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Education, Energy, & Environment Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 West Wing
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

To Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and members of the Education, Energy, & Environment Committee,

I am writing to provide my SUPPORT for the passing of SB134 — the Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant Programs Bill this session.

Butler's Orchard, a diversified U-pick fruit and vegetable grower, has had an ongoing commitment to soil health for many years. We have been farming many acres over 75 years and understand the need to maintain, if not improve, the soil health for the sustained profitability of our operation and to be able to pass the business to the next generation with soils better than we started with. Over those years, we've implemented many soil health building practices including no till planting, intensive multi-species cover cropping and the application of compost. We have seen organic matter percentages increase in our soil tests as a result of these practices.

The passing of SB134 would provide grant money that would support overcoming the cost hurdles associated with programs such as our partnership with Composting Outpost. This partnership has facilitated our application of approximately 150 cubic yards of finished compost per year by using 240 tons of organic material, per Compost Crew's estimates. Providing Farms with grant money to encourage food waste reduction, on-farm composting and compost use, and assist with the equipment, infrastructure, labor, technical assistance, testing and other needs to achieve on-farm food waste reduction and diversion is something we at Butler's Orchard strongly support and we encourage you to as well.

Thank you for your attention to this important Bill.

Sincerely,

Benjamin Butler
Farm and Finance Manager