

SB 134

Uploaded by: Ben Parry

Position: FAV



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

ILSR-BrendaPlatt SB134 Testimony-FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Brenda Platt

Position: FAV

**TESTIMONY TO THE MARYLAND SENATE COMMITTEES ON EDUCATION, ENERGY, &
THE ENVIRONMENT, AND BUDGET & TAXATION**

**SB 134 – Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and
Grant Programs**

Position: Support

February 11th, 2025 Public Hearing

Brenda Platt, Director, Composting for Community Initiative, bplatt@ilsr.org
Institute for Local Self-Reliance 1200 18th Street, NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20036

Dear Committee Members,

The Institute for Local Self-Reliance urges a favorable report on SB 134 – Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant Programs. This bill would establish significant and needed funding for reducing food waste and diverting wasted food and other organics from landfills and incinerators, including food rescue, composting, and a transition to durable food service ware. The bill supports schools, farmers, businesses, and local government, and does so in a way that protects Maryland taxpayers from rising food costs as well as rising future solid waste management costs. The average family of four in America spends \$1,500 per year on uneaten food.¹ At the same time, landfills are filling up faster than projected and new ones are far more expensive than waste reduction, reuse, and recycling/composting strategies. This bill offers a proven way to pay for key environmental programming in the State's Priority Climate Action Plan that doesn't rely on federal cash and doesn't contribute to the state's budget deficit. **In fact, it represents exactly what state leaders have articulated is needed: it is a new revenue-creating policy that keeps our state competitive with the surrounding region while prioritizing safety, economic growth, and the environment.**

We thank Senator Hester for sponsoring this legislation in the Senate to establish a self-funding mechanism to support a wide range of desperately needed projects throughout the state. Schools that invest in durable foodservice ware, for example, could realize thousands of dollars in net savings per year from the avoided cost of expensive throw-aways.

Other key reasons to support this bill include:

- Maryland's recycling level has stagnated and landfills are approaching capacity.
- Maryland's landfills are emitting four times more methane than previously estimated.
- More programs focused on wasted food prevention, reuse, repair, and composting are needed in Maryland. For instance, in 2021, less than 23% of the 1,060,014 tons of wasted food in Maryland was recycled,² and a major report found that policies to fund and incentivize food waste reduction and composting in Maryland are weak.³

¹ US Department of Agriculture: <https://www.usda.gov/foodlossandwaste/consumers>

² Maryland Dept. of the Environment website, "[Solid Waste Management - Organics Recycling and Waste Diversion - Food Residuals.](#)" 819,846 tons were disposed of in landfills and incinerators. Only 240,168 tons were recycled or diverted as animal feed.

³ Natural Resources Defense Council, [Maryland Food Waste Policy Gap Analysis and Inventory](#). October 2021 (p. 13).

- HB 264, passed in the 2021 session, requires large food waste generators to divert their wasted food if capacity exists. SB 134 now creates a tremendous opportunity to support farmers in creating some of that needed capacity and in using compost produced in the state. An influx of diverted food waste will require expanded processing capacity at all levels (including community-scale and farm composters).
- We have heard first-hand testimony from other states (including Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Wisconsin, Indiana, Minnesota, North Carolina and Iowa) who have a similar disposal surcharge to waste diversion mechanism in place. These states have shared that their programs have had positive impacts on their local communities, economies, and the environment. Wisconsin's \$7 per ton recycling fee, for instance, generates \$37 million to \$40 million per year in funding. Even states such as Indiana with a small per ton fee have had tremendous impact. In 2020, its \$1.8 million in grant funding created 47 new jobs and diverted 85,000 tons in new material from disposal. Why not Maryland too?
- The New York State's new Solid Waste Management Plan calls for a \$5/ton surcharge as one of its three top legislative priorities.
- The grant programs will help Maryland businesses develop and expand their food waste diversion efforts. It will also provide direct funding to counties to fund a wide range of projects.
- The bill has a built-in funding mechanism. This is not an unfunded mandate on the state.
- This bill complements SB 346/HB 232 – Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program, which would establish a deposit on beverage containers in the state.
- Expanding waste prevention, reuse, repair, recycling, and composting brings myriad benefits and co-benefits to Maryland: jobs, Bay protection, cleaner air and water, climate protection (see, attached infographics). On a per-ton basis, making compost employs twice as many workers as landfills and four times as many workers as incinerators.

Since the bill's first introduction in the 2022 session, there have been a number of changes based on conversations with numerous stakeholders to address their concerns and suggestions to improve this bill. ILSR, with the guidance of bill sponsors, has gathered input from numerous stakeholders in order to get this bill to fit Maryland's unique landscape. Last year, ILSR collaborated extensively with the Maryland Department of Environment and Department of Agriculture to ensure the bill filled programmatic gaps and was implementable by the agencies.

Sincerely,



Brenda Platt

Director, Composting for Community Project, Institute for Local Self Reliance

Attachments: (1) Funding for Reuse Will Save Schools Money, (2) Infographic: Composting Creates Jobs, (3) Infographic: Compost Enhances Soil and Protects Watersheds, and (4) Infographic: Compost Climate Connections

Funding for Reuse Will Save Schools Money

Average annual savings for schools that switch to reusables:



Over \$2,800 in total
cost savings



3,300 pounds of
waste eliminated



73,747 single-use
items eliminated



9,747 gallons of
water saved



Over 19 tons in
carbon savings



Over \$1,000 in waste
hauling savings

Upstream Solutions, *Conscious Cafeteria Report*, September 2024
<https://upstreamolutions.org/blog/the-conscious-cafeteria-report>

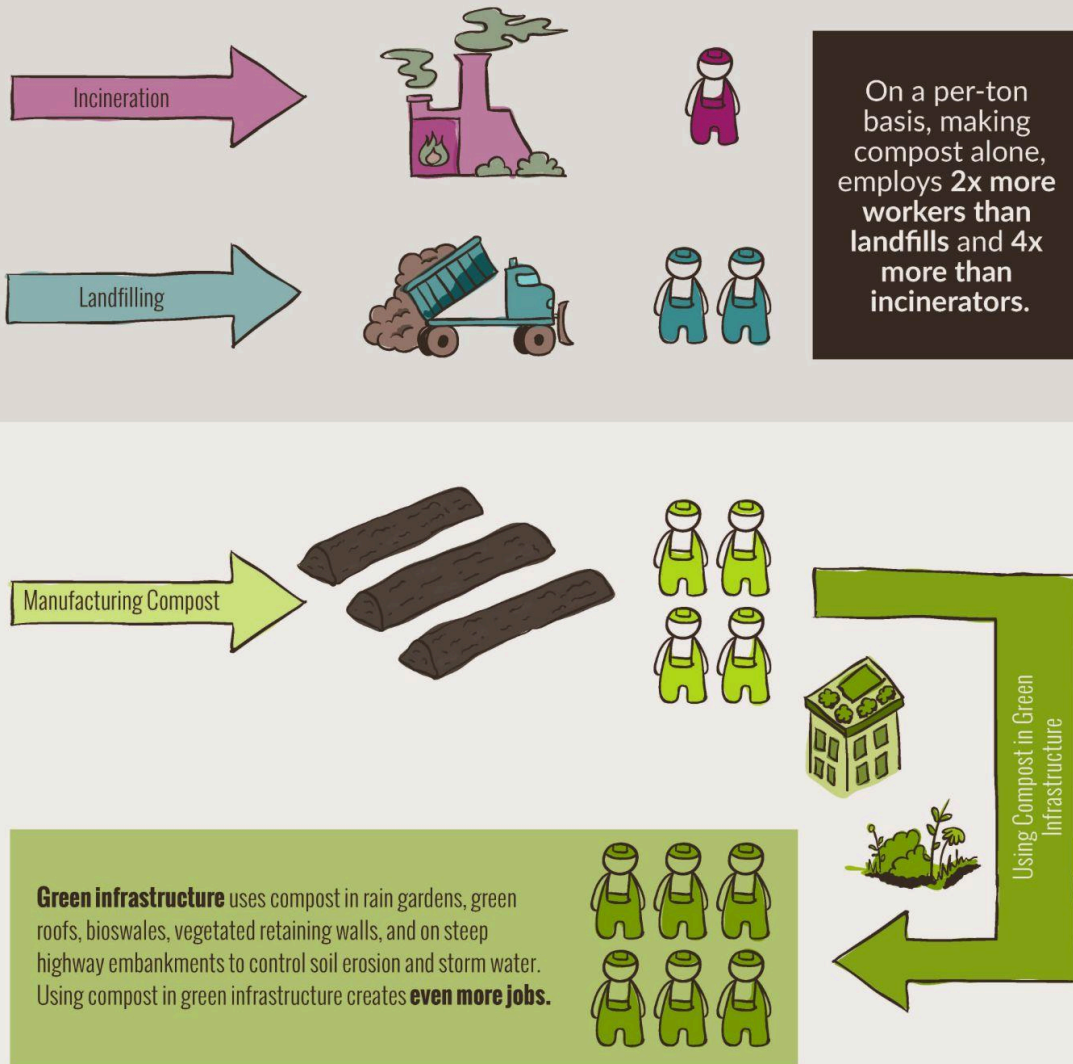
In 2024, 15 elementary schools across the US switched to reusable stainless steel trays (and in some cases, utensils). The pilot study highlights the significant projected environmental and economic benefits of leaving single-use foodware behind.

Composting Creates Jobs

Jobs are sustained in each stage of the organics recovery cycle.

