



February 11, 2025

Senate Education, Energy and Environment Committee

Dear Honorable Committee Members:

Compost Crew supports a favorable report of the Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grants Programs bill (SB134).

Compost Crew is a Maryland-based food scrap recycling and composting business that has been helping individuals, companies, and schools recycle food waste since 2011. We currently service over 20,000 homes, businesses, and municipalities in Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C., diverting over 30 million pounds of food waste annually. In addition, we partner with local farms to recycle food scraps and make high-quality local compost, which enriches the soil, supports local food production and benefits the environment. In making an organic soil amendment, farms do not need to rely on inorganic chemical inputs, much of which are currently in short supply and are expensive.

SB134 *will not* have a negative economic impact on waste haulers and generators, and *will benefit* Maryland farms, schools, among other organizations.

### **No negative economic impact**

The \$2/ton surcharge is a nominal fee that will not have a negative economic impact on waste haulers and generators. Tipping fees for trash are around \$70-100/ton in Maryland. For a normal waste generator, the tipping fee may represent about 20% of total hauling and disposal costs, so \$2/ton surcharge is just 2-3% of the tipping fee and less than 0.5% of total hauling and disposal costs. Most trash companies charge a much higher 3-5% Fuel & Environmental charges on waste bills, so 0.5% will not have a meaningful economic impact.



## **Benefits to Schools**

This funding is sorely needed to support composting programs at schools and other organizations. For example, we provide composting services to about 3 dozen schools in Maryland, which is less than 5% of total schools in our service territory. About a third of these schools have suspended their composting programs due to lack of funding. My son joined a club at public high school in Montgomery County to support its composting program. He told me they are trying to organize a bake sale to raise funding for their composting program. Asking students to organize bake sales, car washes, or other fundraisers to pay for food waste recycling is a terribly unsustainable practice. No school district would consider asking students to hold fundraisers to pay for regular trash service.

## **Benefits to Maryland Farms**

A solid waste disposal surcharge would help Maryland farms manufacture more high-quality compost to improve crop yields and increase the longevity of farmland. Our goal is to build organics recycling infrastructure to support recycling and environmental objectives while benefiting farms. Farmers are interested in locally-made, high-quality, and affordable compost. However, purchasing compost can be difficult since there are not many local options, and shipping high-quality compost in bulk is expensive. In addition, making composting on farms is financially-prohibitive and time-consuming for many farmers, because on-farm composting systems require site improvements, equipment, regulatory hurdles, and trained staff to be run properly. These grant funds will help bring down these costs.

We respectfully request a favorable report of SB134

Sincerely,

Ben Parry  
CEO, Compost Crew Inc, a Benefit Corporation