IndivisibleHoCoMD

HB173 – State Buildings and State Highways – Collection of Yard Waste

Testimony before

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

March 26, 2024

Position: Favorable as amended in the House

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the committee, my name is Crystal Konny, and I represent the 700+ members of Indivisible Howard County. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We are providing written testimony today in _**support of HB173**_, which prohibits disposal of yard waste collected on State property in a single-use plastic container. We appreciate the leadership of Del. Lehman and her colleagues for sponsoring this important legislation.

Methane is a powerful greenhouse gas that is produced when bacteria decompose organic plant matter in landfills. This bill enables composting the organic waste because there isn't a plastic bag in the way, and will effectively reduce methane ultimately coming from yard waste collected on state-owned property. It's an easy win for the environment.

Plastic bags are a huge problem for the environment on so many levels, from its production as a derivative of crude oil and natural gas, to litter, to not breaking down completely for many years.

Howard County has been prohibiting home owners from using single-use plastic bags for lawn debris for years. It makes yard waste compostable without further handling, and it eliminates the use of plastic bags for one use before then going into a landfill where they will not disintegrate for many years.

This bill allows the State to catch up with the Counties in mandating that plastic bags aren't used for yard waste. The members of Indivisible Howard County support such common-sense measures to reduce waste and clean up our environment.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

We respectfully urge a favorable (as amended in the House) committee report.

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