



Committee: Environment and Transportation
Testimony on: HB0253 - Environment - On-Farm Composting Facilities - Permit Exemption
Organization: Maryland Legislative Coalition Climate Justice Wing
Submitting: Laurie McGilvray, Co-Chair
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: February 15, 2022

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of HB253. The Maryland Legislative Coalition (MLC) Climate Justice Wing, a statewide coalition of over 50 grassroots and professional organizations, urges you to vote favorably on HB253.

HB253 will expand the area for on-farm composting of food scraps from the current 5,000 square feet or less to 40,000 square feet or less without a Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE)-issued permit. Currently, on-farm composting is allowed without a MDE permit for an area of 40,000 square feet or less, but only for most feedstocks. HB253 would allow this same 40,000 square foot area for food scrap composting.

The bill will provide a number of benefits, including: increasing the available locations for food scrap composting; increasing the use of compost as a soil amendment for local farmers; diverting food scraps from landfills and incinerators; reducing landfill methane emissions from organic material; and contributing to Maryland's Zero Waste food scrap goals of 60% diversion by 2025, 70% by 2030, and 90% by 2040.

Diverting food waste to on-farm compost sites will conserve landfill space; reduce greenhouse gas emissions; create green businesses and jobs; and benefit agricultural soil health. HB253 represents an important step on the path to zero waste and we recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.