



Committee: Education, Energy and Environment
Testimony on: SB0056 - Food Waste and Solid Waste Reduction - Grants, Fund, and Surcharge
Organization: Maryland Legislative Coalition Climate Justice Wing
Submitting: Laurie McGilvray, Co-Chair
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: February 6, 2024

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of SB0056. The Maryland Legislative Coalition (MLC) Climate Justice Wing, a statewide coalition of nearly 30 grassroots and professional organizations, urges you to vote favorably on SB0056.

According to the Maryland Department of Environment (MDE), 26% of the waste entering landfills is organic and only 18% of food waste generated is recycled. Organic waste drives the carbon footprint of landfills. Reducing food waste and increasing diversion improves business efficiency, reduces environmental impact, and can decrease food insecurity.

MD House Bill 264, Organics Recycling and Waste Diversion–Food Residuals that became effective in January 2023, required certain generators within 30 miles of a composting facility to either reduce, divert to food rescue organizations, farms for animal feed operations, or compost or anaerobically digest the residuals. However, at this point, there are only six composting facilities active in the state, which limits the effectiveness of the law. For example, in 2020, Maryland set a goal of diverting 60% of food scraps by 2035. Our current food residuals recycling rate is 22.6% according to the 2022 Maryland Department of the Environment’s Maryland Solid Waste Management and Diversion Report.

This bill supports the expansion of Maryland’s food residuals recycling in order to meet our required climate and environmental goals, creates mechanisms to discourage gratuitous use of landfills, and establishes a new program to encourage greater upcycling and remanufacturing of materials that would otherwise be disposed of.

These programs would include a Food Waste Reduction and Diversion Grant Program and a Circular Economy Incentive Program, as well as an On-Farm Organic Diversion and Composting Grant in order to support on-farm composting, educate the public about composting, preserve and rescue food for consumption by individuals, and create more cold storage across the state.

These new programs would be funded by a statewide solid waste disposal surcharge. The initial surcharge would be \$2 per ton of solid waste to fund the Reduce, Recycle, and Remanufacture Fund. Local jurisdictions would be enabled to substitute their own surcharge instead, enabling more local control of the projects.

SB0056 will help Maryland reduce food waste, increase food recovery, and foster greater composting in the state, which will enhance our ability to meet our food waste diversion goals by 2035. The MLC Climate Justice Wing strongly supports SB0056 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report in Committee.

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Adat Shalom Climate Action

Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church Environmental Justice Ministry

Chesapeake Earth Holders

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility

Climate Parents of Prince George's

Climate Reality Project

ClimateXChange – Rebuild Maryland Coalition

Coming Clean Network, Union of Concerned Scientists

DoTheMostGood Montgomery County

Echotopia

Elders Climate Action

Fix Maryland Rail

Glen Echo Heights Mobilization

Greenbelt Climate Action Network

HoCoClimateAction

IndivisibleHoCoMD

Maryland Legislative Coalition

Mobilize Frederick

Montgomery County Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions

Montgomery Countryside Alliance

Mountain Maryland Movement

Nuclear Information & Resource Service

Progressive Maryland

Safe & Healthy Playing Fields

Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee

The Climate Mobilization MoCo Chapter

Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

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