PER 10,000 TONS WASTE/YEAR

JOBS SUSTAINED



SOURCES:

Brenda Platt, Bobby Bell, and Cameron Harsh, Pay Dirt: Composting in Maryland to Reduce Waste, Create Jobs & Protect the Bay, Institute for Local Self-Reliance (ILSR), May 2013.
Brenda Platt, Nora Goldstein, Craig Coker, and Sally Brown, The State of Composting in the U.S.: What, Why, Where, & How, Institute for Local Self-Reliance (ILSR), June 2015.
Brenda Platt and Neil Seldman, Wasting and Recycling in the United States 2000, Institute for Local Self-Reliance (ILSR), 2000.

Composting Enhances Soil and Protects Watersheds

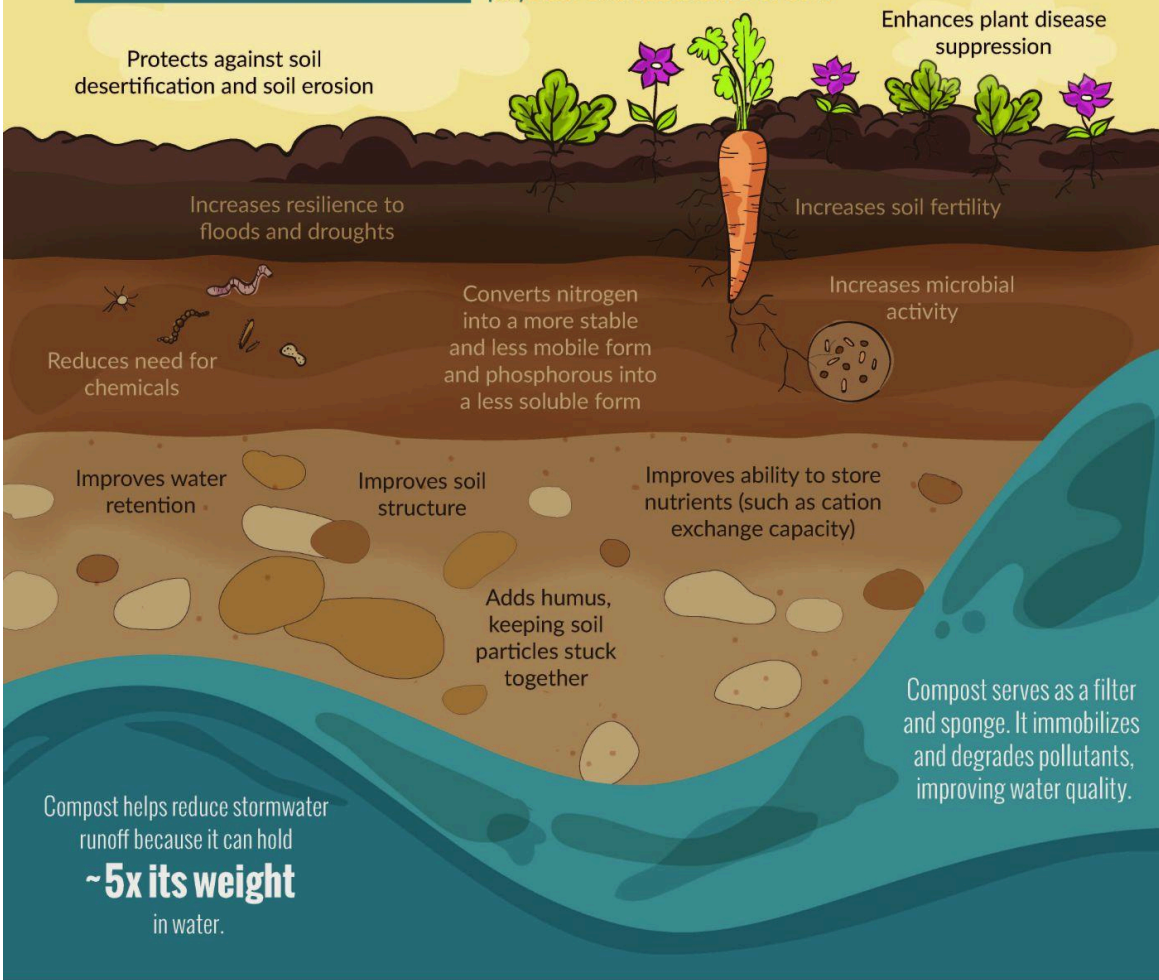
Healthy soils are essential for protecting watersheds. Compost is the best way to add organic matter—which is vital—to soils.

When added to soil, compost can filter out urban stormwater pollutants by an astounding **60-95%**



IT'S ALL ABOUT THE SOIL

COMPOST improves biological, chemical, and physical characteristics of soil.



SOURCES:

Bobby Bell and Brenda Platt, *Building Healthy Soils with Compost to Protect Watersheds*, Institute for Local Self-Reliance (ILSR), June 2014.
 Brenda Platt, Nora Goldstein, Craig Coker, and Sally Brown, *The State of Composting in the U.S.: What, Why, Where, & How*, Institute for Local Self-Reliance (ILSR), June 2015.
 "Why Build Healthy Soil?" Washington Organic Recycling Council (WORC) Soils for Salmon Project, accessed April 2016.
 United States Composting Council (USCC), "Specify and Use COMPOST for LEED & Sustainable Sites Projects: A Natural Connection"
 "Soil Health Key Points," Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA, February 2013.
 "Increasing Soil Organic Matter with Compost," *Compost: The Sustainable Solution*, US Composting Council, July 2014.
 "Strive for 5%," US Composting Council's campaign to promote 5% organic matter in soils, US Composting Council.

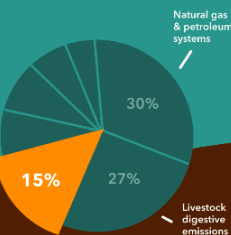
HOW COMPOSTING COMBATS THE CLIMATE CRISIS

1 AVOIDS WASTE OUTCOMES WITH HIGH EMISSIONS

Landfilling food scraps produces **20x** the CO₂e emissions (as methane) as composting

...and when used, compost's net emissions become negative!

Landfills are the **third-largest** source of human-related methane emissions in the U.S.



2 ENHANCES SOIL QUALITY

Compost increases:



Nutrients in soil

- Grows healthier, more nutritious plants & food
- Reduces use of synthetic nitrogen & fossil-fuel-intensive fertilizers

Synthetic nitrogen accounts for **80%** of human-related nitrous oxide emissions



Water holding capacity

Increases soil resiliency to extreme heat & flooding

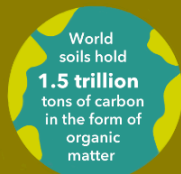


Soil aggregation

Prevents erosion & runoff, thus protecting & restoring waterways

Normally it takes **1,800 years** to build **6 inches** of topsoil but with compost, it takes only **6 months**

3 SEQUESTERS CARBON



What's one of the best ways to build soil organic matter?

Compost!

Degraded soil actually **RELEASES** carbon

But a **1-time** application of compost can make soil a carbon sink again!

Just 1 acre amended with compost can sequester up to

75%

of a car's annual emissions



Compost also increases crop yield & vegetation, leading to even more carbon sequestration

4 BUILDS COMMUNITY RESILIENCY

Healthy soil =

- Food security
- Profitable farms
- Enhanced habitat & biodiversity
- Resilient ecosystems

Degraded soil has been linked historically to the fall of civilization!

Community composting =



- Local jobs
- Environmental education
- Community bonds & safety
- Physical activity & healthy diets
- Social inclusion & empowerment

SB0134_Solid_Waste_Disposal_Surcharge_MLC_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



**TESTIMONY FOR SB0134
FOOD WASTE AND SOLID WASTE REDUCTION – GRANTS, FUND, AND
SURCHARGE**

Bill Sponsor: Senator Hester

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: **FAVORABLE**

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0134 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Food waste is a growing problem in our state. It comprises a quarter of the trash that we throw in landfills and creates additional greenhouse gases as it breaks down. Additionally, given the number of Marylanders going hungry, it seems that keeping as much food waste out of landfills as possible is an important goal.

This bill, if enacted, would divert as much food as possible from landfills, by creating two programs that would provide grants to programs supporting on-farm composting; reducing the amount of food wasted; redistributing unused food to food banks; or encouraging more upcycling and remanufacture of materials that would otherwise end up in landfills.

These programs would be funded by a solid waste surcharge or the use of other state and federal funds.

Our members appreciate the effort to get in front of this growing problem with real solutions. Trash, and especially food waste are problems that we can't kick down the road.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

SB134 FAV MD-DC USCC Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Denice Curry

Position: FAV



SB 134: Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant Programs

Senate Education, Energy, & Environment, and Budget & Taxation Committees
February 11, 2025

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Prince George's County
Board Member

Brenda Platt
Institute for Local Self-Reliance
Board Member

Elly Ventura
World Centric
Advisory Member
Non-Voting Member

Position: Favorable

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee,

The Maryland and Washington, D.C. (MD-DC) Chapter of the US Composting Council represents a variety of sectors and is dedicated to advancing composting and compost use in Maryland and D.C. The Chapter supports SB 134 and urges a favorable report.

A major limiting factor for the expansion of food waste reduction and composting in Maryland is cost. States with similar goals to Maryland for diverting food waste from landfills have seen success only when the goals are supported through investment in infrastructure.

Food waste is a significant greenhouse gas producer when landfilled or burned, and food is the single largest component of the waste stream, making up 22 percent of municipal solid waste. Diverting food waste from landfills and incinerators is not only an important step to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and extending the limited capacity of landfills, but it also provides significant co-benefits.

Investment in locally-driven food waste reduction, food rescue, and composting solutions facilitates emissions reductions, decreases the need for long-distance hauling of materials, creates high-quality soil amendments to build healthy soils and reduce the need for synthetic fertilizers, and supports green jobs and community engagement, particularly in overburdened and underserved communities. These are the outcomes that SB 134 seeks to achieve with a dedicated and reliable funding stream.

