

SB124 - SUPPORT
Tabitha Cutler
tfortab17@gmail.com 301-260-5413

Education Health and Environmental Affairs Committee

Tuesday, March 29, 2022

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

I am writing to express my support for SB0124, sponsored by Senator Hettleman, which will create a grant program supporting food waste reduction in schools.

Throughout the 8 years that I have been a student in a Maryland public school, I have been appalled by the amount of food waste that each school produces. On the first day of school at Eastern Middle School, I went outside to do lunch as I would until this point. As I walked back towards the building at the end of the 45 minutes, what I saw was horrific. Food scattered on the sidewalks, the grass, the black top, the pavement, the parking lot, everywhere. The worst part of it all was that I knew it could be stopped and we weren't doing anything about it. Composting is not just a viable solution, it would benefit our state tremendously. In my community, we have a compost service that picks up each house's bin every week and I have seen the change in my household as well as my community. We have a lot less trash, we are much more mindful of the amount of waste that we produce, and our food waste is being turned into soil that will help new plants grow. Personally, I would love to see my school and many others begin composting and I know that many others would as well. Climate change is occurring and Maryland needs to take substantial action toward stopping it and helping our environment.

SB124 will help combat climate change and fight disadvantages in our state. The introduction of composting programs to schools will not just find a new purpose for food waste, it will educate students on the massive problem we are facing. Environmental change will be brought to schools and students will see the changes in their education and hopefully bring them into their daily life as they move forward in life. When they grow older they might compost in their homes, they could advocate for composting in their future schools and communities and support future legislation that will bring composting or other measures to support the environment to where they live.

As well as composting, food waste diversion means saving edible food from the trash and getting it into the hands of people who need it. 1 in 7 children in Maryland face hunger, and developing more efficient, less wasteful food programs can get usable food into their hands. Two very prominent issues in our community could be combated if this piece of legislation passed.

From my experience volunteering at Nourish Now and Manna Food Bank, I am well aware of the problem of food insecurity in our state. The COVID-19 virus has made this situation even worse because families have lost their main source of income and this bill could support them. 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.

For all of these reasons and many more, please support SB124 and support a transition toward composting in Maryland. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Tabitha Cutler