

Testimony Supporting SB0124
Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
January 19, 2022

Position: SUPPORT

As a former high school science teacher, and a Montgomery County resident who purchases composting for my household, and as a climate activist with many groups in the county and state, I am writing to express my support for SB0124, sponsored by Senator Hettleman, which will create a grant program to support schools in developing programs to prevent, reduce, and compost food waste.

This issue matters to me personally because:

- First and foremost I was reared by a woman who was hungry during the depression and never forgot it and never wasted food. I learned the lesson well.
- As a high school teacher I am well aware of the amount of food that was and is wasted by student populations.
- As a climate activist and science teacher I have long been aware of our climate emergency.
- I also know that 40-50% of our county “trash” is compostable and I know that for now it goes to the Dickerson Incinerator (another big problem).
- When the incinerator no longer exists the “trash” will have to be put into a landfill.
- As a science educator I also know that compostable food in a landfill results in methane gas escaping.
- Methane gas is a greater heat trapping gas than CO₂ when in the atmosphere, although this is a very complex picture.

So since the incinerator will go away and 40-50% of the “trash” is compostable, it only makes sense to get the compostable material out of the waste stream. Beginning the removal of compostable materials in schools also has the added advantage of teaching the young who will eventually bear the onerous burden of our wasteful life styles in the form of global climate catastrophes.

- In September 2015, The U.S. set a national goal to reduce food waste by 50% by the year 2030. However, in Maryland almost a million tons of food waste is generated each year with only 15.5% of these scraps being diverted.
- This would provide green jobs, for example currently in Montgomery County we have no land available for a compost facility. So that means that our compostables will have to be collected and transported to other counties, counties with more available land who could build a compost facility, as PG County has, and charge for the composting services they provide.
- Compost sequesters carbon and rebuilds the micro biome when added to soils, providing resiliency benefits and reducing the need for fertilizers.

- Compost is a valuable soil amendment that enhances soil fertility, soil water-holding capacity, soil organic matter, and soil structure.

For all of these reasons and many more, please support SB 124 and support a transition toward composting in Maryland. Thank you.

Sincerely,

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