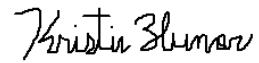
Funding through a modest \$2 per ton surcharge on waste disposed would raise over \$14 million in funding to build Maryland's food waste reduction and composting capacity.

SB 134 promotes the necessary investment and collaborative effort needed to build Maryland's capacity and infrastructure for organics management at all levels. When established, this program would spur new businesses, enable farms

seeking to compost onsite or utilize compost, and will support Maryland's goals to reduce wasted food.

We urge the committee to pass SB 134.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kristie Blumer". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Kristie" and last name "Blumer" clearly legible.

Kristie Blumer
President, MD-DC Board

Support of SB 134

Uploaded by: Erica Seib

Position: FAV

Benjamin Butler
Farm and Finance Manager
Butler's Orchard
22222 Davis Mill Road
Germantown, MD 20876
Ben@ButlersOrchard.com
301-428-0444

February 10, 2025

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

SB134 - CASA FAV Written Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Jose Coronado Flores

Position: FAV



Testimony in SUPPORT of SB134
Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant
Programs - Established

Senate - Education, Energy, and Environment Committee

Jose Coronado-Flores , On Behalf of CASA

February 11, 2025

Dear Honorable Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee,

CASA is pleased to offer **favorable testimony in support of SB134**, because it is important legislation that will address the burden and quantity of food waste and solid waste. CASA is the largest immigrant services and advocacy organization in Maryland, and in the Mid-Atlantic region, with a membership of over 60,000 Black and Latino immigrants and working families in Maryland. We would like to thank Senator Hester for her leadership on this bill.

In our transition to an emissionless and sustainable state, it is critical to offer concrete solutions to reduce the amount of waste that ends up in landfills and trash incinerators. The working-class immigrant community that comprises our membership acknowledges the intertwined relationship between food and solid waste, emissions caused by the burning or landfilling of this waste, the associated emissions that result from transporting this waste, and the local burden of pollution in our communities in being in proximity to landfills across the state and the Baltimore Wheelabrator waste incinerator.

I want to highlight the Food Waste Reduction and Diversion Grants Program that this bill establishes. These grants are to be procured by a variety of entities with the goal of funding projects that aim to reduce food waste through community projects and education. The immigrant community, especially individuals who are coming from sustainable rural communities like my family who comes from a small farming community in Guatemala, wants to bring and engage in our best practices of zero-waste and composting here in our new communities.

We envision communities that compost their food waste and utilize the produced fertilizer for community gardens where carriers of sustainability wisdom lead and execute these projects. Furthermore, these grant programs also promote edible food waste diversion. According to the MD Food Bank, 1/3 Marylanders are food insecure, yet MDE reports that much of the over 1 million tons of food waste produced in 2021 could have been eaten. Food is a gift that some people struggle to obtain, yet many of us carelessly waste it. For these reasons, CASA urges a favorable report.

Jose Coronado-Flores

Research and Policy Analyst

jcoronado@wearecasa.org, 240-393-7840

MF_SB 134_Solid Waste Disposal Fee.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Kathy Kinsey

Position: FAV



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

Food Diversion Fact Sheet.pdf

Uploaded by: Katie Fry Hester

Position: FAV

Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grants

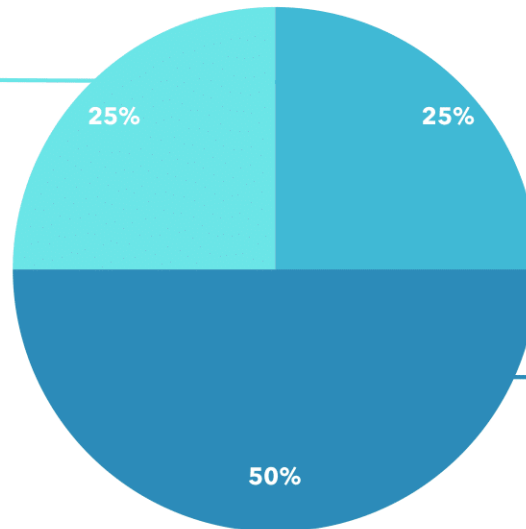
This bill will generate over \$14 million in funding for food waste reduction and diversion projects including food rescue, food waste prevention, organics recycling and compost use, and moving away from single-use food service ware.

Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund:

1 Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Program

Funds projects, infrastructure, education, and technical assistance to reduce wasted food, rescue edible food, compost or recycle food residuals, and transition away from single-use food service ware

1



2

2 On-Farm Organics Diversion and Recycling Grant Program

Funds farmers for wasted food reduction and organics diversion via cold storage, food rescue, composting, compost use, and more

3

3 County Wasted Food Reduction Block Grants

All Counties will receive funding in proportion to their population to reduce, rescue, and divert wasted food



Funded by: A \$2/ton surcharge on final waste disposal

Maryland needs this bill NOW

- ▶ Maryland's food waste diversion mandate, high landfill methane emissions, emissions reduction goals, and increasing demand for alternatives to food disposal require investment in infrastructure, capacity, and education.
- ▶ This bill prioritizes the economic growth and stability, environment, education, and health of Marylanders.

This bill funds many initiatives:

- Cold storage for produce
- Food rescue to feed people or animals
- Local composting infrastructure
- Education and technical assistance
- Reusable food service ware and dishwashers
- County and Municipal food scrap collection programs and staff
- ...to name a few examples

This bill addresses Maryland's budget deficit and saves Marylanders money

- ▶ Funded initiatives will help families avoid losses from uneaten food, averaging \$1,500/year for a family of four.
- ▶ Reliable annual funding will be available to support the longevity of wasted food reduction and diversion efforts in Maryland.
- ▶ This bill will raise new revenue that would help fight the state deficit while keeping Maryland regionally competitive and filling potential gaps in federal funding.
- ▶ Investment in alternative infrastructure to landfilling and burning trash will counter rising disposal costs and constant expansion of disposal facilities.

This bill supports small businesses and local communities

- ▶ Grant funds will be accessible to businesses, schools, nonprofits, local governments, and community groups to develop or expand community waste diversion efforts.
- ▶ Preventing and rescuing wasted food and recycling what's left will generate more jobs and local economic opportunities than landfilling and incineration.
- ▶ Priority funding will go to projects that serve overburdened and underserved communities, and produce minimally-contaminated soil amendments.

Many states have this system in place already. It is not novel.

- ▶ At least ten other states use a surcharge on disposal to fund waste diversion with major impact on the economy and the environment. 29 states have general landfill tipping fee surcharges.

Bill Sponsors:

Delegate Regina T. Boyce: regina.boyce@house.state.md.us

Senator Katie Fry Hester: katiefry.hester@senate.state.md.us

Hester SB 134 Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Katie Fry Hester

Position: FAV

KATIE FRY HESTER
Legislative District 9
Howard and Montgomery Counties

Education, Energy, and
Environment Committee

Chair, Joint Committee on
Cybersecurity, Information Technology
and Biotechnology



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 11, 2025

Testimony in support of SB 134 - Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant Programs – Established

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee.

Thank you for considering SB 134 - **Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant Programs - Established**. For historical reference, this bill has been championed by Vice Chair Boyce over the last four years and was introduced in 2024 as HB1318, in 2023 as HB1139, and in 2022 as HB1070. Additionally, I introduced a bill similar to this in 2024, SB 56.

More than 42 million tons of food scraps are landfilled or incinerated in the U.S. each year, as estimated by the [EPA](#). Lack of funding to prevent and recycle wasted food is one of the main reasons for this high tonnage. According to an analysis by [ReFED](#), an estimated annual investment of \$18.6 billion can reduce food waste by 21.4 million tons each year. This investment would cut greenhouse gas emissions, save water, and rescue and save food for those in need ([Institute for Local Self Reliance](#)).

SB 134 establishes a funding mechanism to support three food waste reduction and diversion grant programs through a \$2 per ton surcharge on final waste disposal. This funding comes from two grant programs: **Wasted Food Reduction & Diversion Grant Program** (administered by the Department of Agriculture), the **On-Farm Organics Diversion & Recycling Grant Program** (administered by the Department of the Environment), and the **County Wasted Food Reduction Block Grant, the final program which is new this session**. These programs are designed for **reducing, rescuing, composting, and recycling wasted food**, along with **on-farm organics recycling and compost use**.

Programs Supported by the Surcharge (See Figure 1):

Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Program: Supports projects, infrastructure, technical assistance, and education to reduce food waste and transition away from single-use food service ware.

On-Farm Organics Diversion and Recycling Grant Program: Assists farmers in food preservation via cold storage and food rescue, organics recycling, and compost use.

County Wasted Food Reduction Block Grant (new): All counties are eligible to receive funding in proportion to their population to reduce, rescue, and divert wasted food.

Maryland requires expanded access to and capacity for food waste reduction and diversion from disposal, benefiting local communities. A lack of funding is a significant obstacle to developing and expanding food waste reduction infrastructure and programs. Recommendations from the Maryland Food Systems Resiliency Council highlight the need for investments in food waste reduction infrastructure and education.

Various entities, including local governments, educational agencies, non-profit organizations, for-profit businesses, and farmers, are eligible for funding. Priority will be given to projects benefiting local communities, serving overburdened or underserved communities, and following best management practices.

The surcharge is set at \$2 per ton on final waste disposal and will be reviewed every two years to adjust for inflation. Waste disposal facilities collect the surcharge and submit the funds to the state. The surcharge does not apply to materials recycled, composted, or diverted from final disposal. Haulers *may* pass down the costs of the surcharge to waste generators within guardrails to prevent exploitation. The goal is to make alternatives to food waste disposal more available and accessible to all Maryland communities. Successful waste reduction and diversion efforts may lead to adjustments in the surcharge amount.

