

I am Dr. Elizabeth Anne Riley of Silver Spring, Maryland. I wish to testify favorably on House Bill #173 regarding the Compostable Bagging of Yard Waste at State Buildings and Highways. I am a member of the League of Women Voters, Sierra Club and a number of environmental organizations, none of whom I speak for.

Many are unaware that yard waste is a valuable organic commodity if it can be processed for composting, whereas plastic is toxic and not at all compostable. Instead, plastic is headed for the landfill. Organic yard waste that goes to a landfill ends up giving off methane. Methane is 84 times more destructive of as a polluting gas emission than is CO₂.

“Cutting methane is the fastest way to slow the rate of global warming right now”, according to the Environmental Defense Fund. Composting does that.

As a resident of Riderwood, a retirement community of multi-family apartments spanning both Montgomery Co. and Prince Georges Co., we have recently completed a three months trial program of Food Scraps collecting from 400 individual’s kitchens. We saved 8 tons of food waste from entering the landfill. Instead, it was combined with yard waste at the Price Georges Co. Organic Composting Facility and turned into Black Gold for enriching depleted earth.

Please pass this bill out of committee in order to enrich the earth.