



# CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

Environmental Protection and Restoration  
Environmental Education

## House Bill 253

Environment – On-Farm Composting Facilities – Permit Exemption

Date: February 15, 2023	Position: Support
To: House Environment and Transportation Committee	From: Matt Stegman
	Title: Maryland Staff Attorney

Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS** HB 253 which requires the Department of the Environment to adopt regulations to exempt an on-farm composting facility from the requirement to obtain a permit if the facility meets certain condition for a permit exemption specified in regulations.

### **Soil health is key to the future of agriculture**

Well-managed composting of waste adds biologically rich material to soils, feeding essential micro-organisms and fungi that improve soil health and enhance production of healthy, nutritious food. Healthier soils increase water holding capacity, facilitate nutrient cycling, and reduce soil loss, helping farmers maintain their land and minimizing risks to water quality and the Chesapeake Bay.

### **Food waste affects climate change**

The diversion of food waste from incinerators and landfills through composting helps minimize the amount of carbon dioxide and methane released into the atmosphere by these traditional methods of waste management. Lower greenhouse gas emissions improve air quality, reduce impacts to human health, and increase resilience to the effects of climate change.

### **HB 253 promotes on-farm composting**

HB 253 would allow an on-farm composting facility exemptions from permit requirements if the facility uses 40,000 square feet of area or less for active food scrap composting, composts only certain materials, records the amount and source of feedstock composted and the date and time the feedstock arrived on the farm, retains the records for three years, and meets any other condition specified in regulations.

This legislation will improve soil health, help fight the effects of climate change, and transition Maryland to a more effective, equitable, and environmentally sound waste management system.

### **CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on HB 253.**

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, at [mstegman@cbf.org](mailto:mstegman@cbf.org).

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The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 300,000 members and e-subscribers, including over 109,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.