Eight states across the country have surcharge and waste diversion policies including grants for recycling. These states include **New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Wisconsin, North Carolina, Iowa, Ohio, and Indiana**. Additionally, counties in states such as **California, Arizona, Illinois, Michigan, Mississippi, Colorado, and West Virginia** have similar programs focused on general waste production (See Figure 2, [BioCycle](#)).

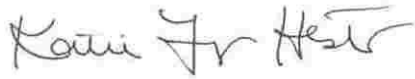
Additionally, the **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency** has already established Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling Grant Programs throughout the nation. The **Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling program** provides grants to [implement the National Recycling Strategy](#) to improve post-consumer materials management and infrastructure and support improvements to local post-consumer materials management and recycling programs. SB 134 also aligns with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 12, which aims to reduce food waste and promote sustainable consumption.

Additionally, **international food waste diversion programs** include the [World Food Programme](#), a UN agency that provides food assistance in emergencies and works with communities to improve nutrition; the United Nations' International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste Reduction, and programs in the United States and United Kingdom, such as [Love Food Hate](#)

[Waste](#), which is a program in the UK that teaches consumers how to reduce food waste through recipe portioning and planning.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report of SB 134.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Katie Fry Hester". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Senator Katie Fry Hester
Howard and Montgomery Counties

Figure 1

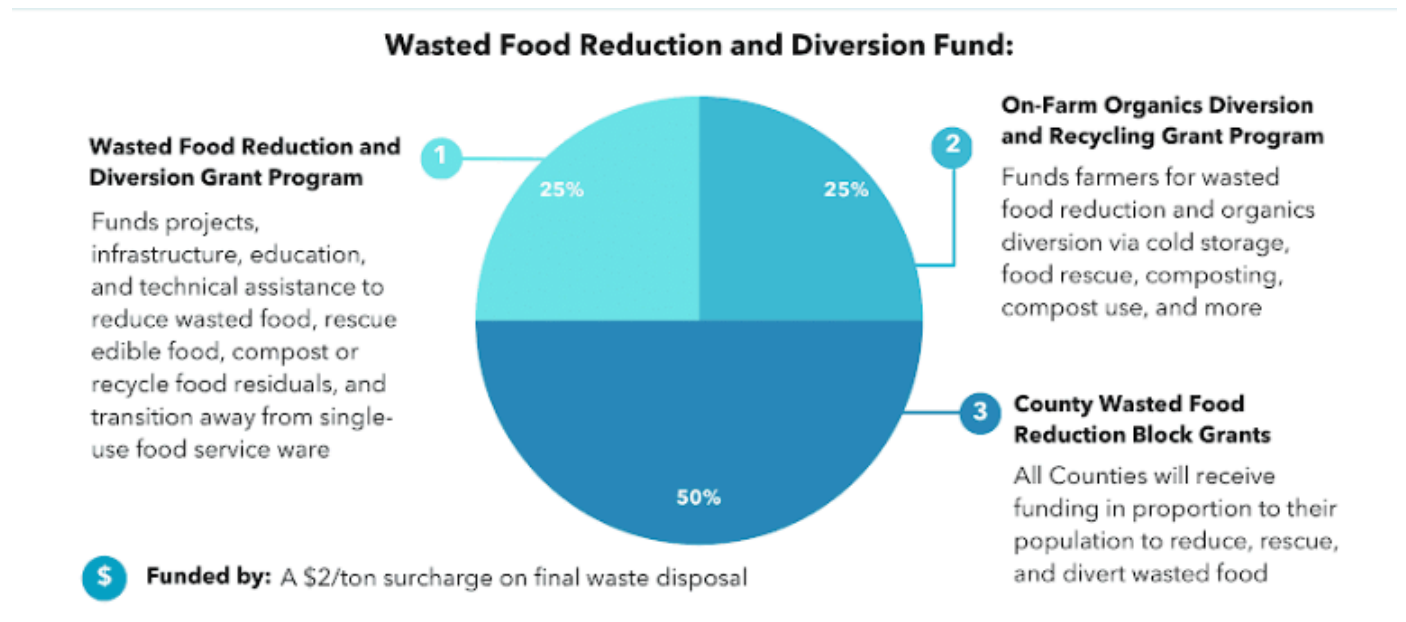


Figure 2

Table 1. Disposal surcharges and revenue

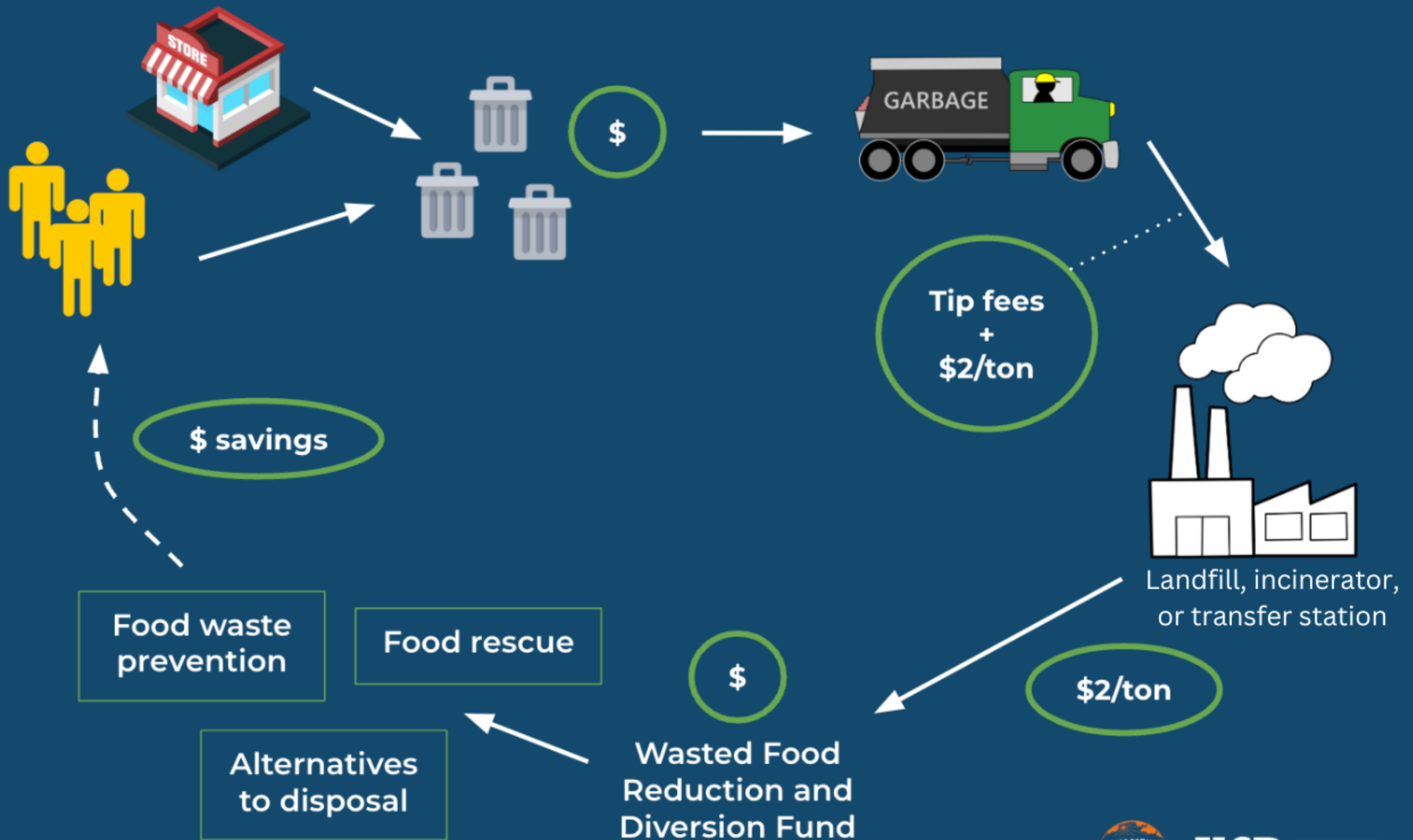
State/local policy	Surcharge amount (\$/ton)	Surcharge applies at			Year est.	Annual surcharge revenue (data year) in \$million
		Landfills	Incinerators	Transfer stations		
Indiana	0.50	X	X		1996	4.86 (2020)
Iowa	4.25	X		X	1987	8 (2020)
Minnesota	9.75% (households) 17% (commercial)	X	X		1997	90 (total; 2021)
New Jersey	3	X	X	X	2008	29 (2018)
N. Carolina	2 ¹	X		X	2008	23 (FY 2020-21)
Ohio	4.75 (MSW disposal)	X		X	1988	69.8 (MSW; 2021)
	1.60 (C&D disposal)	X		X	1988	8.4 (C&D; 2021)
Pennsylvania	2 (Recycling fee)	X	X		1998	105-112 (total; 2021)
	0.25 (Envtl. stewardship fee)	X			1999	
	4 (disposal)	X			2002	
Wisconsin	13	X			1999	56 (2019-2020)
Alameda County, CA	4.34 (AB939 fee)	X	X		1989	9.7 (total; 2021)
	8.23 (Measure D)	X	X		1990	
Santa Clara County, CA	0.78 (planning fee)	X	X	X	1984	1.3 (planning fee; 2021)
	4.10 (AB 939 fee)	X	X	X	1992	1.6 (AB939 fee; 2021)

Surcharge Explainer Graphic.pdf

Uploaded by: Katie Fry Hester

Position: FAV

How does the disposal surcharge work?

