



Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

3358 Davidsonville Road • Davidsonville, MD 21035 • (410) 922-3426

February 15, 2023

To: House Environment & Transportation Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

Re: **Support of HB 253 - Environment - On-Farm Composting Facilities - Permit Exemption**

On behalf of our Farm Bureau member families in Maryland, I submit this written testimony in support of HB 253, legislation that requires the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to establish an exemption, by regulation, from the permitting requirements under the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 26.04.11.06 for an on-farm composting facility that (1) uses 40,000 square feet of area or less for active food scrap composting; (2) composts only one or more of a specified list of feedstocks; (3) records the amount and source of feedstock composted, records the date and time the feedstock arrives on the farm, and retains the records for three years; and (4) meets any other conditions specified in regulations. The bill establishes several related definitions.

Current regulations limit a farmer to up to 5,000 square feet for on-farm composting of off-farm food scraps. This bill looks to increase that to 40,000 square feet to allow more incorporation of food scraps to the feedstock used in the compost pile. Currently, farmers can do up to 40,000 sf of on-site compost feedstock. To meet the new demand for removing food scraps from the landfill, farmers will need to do their part to assist. However, being limited to 5,000 sf before mandating extensive and expensive permitting requirements, prevents most farmers from being able to participate.

MDFB Policy: We support the right for Maryland farmers to make and process mulch and compost from both on and off the farm sources.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS HB 253 & REQUESTS A FAVORABLE REPORT

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Colby Ferguson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Colby Ferguson
Director of Government Relations

For more information contact Colby Ferguson at (240) 578-0396