



February 7, 2024
The Honorable Marc Korman
House Environment and Transportation Committee

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Re: **HB173: State Buildings and State Highways - Collection of Yard Waste** **Position: Favorable with Amendment**

Dear Chairman Korman and Members of the Committee,

The MD-DC Composting Council, a chapter of the US Composting Council whose purpose is to encourage collaboration among various organizations in the compost industry with a vision to convince the general public, lawmakers, and government officials that organics recycling and composting is an urgent public necessity, would like to support HB173 with some suggested amendments.

This bill advances efforts in Maryland to increase the diversion of organic material from disposal in the state, bringing benefits such as:

- reduction of methane emissions from landfills from diversion
- living wage jobs
- through use of compost, promote
 - Water savings and erosion mitigation
 - Decreased use of fertilizer which produces GHG emissions in its production
 - carbon sequestration through locking of carbon in soil and plant growth

We support HB173 for these reasons, and recommend that the bill be amended to require use of the compost generated in accordance with enacted HB586, which directs the Maryland Green Purchasing Committee to write specifications for purchasing compost, mulch or other soil amendments made from organic material. State agencies that purchase such material will need to include these specifications in their solicitations.

Additionally, we request that the bill be amended to state specifically that the called-for containers in the bill be certified compostable by a third-party lab that undergoes near-complete biological decomposition into carbon dioxide, water, inorganic compounds, and biomass in the intended permitted composting facility or facilities within the time period and to the extent specified by a recognized ASTM, ISO, CEN, or DIN compostability standard (e.g., ASTM D6400-19 for plastics). or field testing organization and that they must not be allowed to be in anything that isn't certified compostable (for example: a compostable bag inside of a plastic bag).

Lastly, please add a provision to the bill that calls for education of state personnel and, where appropriate, the public, about the materials that are acceptable in the containers; contamination is devastating to the viability of composting programs and markets. Please don't hesitate to reach out if we can answer your questions.

Sincerely,
Kristie Blumer, President
Maryland-DC Composting Council

