



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Jessica Fitzwater
County Executive

SB 262 - Environment - On-Farm Composting Facilities - Permit Exemption

DATE: March 29, 2023
COMMITTEE: House Environment and Transportation Committee
POSITION: Favorable
FROM: The Office of Frederick County Executive Jessica Fitzwater

As the County Executive of Frederick County, I urge the committee to give **SB 262 - Environment - On-Farm Composting Facilities - Permit Exemption** a favorable report.

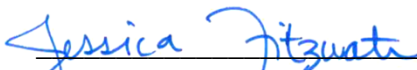
This bill, as amended, expands the footprint of on-farm compost facilities with an MDE-issued permit from the current 5,000 square feet or less to 10,000 square feet or less if the facility meets other conditions for a permit exemption.

Current regulations allow on-farm compost facilities to operate without an MDE-issued permit within specific limits, including a footprint of 40,000 square feet or less for most feedstocks, but within a footprint of only 5,000 square feet for food residuals. This limitation hamstrings farmers who would otherwise be able to incorporate food scraps into existing composting operations and assist in state-wide efforts to divert food waste from landfills.

Frederick County's permitting and land use policies allow for limited food waste composting as an agricultural activity up to 5 acres without a site plan approval or up to 10 acres for commercial activity with a site plan approval. Our Food Waste Composting zoning ordinance was updated in 2018 to help streamline the process and make food waste composting more accessible for our local farmers. The changes proposed in SB 262 would support this effort to reduce barriers for food waste composting.

SB 262 would benefit the farming community and the environment by diverting food waste and expanding composting opportunities. SB 262 was amended in the Senate and now varies slightly from the current version of its crossfile, HB 253. I encourage the committee to pass SB 262 in its current posture.

Thank you for your consideration of SB 262 and I urge a favorable report.



Jessica Fitzwater, County Executive
Frederick County, MD