



Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Testimony on: Senate Bill 134 – Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant Programs

Organization: Mobilize Frederick

Submitting: Karen Cannon, Executive Director

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: February February 11, 2025

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Senate Bill 134 – Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant Programs. Mobilize Frederick urges the Committee to issue a **favorable** report on this important bill.

Mobilize Frederick is a nonprofit community advocacy organization formed to assist with implementing the recommendations of the 2021 Climate Response and Resilience Report (CRRR). The CRRR is a comprehensive climate action plan chartered by the City of Frederick and Frederick County designed to put Frederick City and County on the path to safer, healthier, and more resilient communities through innovative and effective local solutions to address climate change.

In Maryland, municipal solid waste landfills are the single largest source of methane – a powerful greenhouse gas with a Global Warming Potential more than 80 times that of carbon dioxide. Nearly 60% of landfill methane emissions are attributable to decomposition of food waste. Eliminating disposal of food waste through diversion, composting and other food recycling programs is the most effective way to substantially reduce landfill methane emissions.

Maryland's Climate Pollution Reduction Plan sets a 2035 food scrap recycling target of 60%. Yet, in 2022, only 15.5% of the more than 1.5 million tons of food waste that was generated in Maryland was diverted, composted or otherwise recycled. A lack of dedicated funding is the biggest obstacle to the expansion of food waste diversion and composting programs. Through a nominal \$2 surcharge on each ton of solid waste that is landfilled or incinerated, Senate Bill 134 provides a new source of grant funding for the infrastructure investment needed to support on-farm, community, and local government food waste

diversion and composting programs. Counties would receive 50% of the revenue generated by the surcharge in the form of annual block grants proportional to their population.

Robust food waste diversion and composting programs deliver additional social and economic benefits by preserving landfill space, reducing solid waste disposal costs, promoting food security through the redirection of edible food into food recovery programs, and by supporting on-farm composting programs that reduce the need for the application of non-organic chemical fertilizers.

In passing this bill, Maryland would be following the lead of at least 10 other states that assess solid waste disposal surcharges to fund food waste diversion, recycling, and composting programs. For all the foregoing reasons, we urge the Committee to issue a **favorable** report on Senate Bill 134.

Karen Cannon
Executive Director

cc: Kathy Kinsey
Chair, Government Affairs and Policy Committee