

Maryland-Delaware Solid Waste Association

a chapter of the

**National
Waste & Recycling
AssociationSM**

Collect. Recycle. Innovate.

TO: The Honorable Kumar P. Barve, Chair
Members, House Environment and Transportation Committee
The Honorable Regina T. Boyce

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise
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DATE: March 8, 2023

RE: **OPPOSE** – House Bill 1139 – *Solid Waste Disposal and Diversion and On-Farm Composting and Compost Use*

The Maryland Delaware Solid Waste Association (MDSWA), a chapter of the National Waste and Recycling Association, is a trade association representing the private solid waste industry in the State of Maryland. Its membership includes hauling and collection companies, processing and recycling facilities, transfer stations, and disposal facilities. MDSWA and its members **oppose** House Bill 1139.

House Bill 1070 proposes to establish an On-Farm Composting and Compost Use Grant Fund and a Waste Reduction Grant Fund, which are funded by imposing a disposal surcharge of \$2 per ton to be paid by refuse disposal facilities. The On-Farm Composting Fund will be utilized to provide grants for a variety of objectives related to On-Farm Composting and compost use. The Waste Reduction Grant Fund will be utilized for a variety of purposes, including grants to various entities to address waste reduction, recycling, composting, illegal dumping, and other related waste management objectives. The bill also authorizes a local jurisdiction to enact its own surcharge program, which then exempts the jurisdiction from participation in the State surcharge program.

While MDSWA does not object to the intent of this legislation, which is to address various aspects of waste disposal, recycling, and composting continuum that could be enhanced, incentivized, or managed differently. However, many of the issues the bill proposes to address through grant programs cannot be resolved by a simple grant program, nor are they related to lack of funding per se. Furthermore, all of the municipal solid waste landfills in the State are publicly owned and operated and many of the other waste facilities, such as transfer stations and material recovery facilities, are a mix of both public and private ownership and operation. Applying a disposal surcharge on these facilities in order for them to be a possible grantee from one of the programs will not produce the intended outcome and in fact will likely lead to unintended consequences that undermine the objectives of the legislation. Increased disposal fees

will lead to more out of state waste disposal; higher collection rates and transportation costs, which will be passed down to the consumers and businesses; and will further challenge the efficient and effective operation of the State's current recycling facilities as they seek to manage market volatility and work to increase the effectiveness of their material processing functions.

Finally, MDSWA is very supportive of on-farm composting and enhancing the use of compost. However, the biggest challenge to expanded composting in the State is the barriers to the development of commercial grade composting facilities capable of accepting large volumes of compostable materials. To date, facility development is hampered by zoning restrictions and facility siting objections by affected communities. These barriers must be addressed if the State is to have sufficient compost infrastructure to meet demand. Unfortunately, on-farm composting does not offer the potential capacity to meet the State's needs. For the reasons stated, MDSWA, while acknowledging the sponsor for her notable objectives, must respectfully request an unfavorable report.