SB0134

Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant Programs - Established

Testimony before Education, Energy, and The Environment

Hearing February 11, 2025

Position: Favorable

Dear Chair Feldman and Co-Chair Kagan, and members of the committee, my name is Virginia Smith, and I represent the 900+ members of Indivisible Howard County.   Indivisible Howard County is also an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We are providing written testimony today **in support of SB0134**, which will establish an On-Farm Organics Diversion and Recycling Grant Program in the Department of Agriculture and establish a solid waste disposal surcharge on the final disposal of solid waste in the State. We thank Senator Hester for her sponsoring of this bill.

According to the USDA an estimated 30-40% of the food supply is wasted each year. This amounts to 120 billion pounds each year. In the end, it means that 22% of the municipal solid waste inside a landfill is food that could have been consumed or composted. That is why this legislation is so important. By providing grants for on-farm organics recycling and compost, the State will be able to keep more food out of landfills. The other positives of this bill are that it requires that labor and wages be provided in support of the food waste prevention, in order to be eligible for the grant and it will prioritize requesters who will serve overburdened or underserved communities.

This bill does not only institute a carrot approach to reducing food waste by providing the grants, it also uses the stick by instituting a solid waste disposal surcharge on the final disposal of solid waste in refuse disposal systems in the State. This surcharge will hopefully entities that do not qualify for a grant to still seek alternative measures to reduce their solid waste.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

We respectfully urge a favorable report.

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