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Education, Energy, and
Environment Committee

Chair, Joint Committee on
Cybersecurity, Information Technology
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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of SB782 – State Procurement – Purchasing Preferences – Compost, Mulch, and Soil Amendments and Recycled Aggregate

March 7th, 2023

Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and members of the Budget & Taxation Committee, thank you for your consideration of SB782, which will increase our state’s procurement of certain recycled or organic materials.

Our state has a long tradition of promoting sustainable materials management since the 2014 establishment of the Maryland Green Purchasing Committee. In order to meet Maryland’s climate goals, however, the General Assembly must continue to build on this work. We still generate a lot of “waste,” but we have begun to view that waste for what it really is: a resource out of place. Sustainable materials management means using these resources as efficiently as possible throughout their lifecycle, and studies demonstrate that diverting these materials from disposal to reuse results in a faster growing and more resilient economic system.

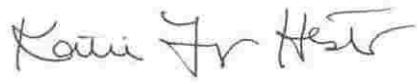
Utilizing sustainable materials in the construction process is a powerful way to decrease our environmental impact. One area that is ripe for state procurement is compost, mulch, aggregate and other ground covers. When we purchase these materials we have a choice: if we choose recycled products as opposed to products made from virgin materials, we are simultaneously reducing landfill volumes *and* lowering greenhouse gas emissions

To this end, SB782 directs a state unit responsible for public land maintenance to give preference to products made from municipal solid, food, or yard waste, as well as a number of other recycled or organic materials, so long as they are competitively priced and of satisfactory quality. The bill defines “comparably priced” as not more than 10% above the cost of virgin material products, but permits an additional 5% preference margin if the Maryland Green Purchasing Committee determines that amount to be appropriate.

Furthermore, today you will hear from Maryland-based companies that these materials are being manufactured in the state - and by shifting our purchasing power we can work towards our environmental goals while supporting our local economy. This modest bill is an excellent,

win-win opportunity for the environment. **For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill SB782.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katie Fry Hester". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Senator Katie Fry Hester
Howard & Montgomery Counties