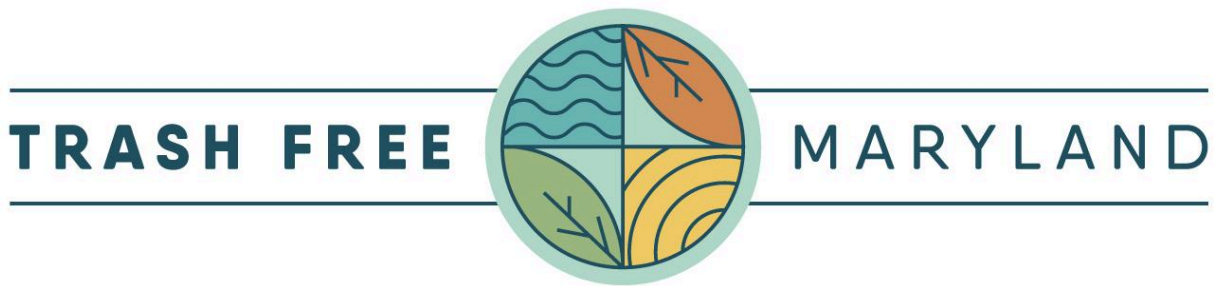


*The \$2/ton surcharge, when passed down, averages out to \$2.50 per year per capita in Maryland, which would be dispersed between households, businesses, and other waste generators

Trash Free Maryland_Support_SB134_021125.pdf

Uploaded by: Kelly Doordan

Position: FAV



Bill: SB134 Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge, Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund, Grant Programs

Date: February 11, 2025

Position: Support

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and Members of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee:

Trash Free Maryland strongly supports SB134, which will establish grant programs and generate needed funds to reduce and divert wasted food in Maryland, including funding projects, infrastructure, education, and technical assistance to transition from single-use food service ware to durable and reusable food service ware.

Trash Free Maryland works toward a state that is free of trash, debris, and litter, and where communities, public spaces and waterways are safe, healthy, and support economic viability. We base this work on significant contributors to trash pollution, identified through neighborhood and waterway cleanup data.

Trash Free Maryland urges you to support this legislation for the following reasons:

- Single-use, disposable food service ware contributes to unnecessary waste and plastic pollution found in our litter cleanups and also as a contaminant in recycling. A transition to durable and reusable food service ware can reduce plastic waste and pollution in litter and recycling processes.
- The shift from single-use to reusable food service ware alternatives can require an initial investment in durable products or dishwashers; funding to support this transition can enable a permanent switch.
- Microplastics are an increasing concern for both environmental and public health. Providing grants to support a transition to reusable food service ware and to organics recycling projects that produce minimally-contaminated soil amendments would be a step toward reducing plastic pollution.
- Reducing and diverting wasted food supports Maryland's climate and waste reduction goals.

For these reasons, we urge the Committee to support SB134.

Contact:

Kelly Doordan, Executive Director, Trash Free Maryland

kelly@trashfreemaryland.org

Compostology Written Testimony - SB134 - Google Do

Uploaded by: Liliana Katz-Hollander

Position: FAV

Written Testimony - [SB134](#)

Dear Chair Feldman and Committee members.

I am writing in favor of SENATE BILL 134 sponsored by Senator Hester. My name is Liliana Katz-Hollander, and I am a senior at Richard Montgomery High School, in Montgomery County's 17th district, and a constituent of District 18. I am also the finance director for Compostology, a youth led non-profit based in Montgomery County. For the past 5 years, we have been working to divert food waste in schools from incineration and trash to sustainable composting facilities.

Last year, Compostology led a student movement advocating for the Maryland Grant Program to Reduce & Compost School Waste (SB124-2022). This bill originally allocated \$1.25M for multiple schools to run food waste diversion programs similar to ours. Though only \$250K was allocated at the time, the first year of this grant alone left undeniable impact. Among others, Compostology is one of the many groups that was able to use these funds to create a greener environment in Maryland. We were able to introduce and manage programs in multiple elementary, middle, and high schools throughout the county, each recovering on average 70 unopened food items daily and composting around 800 pounds of food scraps monthly - all of which would otherwise have been trashed.

Whenever I visit a school to teach students about their new composting program, I am in awe of their enthusiasm and investment. They want the chance to learn and be a part of something greater. Society has repeatedly told students that we are the generation that will change the world, but we are currently limited to the classroom when interacting with problems such as climate change and food insecurity. Our food waste diversion programs give students the tools they need to become their own environmental advocates. Not only do we incorporate environmental education into our training on food recovery and composting, but we launch civic education and leadership development activities especially in schools with underfunded PTAs and extracurricular opportunities. Beyond reducing greenhouse gas emissions from school food waste, these programs give students the power to commit to daily habits that build up to something greater than themselves — something that will improve the lives of their classmates, and the world as a whole.

However, the funding from the state for these programs has mostly run out, and the funds provided by the Grant Program to Reduce & Compost School Waste will sunset in June of 2027. Our communities lack the system structures needed for sustainable and effective food waste diversion strategies, especially in schools. It is our responsibility to develop and improve these systems for a more sustainable future. SB134 is needed to continue the positive direct impact of this program so that we can continue making food waste diversion in schools the norm.

SB0134_FAV_Solid_Waste_ENT_HoCoCA.org.pdf

Uploaded by: Liz Feighner

Position: FAV



HoCoClimateAction.org
Howard County, Maryland

SB0134: Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant Programs

Hearing Date: February 11, 2025

Bill Sponsor: Senator Hester

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Submitting: Liz Feighner for HoCo Climate Action

Position: Favorable

[HoCo Climate Action](#) is a [350.org](#) local chapter and a grassroots organization representing approximately 1,400 subscribers. It is also a member of the [Climate Justice Wing](#) of the [Maryland Legislative Coalition](#).

We urge you to **vote favorably on SB0134** which establishes needed funds and grant programs to reduce, rescue, and divert wasted food from disposal in Maryland.

HoCo Climate Action has been advocating for clean, renewable energy for years along with [advocating for decarbonizing buildings since October 2020](#). Our advocacy work includes reducing methane emissions which is 84 times more potent than CO₂ on a 20-year timescale accelerating climate change. "The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) has concurred with recent research findings which shows that [MSW landfills in Maryland are the single largest source for the state's methane emissions](#). These emissions are approximately four times higher than previously thought." We urgently need to reduce methane emissions wherever possible if we want to have any chance at a liveable planet and meet our mandated targets set by the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022.

This bill, if enacted, will provide grants for wasted food reduction and diversion projects such as:

- Organics recycling
- Food waste prevention programs and food waste rescue programs
- Durable food service ware infrastructure
- Farmer and school programs

The grants will be funded by a \$2 surcharge at landfills and incinerators and the funding for grants will be distributed to counties proportional to their population.

We urge a **favorable vote on SB0134**.

Howard County Climate Action

Submitted by Liz Feighner, Steering and Advocacy Committee

www.HoCoClimateAction.org

HoCoClimateAction@gmail.com

SB 134 - National Aquarium - Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Maggie Ostdahl

Position: FAV



NATIONAL AQUARIUM®

Date: February 11, 2025

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

Position: Support

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee:

The National Aquarium respectfully requests a favorable report for SB 134, which would establish a \$2/ton surcharge on the final disposal of solid waste to provide for implementation of programs and projects that prevent food waste, increase food rescue, and support organics recycling and compost.

The National Aquarium is a nonprofit organization that connects people with nature to inspire conservation action, through a holistic, solutions-focused approach, which includes translating ocean and climate science, building resilience through community empowerment, implementing nature-based solutions, and reducing our own carbon footprint. Our work is guided by three overarching goals to combat climate change, stop plastic pollution, and save wildlife and habitats. Environmental responsibility is core to our daily operations; we regularly evaluate how we're doing and challenge ourselves to keep improving. Since 2017 the National Aquarium has eliminated all single-use plastic foodware in our building, replacing disposable plastic products with reusable, compostable or more sustainable options. The Aquarium has for years implemented efforts towards reduced waste overall, including through composting food scraps from our cafes and catered events.

Food waste and other organic matter sent to incinerators and landfills are significant contributors of greenhouse gas emissions. Maryland needs to invest in capacity for management of organic waste in a way that meets our necessary and ambitious climate goals, and this legislation is a proven approach to funding waste management. A nominal charge per ton of waste will incentivize organics diversion while supporting food rescue, on-farm and community composting programs, and local business development with associated green jobs. The self-financing mechanism will also result in less pollution for all Marylanders.

We urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 134.

Contact:

Ryan Fredriksson

Vice President, Government Affairs

410-385-8276

rfredriksson@aqua.org

Maggie Ostdahl

Sr. Conservation Policy Manager

410-385-8275

mostdahl@aqua.org

SB134_MD Sierra Club_fav 2-11-25.pdf

Uploaded by: Martha Ainsworth

Position: FAV

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Testimony on: SB 134: “Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant Programs – Established”

Position: Support

Hearing Date: February 11, 2025

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club urges the Committee to support SB134. The bill would create a Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund to finance three grant programs aimed at increasing waste diversion, recycling, and composting infrastructure, financed by a \$2 per ton surcharge on waste disposal.

Reducing waste and its disposal in landfills and incinerators is a key strategy for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and fighting climate change. However, success at diverting waste depends critically on having in place the infrastructure for expanded composting and recycling. It requires investments in infrastructure by local governments, farmers, businesses, schools, nonprofits, and other local entities. SB134 would generate the resources for these needed investments, while encouraging waste reduction.

