



Maryland Chapter  
P.O. Box 278  
Riverdale, MD 20738

**Committee:** Environment and Transportation

**Testimony on:** HB1070 – Solid Waste Disposal & Diversion and On-Farm Composting & Compost Use

**Position:** Support

**Hearing Date:** March 2, 2022

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club urges you to support HB1070. This bill would create an Environmental Stewardship Fund to finance two grant programs aimed at increasing waste diversion, recycling, and composting infrastructure, financed by a \$5 per ton surcharge on waste disposal. Half of the Fund would be allocated to the On-Farm Composting & Compost Use Grant Program, supporting farmers' investments, development, and implementation of on-farm composting and compost use. The other half of the Fund would be allocated to the Waste Diversion Grant Program, allocated equally between grants to counties<sup>1</sup> for waste diversion efforts and competitive grants to businesses, schools, non-profit organizations, farmers, and others for the same.

Reducing waste and its disposal in landfills and incinerators is one of several key strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and fighting climate change. However, success at diverting waste depends critically on having in place the infrastructure for expanded composting and recycling. It requires investments in infrastructure by local government, farmers, businesses, schools, nonprofits, and other local entities.

HB1070 would generate the resources for these needed investments, while at the same time discouraging waste disposal. For example, in 2019 a \$5 per ton surcharge on waste accepted at Maryland permitted municipal solid waste landfills and permitted incinerators would have generated at least \$9 million dollars annually for these needed investments.<sup>2</sup> Solid waste surcharges ranging from 50 cents per ton to \$13 per ton at landfills, incinerators, and transfer stations have been funding recycling and waste reduction programs in Indiana, Minnesota, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin, as well as in local jurisdictions, since as early as the 1980's.<sup>3</sup> These investments pay for themselves, by reducing the amount of waste disposed.

Waste diversion investments are critical, and a waste disposal surcharge has proven to be a highly effective way of funding them across the country. The Sierra Club respectfully requests a favorable report on HB 1070.

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<sup>1</sup> Including Baltimore City.

<sup>2</sup> MDE. 2021. *Maryland Solid Waste Management and Diversion Report 2020 (CY 2019)*. Total waste accepted at these facilities in 2019 was 3,858,365 tons (Tables 4 and 11). Nine million dollars is a conservative estimate of resources generated by a surcharge because more than 3 million tons of waste was accepted at transfer stations and processing facilities, but the MDE report does not distinguish between tonnage for waste disposal vs. recycling at transfer stations. The bill is unclear whether the surcharge would apply to disposal of construction and demolition debris.

<sup>3</sup> Jones, Sophia. 2022. "Surcharges on Waste Disposal Fund Composting," *Institute for Local Self Reliance*.  
<https://ilsr.org/disposal-surcharges-fund-composting/>.

Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America's oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 70,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has over 800,000 members and nearly four million supporters.