

SB124 / HB150 - SUPPORT

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Education Health and Environmental Affairs Committee

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Dear Chair Pinsky and Members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee:

As a student first and a member of the Coalition to Re-Imagine School Waste second, I wholeheartedly believe that SB124/HB150 (Public Schools – Grant Program to Reduce and Compost School Waste) MUST be supported by your committee.

From my short time on this Earth, I don't know much. But I do know that we can prevent damage to our planet with the easy solution of composting. When I learned of this two years ago, I became determined to do my part and teach others. From my short time as a youth activist, I have spent many long, grueling hours working towards the ultimate goal of bringing composting into schools statewide. Introducing composting into the school system and community has a major positive impact on saving the environment.

It sickens me to see students throw away banana peels and leftover food waste into a trash bin. Sometimes even a recycling bin! Our coalition has discovered that only a mere 10 percent of the waste we throw away in schools is actual trash meant for the landfills incinerators. About 60 percent of the things kids throw away at school are food, milk, or juice. In Maryland, a million tons of food waste is generated each year. And of that, only 15 percent is getting diverted properly. This is unacceptable. By creating composting programs in schools, we can also salvage and share uneaten foods and offer those foods to the hungry. Composting is truly a multifaceted solution. How could you not pass this bill?

And what's more, the soil created from composted food is nutrient-rich and captures carbon and methane. Which in turn reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

Tik, tik...boom. Time is running out. Each year more and more food waste is reaching our landfills, and more and more methane gas is being produced; soon, our environment will collapse beyond repair. Teaching students about the importance of composting and food recovery will allow students to become more conscious about where their waste goes.

This is bigger than me. I want to protect our ecosystems. I urge you to support SB124.