Solid waste surcharges ranging from 50 cents per ton to \$13 per ton at landfills, incinerators, and transfer stations have been funding recycling and waste reduction programs in Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin, as well as in local jurisdictions, since as early as the 1980s. These investments pay for themselves by reducing the amount of waste disposed. In Maryland, the grants could total more than \$14 million per year to support local governments, small businesses, non-profits, schools, farmers, and others in their efforts to advance wasted food prevention, rescue, recycling, and composting projects and infrastructure.

Earlier versions of this bill were introduced in the 2022, 2023, and 2024 General Assembly sessions. The current bill incorporates changes based on discussions with the Maryland Department of Environment and the Department of Agriculture to ensure that the bill fills programmatic gaps and is implementable by the agencies.

Waste diversion investments are critical, and a waste disposal surcharge has proven to be a highly effective way of funding them across the country. The Sierra Club respectfully requests a favorable report on SB134.

Ben Fischler
Chapter Zero Waste Team
brf57@yahoo.com

Josh Tulkin
Chapter Director
Josh.Tulkin@MDSierra.org

SB 134 - CBF - FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Matt Stegman

Position: FAV



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

*Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education*

Senate Bill 134

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

Date: February 11, 2025

To: Education, Energy, & Environment Committee

Position: **Favorable**

From: Julieta Rodrigo, Urban &
Community Resilience Manager

Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS** SB 134 which establishes the Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund, a special fund administered by Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), to support the On-Farm Organics Diversion and Recycling Grant Program administered by the Department of Agriculture (MDA) and the Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Program administered by MDE. Money credited to the Fund is intended to supplement, not replace, other funding sources that may support these programs.

FOOD WASTE IMPACTS CLIMATE CHANGE:

The diversion of food waste from incinerators and landfills through composting helps minimize the amount of carbon dioxide and methane released into the atmosphere by these traditional methods of waste management. Lower greenhouse gas emissions improve air quality, reduce impacts to human health, and increase resilience to the effects of climate change.

SOIL HEALTH IS KEY TO THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE:

Well-managed composting of waste adds biologically rich material to soils, feeding essential micro-organisms and fungi that improve soil health and enhance production of healthy, nutritious food. Healthier soils increase water holding capacity, facilitate nutrient cycling, and reduce soil loss, helping farmers maintain their land and minimizing risks to water quality and the Chesapeake Bay.

This legislation will improve soil health, help fight the effects of climate change, and transition Maryland to a more effective, equitable, and environmentally sound waste management system. The bill will support the Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund with a modest surcharge on solid waste disposal. CBF supports both the surcharge and the creation of the On-Farm Organics Diversion and Recycling Grant and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant programs.

CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on SB 134.

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, at mstegman@cbf.org.

Maryland Office • Philip Merrill Environmental Center • 6 Herndon Avenue • Annapolis • Maryland • 21403

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 200,000 members and e-subscribers, including 71,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.

SB 134 - Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted

Uploaded by: Matthew Capodanno

Position: FAV

SB 134

Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant Programs – Established Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee February 11, 2025

SUPPORT

Senate Bill 134 aims to reduce food waste by creating three new grant programs that would fund infrastructure, projects, education, composting, food rescue, and other food waste reduction programs through a \$2/ton surcharge on final waste disposal in landfills and incinerators.

The Maryland Food Bank estimates that 1 in 3 Marylanders are at risk of food insecurity. A person who is food insecure does not have consistent access to healthy and nutritious food on any given day, and this problem persists in every area of the state.

The Maryland Food Bank understands the importance – and challenges – of reducing and minimizing wasted food. We are an integral part of the local food system as the statewide food assistance safety net organization, last year providing food to over 1 million Marylanders. In order to carry out this critical work, we rely in part on donations of food. These donations come from a myriad of sources, including partnerships we organize with local grocery, wholesale, and retail organizations, as well as farms located around the state. Specifically, the Food Bank facilitates a Retail Recovery program that connects grocery stores and wholesalers to local food pantries and partners with farms who donate produce and allow staff and volunteers to glean extra crops. In FY 24, we ramped up our Retail Recovery program by 35%, rescuing 3 million pounds of food. We believe these are critical efforts to re-distribute food before it becomes wasted.

This work requires adequate resources and the partnership of the entire food system working together. SB 134 helps make that more realistic and achievable by providing resources to non-profit organizations and small businesses, local governments and communities, and our friends in agriculture. By involving the entire food supply chain, Maryland has the opportunity to not only combat wasted food productively and responsibly, but also to strengthen necessary infrastructure, increase education and awareness, and achieve environmental goals. Legislation like SB 134 is critical in transforming our food system into one that wastes no edible food, strengthens the capacity of organizations and businesses necessary in the food supply chain, and increases the food security of entire communities.

The Maryland Food Bank appreciates your consideration and respectfully requests a favorable report on SB 134.

SB0134-BT-EEE-SUPP.pdf

Uploaded by: Nina Themelis

Position: FAV



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations
88 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

SB134

February 11, 2025

TO: Members of the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

FROM: Nina Themelis, Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations

RE: Senate Bill 134- Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant Programs - Established

POSITION: Support

Chairs Feldman and Guzzone, Vice Chairs Kagan and Rosapepe, and Members of the Committees, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 134.

SB 134 supports wasted food diversion goals across the state of Maryland and priorities to reduce wasted food outlined in Baltimore City's [2018 Food Waste & Recovery Strategy](#). The "On-Farm Organics Diversion and Recycling Grant Program" established under SB 134 would fund various strategies to prevent, reduce and divert organic waste, potentially supporting the long-term goals of HB 264 – Organics Recycling - Food Residuals, which passed the Maryland General Assembly in 2021. Surcharges of \$2/ton from waste disposal facilities would support the grant program. SB 134 both addresses funding shortfalls for organic waste diversion activities by creating a new revenue source to divert organic waste.

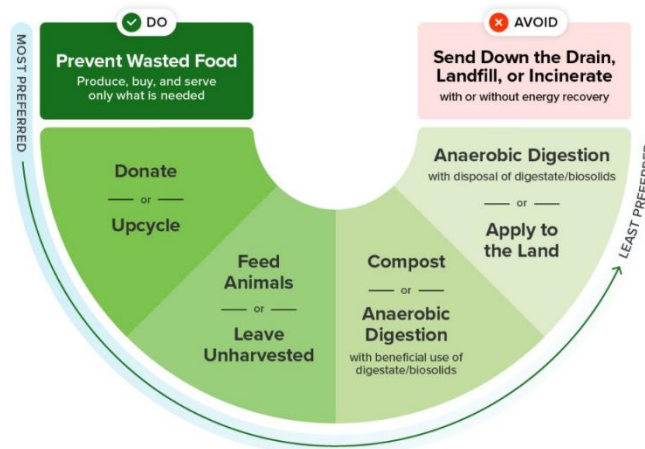
Wasted food contributes significantly to municipal solid waste cost which local governments are responsible for managing. An estimated 25% of residential waste in Baltimore City is food and roughly a third of waste is compostable, based on a 2019 waste sort. In the U.S., 40% of all food produced is wasted. For Maryland and the City of Baltimore, this means an exorbitant amount of food is sent to landfills, burned in waste incinerators opposed to feeding people, feeding animals or recirculating nutrients back into the local ecosystem (through composting).

The US Environmental Protection Agency has recognized food waste as a national, solvable problem with the release of its Food Waste Scale in 2023 which prioritizes prevention, redistribution and feeding animals as key strategies.



Wasted Food Scale

How to reduce the environmental impacts of wasted food



October 2023

Landfilling and burning food residuals are the least desired destinations for our food resources, according to the Food Waste Scale, yet in the U.S. the majority of food is disposed in this manner. Maryland has made tremendous progress to reduce food waste, but funding mechanisms to support these goals have been sparse, at best. Applying a \$2/ton surcharge on waste disposal facilities accomplishes 2 goals. First, the surcharge provides an incentive to reduce the amount of waste dumped at landfills and incinerators across the state, prompting a key change in waste behaviors. Second, the bill invests revenue from the surcharge into much needed food waste reduction infrastructure.

Per the bill language, fundable activities will be divided into three buckets 1) a Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Program; 2) an On-Farm Organics Diversion and Recycling Grant Program and 3) County Wasted Food Reduction Block Grants. Grants may support farmers, colleges/universities, non-profit organizations or businesses with resources to prevent food from being wasted, redistribute uneaten/unwanted food, feed animals, compost or recycle wasted food and fund various education, training or research goals.

Baltimore stands to benefit directly from the proposed block grants, designated for units of local government, institutions of higher education, non-profits, farmers, businesses, or some combination of these entities. Block grants under this legislation are intended to fund *'infrastructure, collection...education or technical assistance...'* programs across Maryland. Baltimore City may fund a range of food waste reduction needs with these funds including cold storage for produce, efforts to animals, composting infrastructure, education/technical assistance, the adoption of reusable food service ware and dishwashers, food scrap collection programs or staffing needs. In the city's 2018 Food Waste and Recovery Strategy, we commit to a 50% reduction in commercial food waste, eliminating all food waste from colleges and universities by, an 80% reduction in household food waste and a 90% diversion rate in k-12 schools by 2040. SB 134 makes these goals possible, and provides the much-needed funding to build critical food waste infrastructure.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully request a **favorable** report on SB 134.

