



February 5, 2024

To: Maryland House Environment and Transportation Committee
Re: HB173 State Buildings and State Highways – Collection of Yard Waste

The Maryland Recycling Network promotes sustainable reduction, reuse and recycling (the 3 "R's"), to ensure that the use of virgin materials is minimized, materials otherwise destined for disposal are reused or recycled and strong demand exists for buying products made with recycled material content. We achieve these goals through education programs, advocacy activities to affect public policy, technical assistance efforts, and the development of markets to purchase recycled materials and manufacture products with recycled content.

Our members are county and municipal government recycling managers, private sector recyclers, non-profit recyclers and citizens who support recycling. We have direct experience operating recycling and composting programs at the county and municipal government level. We know the ins and outs of recycling in Maryland. Our experience informs our comments.

We support HB173 with one suggested amendment. Section 2-901(D) specifies containers for collecting yard waste that either will not be discarded with the yard waste (e.g., reusable containers) or are "compostable" containers. We suggest changing "compostable" to paper. Maryland local government yard waste programs generally require those materials be set at the curbside in either a reusable container or a paper bag. While the intent of a compostable container, whether paper or plastic, is commendable, we feel that allowing compostable plastic bags for yard waste will send mixed signals to state residents.

The Maryland Recycling Network stands ready to serve as a sounding board and resource for legislators and others interested in pursuing our mission. Please do not hesitate to contact me via email phoustle@marylandrecyclingnetwork.org, phone 301-725-2508 or mail - MRN, PO Box 1640, Columbia MD 21044 if you have any questions or would like additional information regarding the above.

We look forward to working with you to continue the strides we have all made to improve Maryland's recycling programs and thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Houstle".

Peter Houstle
Executive Director