



# THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

**BILL:** House Bill 184 – Environment - On-Farm Composting Facilities - Permit Exemption

**SPONSOR:** Delegate Shetty

**COMMITTEE:** Environment and Transportation

**CONTACT:** Intergovernmental Affairs Office, 301-780-8411

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**POSITION:** SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

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The Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS with Amendments House Bill 184**, which would require the Department of the Environment to adopt regulations to exempt an on-farm composting facility from the requirement to obtain a permit if the on-farm composting facility uses 40,000 square feet or less in support of food scrap composting and meets any other condition for a permit exemption specified in regulations.

This legislation is attempts to address the reduction of the food waste stream into landfills or incineration facilities by simplifying the process to compost food waste on farms and thus has good intentions and warrants consideration.

Prince Georges County has been a leader in the state in compositing and waste diversion and is supportive of the efforts of this bill to address the larger environmental impact of food waste.

This effort needs to be targeted however, because handling and processing food waste can be a challenge for several reasons such as runoff, odors, attraction of rodents, flies and other pests. Even though the proposed legislation would exempt a permit from MDE, it does not relieve the operator from meeting other parts of the regulations. Items such as having a designed composting pad area for the facility and registration of the compost product from Maryland Department of Agriculture if moved off site from the farm. On farm use requires testing under the existing Nutrient Management regulations. For those reasons, we would offer the following amendments:

1. Although COMAR 26.04.11.02 does not specifically define “on-farm”, it is implied in the wording that composting would occur on a farm which is defined. However, the definition should limit on-farm composting to only waste that is generated or produced on that farm.
2. Composting Pad area should be reduced to 20,000sf (1/2) ac.

3. The composting pad area should be designed and installed pursuant to current USDA-NRCS standards and specifications. The facility would be a planned best management practice in the approved Soil and Water Conservation Plan prepared by the local Soil Conservation District.
4. Any composting operators should be certified through the University of Maryland's Better Composting School.

For the reasons stated above, the Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS with AMENDMENTS House Bill 184** and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report.