

Good afternoon, Chair Barve and Vice Chair Stein. And thank you to Delegate Boyce for her leadership on this topic. My name is Yvette Cabrera and I'm the Director of Food Waste at NRDC, the Natural Resources Defense Council, an organization of some 700 scientists, lawyers, and advocates with the power of more than three million members. NRDC has had the honor of being a partner in and witness to Maryland becoming a national leader on waste and sustainability.

NRDC is testifying today in support of HB1070 because better food and waste management is key to combatting climate change, protecting our natural resources, and supporting thriving communities. Solutions to our waste problem exist, but they need support to be successful.

Waste is the reason we have landfills and incinerators – polluting facilities that cause massive environmental injustices and are predominantly located in low-income communities and on Indigenous lands. When we landfill materials that could have been composted or recycled, we waste all the embedded resources in those materials; and when we landfill organics like food waste, we create methane, a climate pollutant up to 80 times more potent than carbon dioxide.

This legislation and the resulting two grant programs would help on a myriad of fronts:

- They would boost programs that enable waste prevention – the best way to reduce the problems associated with waste is to not create the waste in the first place, and especially to not landfill or incinerate useful materials.
- They would bolster reuse programs and support food rescue activities – with food insecurity on the rise, we must ensure that we are rescuing and redistributing as much surplus food as possible.
- They would support recycling, and very important to NRDC, the recycling of food scraps to create compost and put nutrients back into our soils.

Composting and other types of recycling create more jobs than landfills or incinerators, and Baltimore's community compost programs are a great example of how composting can achieve not only environmental, but social and economic benefits as well. Maryland has many wonderful composting efforts underway, and this grant funding would help programs like these continue and expand.

We hope you will support HB1070, a critical step in increasing the diversion of useful materials from landfills and incinerators and in supporting local communities through maximizing the use of valuable resources, reducing pollution, and creating jobs.