent to the landfill or incinerators.
 - Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and noxious pollutants from such facilities.
 - Avoid large amounts of edible food from unnecessarily leaving the bellies of Maryland students and entering the waste stream.
 - Reduce plate waste.
 - Use edible food to feed Maryland students.
- **We support this legislation for the following reasons:**
- Food waste in landfills produces methane, a greenhouse gas that is 86 times more potent than carbon dioxide in its first 20 years of release to the atmosphere.
 - Compost is a valuable soil amendment that enhances soil fertility, soil water-holding capacity, soil organic matter, and soil structure.
 - Currently, in Maryland, almost 85 percent of school food waste enters the waste stream.
 - The future for Maryland residents is composting, and some counties are encouraging residential composting. The same should be true of our schools, which produce exponentially larger quantities of food waste.
 - **This bill would acknowledge science and equity.**

Conclusion. This bill ensures Maryland’s commitments toward environmental sustainability. We urge a favorable report by this Committee.