



**Testimony On:** SB 56 Food Waste and Solid Waste Reduction – Grants, Fund, and Surcharge  
**Committee:** Education, Energy, and the Environment  
**Organization:** Zero Waste Montgomery County  
**Submitting:** Kelly Doordan  
**Position:** Support  
**Date:** February 6, 2024

Honorable Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this statement for the record. Zero Waste Montgomery County strongly SUPPORTS S.B. 56 - Food Waste and Solid Waste Reduction – Grants, Fund, and Surcharge.

Maryland has enacted laudable policies to reduce food waste and increase food recovery and recycling. A barrier to expanding these programs further has been a lack of dedicated funding for infrastructure to expand some of these programs. We know that reducing food waste benefits the climate by helping to avoid emissions from generation to disposal. This legislation helps us achieve climate benefits as well as significant social and economic co-benefits by reducing food waste through expanded infrastructure for edible food recovery and food security, as well as expanded opportunities for farmers to benefit from on-farm composting and compost use.

This model for funding waste reduction projects has successfully been used in numerous states and local jurisdictions across the United States. A \$2 per ton surcharge on waste disposed of at incinerators and landfills can help fill the identified need for investments in programs like cold storage for edible food recovery, on-farm composting, and school grants for food waste reduction and composting, the latter of which was authorized in 2022 but requires an annual appropriation.

Expanding on-farm composting and the availability of high-quality compost supports agriculture and regenerative food systems in Maryland by building healthier soils. Grants from this program will provide community benefits and a funding mechanism to help Maryland meet existing and new goals for climate and zero waste while supporting food security, local farmers and agriculture, and remanufacturing materials as part of a

circular economy where materials can be maintained for as long as possible at their highest and best use rather than incinerated or landfilled.

Please approve SB 56 to provide a mechanism to support zero waste, edible food recovery, Maryland farmers, and climate progress.