



**The Maryland Department of the Environment**  
**Secretary Serena McIlwain**

***House Bill 173***

***State Buildings and State Highways - Collection of Yard Waste***

**Position:** Support

**Committee:** Education, Energy, and the Environment

**Date:** March 26, 2024

**From:** Jeremy D. Baker

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The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) **SUPPORTS** HB 173 as amended.

**Bill Summary**

The bill would prohibit a person from disposing of yard waste collected on the grounds of a State building or State highway in a single-use plastic container. Additionally, it would require a person to collect yard waste on the grounds of a State building or State highway in a container that 1) will not be discarded with the yard waste; or 2) is compostable. The bill does allow for the use of plastic or other non-compostable materials when a person is disposing of noxious weeds or invasive species.

**Position Rationale**

Requiring that yard waste be collected in a container that will not be discarded with the yard waste or is compostable will save organic recyclers time and money because they will not have to debag the waste, lowering their costs. Lowered costs could be transferred to their customers making organics recycling that much more appealing. MDE anticipates that this will help promote the additional diversion of yard waste, which is already extremely high. MDE hopes that the state's leadership in this area will also encourage counties and municipalities to adopt similar policies, as it is a low effort, high impact countermeasure.

The majority of State agencies responsible for managing State property, including the Department of General Services and the State Highway Administration, currently use compostable containers or alternative methods when collecting yard waste. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) also minimizes the use of plastic containers when collecting yard waste, except when eradicating invasive species.

Accordingly, MDE asks for a **FAVORABLE** report for HB 173.

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**Contact:** Les Knapp, Government Relations Director  
Cell: 410-453-2611, Email: [les.knapp@maryland.gov](mailto:les.knapp@maryland.gov)