SB 134_HB 42 LOS 2-7-25.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Rachel Jones

Position: FAV



Maryland Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary

Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
Kevin Atticks, Secretary
Steven A. Connelly, Deputy Secretary

The Wayne A. Cawley, Jr. Building
50 Harry S Truman Parkway
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
mda.maryland.gov

Agriculture | Maryland's Leading
Industry

410.841.5885 Baltimore/Washington
410.841.5846 Fax

Maryland Department of Agriculture Legislative Comment Date: February 7, 2025

BILL NUMBER: HB 42/SB 134
SHORT TITLE: **Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant Programs - Established**
MDA POSITION: Support

SB 134 establishes the *On-Farm Organics Diversion and Recycling Grant Program* at the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA), in addition to establishing grant programs at MDE. The grant program established at MDA aims to award grants to eligible entities to assist with the costs of developing and implementing on-farm composting and compost use projects, food waste prevention, and food rescue projects. MDA supports this legislation.

On-farm composting is an area of growing interest with farmers and provides both agronomic and environmental benefits. Compost can reduce chemical nutrient inputs requirements for crops, thus reducing input costs for the farm. Well managed compost provides a carbon-rich material that can increase organic matter levels and improve soil health. The diversion of food waste for on-farm composting will address state environmental goals for food waste reduction and diversion, while creating a circular economy model. Additionally, grants under the Program can enable training, education, and projects to reduce or redistribute food waste to support local communities.

The establishment of the *On-Farm Organics Diversion and Recycling Grant Program* at MDA would be a novel grant program at MDA and would expand available assistance to farms. Funding will be required for program administration and grant management; however, MDA is long experienced at delivering financial assistance directly to farms and farm businesses. We anticipate integrating the program into MDA's existing Office of Resource Conservation would have minimal operational impact. MDA requests your consideration of a favorable report for SB 134.

If you have additional questions, please contact Rachel Jones, MDA Director of Government Relations at Rachel.Jones2@maryland.gov or (667) 408-0134.

Testimony in support of SB0134 - Solid Waste Dispo

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

02/11/2025

Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON SB#0134 -
FAVORABLE

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

TO: Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy and the
Environment Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#0134, Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant Programs - Established

This bill is submitted to recognize that solutions to pollution and food waste that have a positive economic and environmental matters is possible. It will accomplish those goals by establishing the On-Farm Organics Diversion and Recycling Grant Program in the Department of Agriculture to award grants to eligible entities to develop and implement on-farm organics recycling and compost use, wasted food prevention, and food rescue. It can fund these efforts through establishing a solid waste disposal surcharge on the final disposal of solid waste in the State.

The data needed to evaluate the success of the efforts is mandated by requiring the Department to report to the General Assembly yearly beginning December 31, 2027, on the grants awarded, and the impact on job creation, producers, and food waste prevention; etc.

Maryland has a chance to be a leader in sustainable agriculture and food waste prevention as well as encouraging promotion of organics minimizing the negative effects of chemical use in agriculture.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB#0134.

SB 134_Maryland Catholics for Our Common Home_FAV.

Uploaded by: Robert Simon

Position: FAV



Hearing before the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Maryland General Assembly
February 11, 2025

**Statement of Support (FAVORABLE)
of Maryland Catholics for Our Common Home for
SB 134, Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and
Diversion Fund and Grant Programs - Established**

Maryland Catholics for Our Common Home (MCCH) is a lay-led organization of Catholics from parishes in the three Catholic dioceses in Maryland: the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the Archdiocese of Washington, and the Diocese of Wilmington. It engages in education about, and advocacy based upon, the teachings of the Catholic Church relating to care for creation and respect for all life. MCCH is a grassroots voice for the understanding of Catholic social teaching held by a wide array of Maryland Catholics. In the 2024 Legislative Session, 570 Maryland Catholics from 22 different Catholic parishes and religious communities across the State joined together through MCCH to support several key environmental bills under consideration by the General Assembly. MCCH is independent, though, and should be distinguished as an organization from the Maryland Catholic Conference, which represents the public policy positions of the bishops who lead these three dioceses.

Because we are attuned both to the cry of a distressed Earth and the cry of the poor who suffer first and foremost from a warming planet, **MCCH would like to express our strong support for Senate Bill 134 Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant Programs - Established.**

Americans currently waste about 60 million tons of food (40 percent of our entire food supply) per year.¹ These astounding numbers raise serious concerns.

Our Catholic tradition recognizes that food production, distribution, and consumption have multiple moral dimensions, especially in relation to the poor, whose dietary habits and accessibility to healthy food are impacted by their social and political vulnerability. Our agricultural system, no less than our economic and political systems, affects human dignity.

The U.S. Catholic bishops, along with organizations like the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, have had a special interest in food and agriculture for most of the last century. In 2003 they reemphasized this interest in *For I Was Hungry and You Gave Me Food: Catholic Reflections on Food, Farmers, and Farmworkers*, a pastoral document that offered a moral framework and action agenda for agricultural issues based on Catholic social teachings. Part Five explicitly notes that “Farmers should

¹ Recycle Track Systems, *Food Waste in America in 2025: Statistics and Facts*, available at <https://www.rts.com/resources/guides/food-waste-america/?form=MG0AV3>.

expand the use of environmentally sustainable methods so that farmland in the United States can provide food for generations to come.”²

Pope Francis has also spoken clearly on food/waste related issues. In his 2015 encyclical, entitled *Laudato Si’: On Care for Our Common Home*,³ he asserted that “we know that approximately a third of all food produced is discarded, and whatever food is thrown out it is as if [it] were stolen from the table of the poor.” (*Laudato Si’*, no. 50)

In an earlier speech in 2013, Pope Francis decried the “culture of waste” that has “made us insensitive to wasting and throwing out excess foodstuffs which is especially condemnable when, in every part of the world, unfortunately, many people and families suffer hunger and malnutrition.” He stated that this insensitive “mentality” related directly to human life insofar as the human person is “no longer seen as a primary value to be respected and safeguarded, especially if they are poor or disabled, if they are not yet useful — like the unborn child — or are no longer of any use — like the elderly person.” He concluded by calling on us to “combat the culture of waste and of throwing out....”⁴

As Maryland Catholic constituents, **we support Senate Bill 134** because this bill—

- revitalizes Maryland’s stagnant recycling rate and helps prevent food waste and losses from uneaten food;
- spurs composting and alternative infrastructures to polluting landfills and incinerators (which, because of their locations, often adversely impact overburdened and low-income people);
- provides direct benefits to local communities and vulnerable populations; and
- generates revenues for important food waste reduction programs (i.e., the Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Program, the On-Farm Organics Diversion and Recycling Grant Program, and the County Wasted Food Reduction Block Grant Program) and saves all taxpayers money from building future disposal sites.

For the above reasons, we strongly urge your support for this bill. Thank you for your consideration of our views and our respectful request for a **favorable report** on Senate Bill 134.

² U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, *For I Was Hungry and You Gave Me Food: Catholic Reflections on Food, Farmers, and Farmworkers* - Part 5, available at <https://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/agriculture-nutrition-rural-issues/for-i-was-hungry-pastoral-reflection-part-5>.

³ The English text of the encyclical, to which the paragraph numbers in the parentheses refer, can be found at: https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html.

⁴ Pope Francis, General Audience, 5 June 2013, available at https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130605_udienza-generale.html.

MDE SB134 SUP.pdf

Uploaded by: Serena McIlwain

Position: FAV



**The Maryland Department of the Environment
Secretary Serena McIlwain**

***Senate Bill 134
Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and
Grant Programs - Established***

Position: Support

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Date: February 11, 2025

From: Leslie Gray, Government Relations Officer

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) **SUPPORTS** SB 134.

This bill would establish a \$2/ton surcharge on material managed through a refuse disposal system for final disposal. The anticipated revenue generated from this bill is expected to be \$14.4 million which could fund several programs including the On-Farm Organics Diversion and Recycling Grant Program, the Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Program, and the County Wasted Food Block Grant Program, in addition to certain administrative costs for MDE and the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA).

MDE supports SB 134 as it would help create a reasonable surcharge at refuse disposal systems to help establish grants for organics recycling infrastructure. According to a 2016 Waste Characterization Study conducted in the State of Maryland, approximately 18% of Maryland's waste stream consists of food residuals, making it the State's most prominent waste stream. This bill will provide the grant funding necessary to help scale organics recycling in the State through a significant investment in organics recycling infrastructure. Currently, Maryland has both limited landfill capacity and limited space for additional landfills.

SB 134 would greatly assist the State with its waste diversion goals, and help protect Maryland citizens from the increased costs of waste transport for disposal outside of Maryland and the potential cost of new landfills.

In conclusion, MDE urges a **FAVORABLE** report for SB 134.

Contact: Leslie Gray, Government Relations Officer

Email: leslie.gray@maryland.gov

ILSR - SB134 Sign-On Testimony - FAV-combined.pdf

Uploaded by: Sophia Jones

Position: FAV



**TESTIMONY TO THE MARYLAND SENATE COMMITTEES ON EDUCATION,
ENERGY, & THE ENVIRONMENT, AND BUDGET & TAXATION**

**SB 134 – Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund
and Grant Programs**

Position: Favorable

February 11th, 2025 Public Hearing

Institute for Local Self-Reliance, 1200 18th Street, NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20036

Dear Members of the Committee,

The Institute for Local Self-Reliance and the undersigned 44 organizations support SB 134 and encourage the committee to pass this bill. We thank Senator Katie Fry Hester for bringing this legislation forward to establish needed funds and grant programs to reduce, rescue, and divert wasted food from disposal in Maryland.

Maryland's stagnant recycling rate, high landfill emissions, shrinking landfill capacity, and increasing demand for alternatives to food waste disposal indicate the need for widespread investment into wasted food reduction and diversion in a way that benefits local communities, NOW. Maryland has policies supporting healthy soils, food waste recovery, organics recycling, and composting but funding for implementation and support remains a crucial obstacle to progress. This bill invests in capacity and infrastructure, establishing funding that addresses the budget deficit while protecting taxpayers from future disposal costs, which will inevitably rise.

