



March 6, 2023

To: Maryland Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Re: SB782 Purchasing Preferences – Compost, Mulch and Soil Amendments

The Maryland Recycling Network promotes sustainable reduction, reuse and recycling (the 3 "R's") of materials otherwise destined for disposal and the purchase of products made with recycled material content. We achieve these goals through education programs, advocacy activities to affect public policy, technical assistance efforts, and the development of markets to purchase recycled materials and manufacture products with recycled content.

Our members are county and municipal government recycling and organics materials managers, private sector companies engaged in recycling and organics materials management, and citizens who support recycling and organics materials management. We support both composting and anaerobic technologies to manage food and yard waste. We have a long history of supporting food waste recovery legislation in Maryland including HB 264, the Organics Recycling and Waste Diversion – Food Residual bill that was enacted into law in 2021. We have direct experience operating recycling and composting programs at the county and municipal government level. We know the ins and outs of recycling and organics materials management in Maryland. Our experience informs our comments.

We support SB 782 with an amendment.

Managing food waste is Maryland's next big step forward in recovering and turning our discards into useful products. The legislature took the first step with the enactment of SB483 in 2021, an organics recycling bill we supported. It took another step forward that year with the enactment of SB116, creating a recycling market development program at MDE, a bill we also supported. We thank Senator Hester for her co-sponsorship of both bills.

SB782 will help to create market demand for compost, mulch and soil amendments from a variety of sources including food waste. In particular, it makes the state of Maryland one of those markets.

Price preferences help to support a growing market. They show the state's interest in ensuring that the new food waste programs in Maryland have an increased likelihood of success. In addition, Maryland's state procurement agencies can establish a standard for the amount of organic materials and specify that standard in the procurement request. For instance, it could be "compost made of at least 50 percent organic materials from municipal solid waste, food waste, sludge, yard waste, clean wood waste or other organic materials".

We suggest one minor amendment to the bill. Add to (D)(1) "(III) The products are readily available". Along with (I) and (II) that is a part of EPA's Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines.

We thank Senator Hester for introducing this bill and for the support she has shown in expanding markets for our recyclables and organic materials.

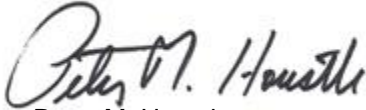
The Maryland Recycling Network stands ready to serve as a sounding board and resource for legislators and others interested in pursuing our mission. Please do not hesitate to contact me via email

Maryland Recycling Network
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phoustle@marylandrecyclingnetwork.org, phone 301-725-2508 or mail - MRN, PO Box 1640, Columbia MD 21044 if you have any questions or would like additional information regarding the above.

We look forward to working with you to continue the strides we have all made to improve Maryland's recycling programs in a time- and cost-effective manner.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter M. Houstle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Peter M. Houstle
Executive Director