



Committee: Education, Health & Environmental Affairs

Testimony on: SB124 - Public Schools-Grant Program to Reduce and Compost School Waste

Organization: Greenbelt Climate Action Network

Submitting: Lore Rosenthal, Program Coordinator

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: January 19, 2022

Dear Chairman Pinsky, Vice Chairwoman Kagan, and Committee Members:

The Greenbelt Climate Action Network (GCAN) is writing in support of SB124 - Public Schools-Grant Program to Reduce and Compost School Waste

GCAN's mission is to educate residents about climate change, “systemic” solutions, how they can change their behaviors to be more sustainable, and take personal, local, systemic, and political action.

Last year, the MD General Assembly made a big step in composting, in passing HB 264, which requires entities — including supermarkets, schools and institutions, and food establishments — that generate at least two tons/week of food residuals to divert that material from disposal, starting on January 1, 2023.

This year, it is time to focus our energies on the schools which generate large amounts of organics (compostables) each day.

This bill creates a competitive grant program to support school-based initiatives to prevent, reduce, and compost pre- and post-consumer food waste. It creates excellent educational opportunities for the students. Not only do they learn about composting, but also how to reduce and divert excess food produced, rather than composting it.

This bill would result in

- feeding hungry children
- increasing available foods in our Food Banks, during these uncertain times of food insecurity
- keeping food waste out of our landfills
- reducing the worst effects of climate change

Food waste in landfills produces methane, a greenhouse gas that is 86x more potent than carbon dioxide in its first 20 years of release to the atmosphere.

For all these reasons, we recommend a FAVORABLE report for SB124 in committee.

Sincerely,

Lore Rosenthal, Program Coordinator
Greenbelt Climate Action Network