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The Maryland House of Delegates
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**Delegate Stein Testimony in Support of
HB 847 Anaerobic Digestion Workgroup**

Chairman Barve and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

Global scientists and environmentalists agree that anaerobic digesters hold great promise for addressing climate change by:

- capturing harmful greenhouse gasses—particularly methane—and recycling them as a renewable energy source;
- diverting organic material from landfills and incinerators;
- reducing environmental health impacts to our citizens

The carbon emissions from food waste are greater than all transportation combined. It has been estimated that a single anaerobic digester facility will have greenhouse gas emissions reductions equivalent to taking more than 6,000 gasoline-powered cars off the road.

Methane has been identified as the most harmful of all greenhouse gas emissions. A study titled “Valuing the Ozone-Related Health Benefits of Methane Emission Controls” found that “*the benefits of avoided cardiovascular and pulmonary mortality due to reductions in methane emissions are substantial and are an important benefit to include when assessing the benefits of methane mitigation policies.*”*

While this technology holds great promise for our future, we need to make sure we consider all aspects before setting these up statewide in Maryland. As amended in the Senate, this bill establishes a workgroup composed of stakeholders to identify recommendations for the thoughtful expansion of anaerobic digesters throughout our state. The workgroup will focus on the design, construction, and operation of these facilities as well as the digestate produced through the process.

This workgroup is intended to include all stakeholders interested in planning for the expansion of these digesters in the future as a way decrease what we put into our landfills and increase the amount of compost and soil amendments produced and utilized in Maryland.

I urge your support of this legislation.

* Sarofim, M.C., Waldhoff, S.T. & Anenberg, S.C., “Valuing the Ozone-Related Health Benefits of Methane Emission Controls,” *Environ Resource Econ* (2017):66, 45–63.