



The Garden International LLC
11890 Old Baltimore Pike, Ste G
Beltsville, MD 20705
info@thegarden.farm
www.thegarden.farm
(301) 957-4258

February 6, 2024

**Senate Bill 56 - Food Waste and Solid Waste Reduction- Grants, Funds, Surcharge
Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee**

Position: Support

Dear Chair, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Committee:

The Garden International is a mushroom farm located in Prince George's County. At The Garden, our mission is to 'plantify' the world. We strive to build restorative, and sustainable systems that work in harmony with nature. We feel strongly that the tides are turning, and it is time to cultivate ecosystems that feed local communities and the economy. The Garden International writes to support Senate Bill 56– Food Waste and Solid Waste Reduction- Grants, Funds, Surcharge. If enacted, the legislation will contribute to our mission of using minimal natural resources to contribute to the health and wellbeing of the Earth and all its inhabitants.

Senate Bill 56 would support our healthy food initiatives and serve as a funding opportunity for our Mushroom Learning Center. At The Garden International we are building a mushroom learning center where students will learn all about STEAM programs, workforce development, and even learn how to grow their own mushrooms at home. Additionally, Senate Bill 56 strongly supports our initiative of working with local farmer to reduce food waste, create new products, increase farm profitability, and provide high quality foods to our local community. If enacted, Senate Bill 56 would increase the STEAM presence in our communities, while also promoting the benefits of composting. The Garden recognizes that the decrease in food waste, increases the number of available foods for consumption. Reducing food waste contributes to efforts to address hunger and malnutrition. If enacted, we know Senate Bill 56 would promote positive impacts on resource conservation, environmental sustainability, economic efficiency, and food security.

This bill establishes necessary measures for expanding community development, educational opportunities like food literacy, public health, and reducing food waste. The Garden believes when communities have equitable access to food resources, it can contribute to social cohesion and a sense of shared purpose. Senate Bill 56 would allow a collaborative effort we can all work on to strengthen our community bonds. Therefore, we respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 56.

For more information call or email:

Therese M. Hessler | 301-503-2576 | therese@ashlargr.com