SB 134 establishes a nominal \$2/ton surcharge on final waste disposal to provide over \$14 million per year for development of infrastructure, programs, and education for wasted food diversion in Maryland through the (1) Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Program, the (2) On-Farm Organics Diversion and Recycling Grant Program, and the (3) County Wasted Food Reduction Block Grant Program. The disposal surcharge is added to existing disposal facility tip fees (which presently range from \$55-\$125/ton), applies only to waste disposed, and will not be assessed more than once on solid waste destined for disposal.

The funding will prioritize projects that directly benefit local communities, particularly overburdened and underserved communities, and that produce high-quality soil amendments to support Maryland soil and water health. Counties will receive reliable annual funding to support and expand wasted food prevention and diversion programs, infrastructure, and education, including staffing costs. These provisions support a collaborative approach to achieving better food and organics management throughout the state, with development via many avenues.

More than 10 states (including New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Iowa, Ohio, Indiana, Minnesota, Wisconsin, North Carolina, Arizona, and Tennessee) already have in place disposal surcharges that fund waste diversion, recycling, and composting. This model has been working for decades, producing positive impacts on local communities, economies, and the environment, and we strongly believe it will be successful in Maryland.



We, the undersigned 44 organizations, urge the Committee to support SB 134.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sophia Jones', is written over a horizontal line.

Sophia Jones

Policy and Advocacy Project Manager, Composting for Community

[Institute for Local Self-Reliance](#)

Attachments: (1) Fact Sheet on HB42/SB134 and (2) FAQs on HB42/SB134

Signed-On Organizations:

[American Sustainable Business Council](#)

Ask the Climate Question

[Baltimore Jewish Council](#)

Beaverdam Creek Watershed Watch Group

[Blue Water Baltimore](#)

[CASA](#)

Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Environmental Justice Ministry

[Centro de Apoyo Familiar](#)

[Chesapeake Bay Foundation](#)

[Chesapeake Climate Action Network Action Fund](#)

[Clean Water Action](#)

[ECO City Farms](#)

[Envision Frederick County](#)

[Food Recovery Network](#)

[Frederick County Food Council](#)

[Gaithersburg HELP](#)

[HoCo Climate Action](#)

Indivisible HoCoMD Environmental Action

[Less Plastic Please](#)

[Manna Food Center](#)

[Maryland Catholics for Our Common Home](#)

[Maryland Legislative Coalition](#)

[MLC - Climate Justice Wing](#)

[Maryland League of Conservation Voters](#)

[Mid-County United Ministries](#)

[Mobilize Frederick](#)

[Montgomery County Food Council](#)

[National Aquarium](#)

[North Avenue and Hilton Street Business Community Task Force](#)

[PEH Organics Recycling Inc.](#)

[Regenerative Solutions](#)

[Rise N Shine Foundation Inc.](#)

[Safe Skies Maryland](#)

[Share Our Strength / No Kid Hungry Maryland](#)

[St Rose of Lima Green Team Gaithersburg](#)

[Talbot Green Hands \(Interfaith Partners of the Chesapeake Chapter\)](#)

[The Universities at Shady Grove Student Council](#)

[Trash Free Maryland](#)

[Urbana High School Youth Climate Institute](#)

Varsity Kosher Food Service Inc.

[Vietnamese Americans Services Inc.](#)

[WeRadiate](#)

[Zero Waste Montgomery county](#)

[Zero Waste USA](#)

Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grants

This bill will generate over \$14 million in funding for food waste reduction and diversion projects including food rescue, food waste prevention, organics recycling and compost use, and moving away from single-use food service ware.

Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund:

Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Program

Funds projects, infrastructure, education, and technical assistance to reduce wasted food, rescue edible food, compost or recycle food residuals, and transition away from single-use food service ware

1

25%

2

On-Farm Organics Diversion and Recycling Grant Program

Funds farmers for wasted food reduction and organics diversion via cold storage, food rescue, composting, compost use, and more

25%

3

County Wasted Food Reduction Block Grants

All Counties will receive funding in proportion to their population to reduce, rescue, and divert wasted food

50%



Funded by: A \$2/ton surcharge on final waste disposal

Maryland needs this bill NOW

- ▶ Maryland's food waste diversion mandate, high landfill methane emissions, emissions reduction goals, and increasing demand for alternatives to food disposal require investment in infrastructure, capacity, and education.
- ▶ This bill prioritizes the economic growth and stability, environment, education, and health of Marylanders.

This bill funds many initiatives:

- Cold storage for produce
- Food rescue to feed people or animals
- Local composting infrastructure
- Education and technical assistance
- Reusable food service ware and dishwashers
- County and Municipal food scrap collection programs and staff
- ...to name a few examples

This bill addresses Maryland's budget deficit and saves Marylanders money

- ▶ Funded initiatives will help families avoid losses from uneaten food, averaging \$1,500/year for a family of four.
- ▶ Reliable annual funding will be available to support the longevity of wasted food reduction and diversion efforts in Maryland.
- ▶ This bill will raise new revenue that would help fight the state deficit while keeping Maryland regionally competitive and filling potential gaps in federal funding.
- ▶ Investment in alternative infrastructure to landfilling and burning trash will counter rising disposal costs and constant expansion of disposal facilities.

This bill supports small businesses and local communities

- ▶ Grant funds will be accessible to businesses, schools, nonprofits, local governments, and community groups to develop or expand community waste diversion efforts.
- ▶ Preventing and rescuing wasted food and recycling what's left will generate more jobs and local economic opportunities than landfilling and incineration.
- ▶ Priority funding will go to projects that serve overburdened and underserved communities, and produce minimally-contaminated soil amendments.

Many states have this system in place already. It is not novel.

- ▶ At least ten other states use a surcharge on disposal to fund waste diversion with major impact on the economy and the environment. 29 states have general landfill tipping fee surcharges.

Bill Sponsors:

Delegate Regina T. Boyce: regina.boyce@house.state.md.us

Senator Katie Fry Hester: katiefry.hester@senate.state.md.us

Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion - HB 42 & SB 134

Frequently Asked Questions

Drafted by: Sophia Jones (sjones@ilsr.org), Institute for Local Self-Reliance

What does this bill do?

- Establish a funding mechanism to support food waste reduction and diversion grant programs via a \$2 per ton surcharge on final waste disposal in landfills and incinerators.
- Mobilize an estimated \$14 million to build alternatives to food waste disposal.
- Create three new grant programs for
 - (1) reducing, rescuing, composting, and recycling wasted food (including infrastructure, operations, education, and technical assistance,) and transition away from disposable food service ware;
 - (2) on-farm organics recycling and compost use, wasted food prevention, and food rescue;
 - (3) Counties to reduce, rescue, and divert wasted food in the county.
- Make food waste diversion more accessible and more competitive by using funds from waste disposal to build food rescue, food waste reduction, and organics recycling projects.

Why is this bill important?

- The goal is that there will be a significant enough decrease in disposal of organics and an increase in alternatives such that haulers can be paying less in tipping fees and the inevitable increases in the costs of disposal will be mitigated by the availability of alternatives across the board.
- As Maryland's population is anticipated to rise, there will be an inevitable need to develop alternative infrastructure. Doing this sooner rather than later will save future costs and get Maryland ahead.
- This bill nominally increases the cost of disposal in exchange for investment in robust and locally-driven food waste reduction and organics management infrastructure. This is a way to insure against disposal costs that will exponentially increase moving forward due to shrinking landfill capacity and machinery upkeep and replacement needs.

What will the programs funded by the disposal surcharge support?

- The Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Program (administered by MDE) will fund projects, infrastructure, and education to reduce food waste, rescue edible food, compost or recycle food residuals, and to transition away from single-use food serviceware.
- The On-Farm Organics Diversion and Recycling Grant Program (administered by MDA) will support farmers in food preservation and rescue, including: cold storage; recovering food to feed animals; organics recycling; compost use; and the equipment, infrastructure, labor, technical assistance, testing, and other needs to achieve food waste reduction and diversion.
- The County Wasted Food Reduction Block Grant Program distributes flexible, annual funding to County governments, in proportion to their population, for infrastructure, programs, and education to reduce, rescue, and divert wasted food.

Who will be eligible for funding?

- The Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Program will be accessible to: units of local government, local educational agencies, institutions of higher education, non-profit organizations, for-profit businesses, and farmers including urban farmers. This includes waste haulers looking to move their businesses toward waste reduction activities.
- The On-Farm Organics Diversion and Recycling Grant Program will be accessible to: farmers including urban farmers, Soil Conservation Districts, institutions of higher education, non-profit organizations, and for-profit businesses.
- The County Wasted Food Reduction Block Grant Program directs funding to all Maryland counties, including Baltimore City and the Mid-Shore Counties.
- Priority funding for all programs will support projects that provide direct benefits to their local communities and address community needs, serve overburdened or underserved communities, follow relevant best management practices, produce minimally-contaminated compost, and more.

How does the disposal surcharge work?

- \$2 is added to the existing disposal facility and transfer station's tipping fee (which presently range from \$55-\$125/ton in Maryland) on waste disposed. Waste generators pay for hauling services and haulers pay these tipping fees when dumping waste at a disposal facility.
- Haulers are authorized to pass down the costs of the surcharge (but not more) to the waste generators. Haulers already incorporate tipping fees into their business and payment structure and they would account for the \$2/ton accordingly. Haulers may work to avoid disposal costs by offering expanded service for organics and recycling.
- Spread amongst households, businesses, and other waste generators, the \$2/ton disposal surcharge would cost approximately \$2.50 per person per year.

How might the surcharge amount change?

- This bill sets the surcharge amount at \$2/ton of waste disposed.
- The surcharge will be reviewed every two years beginning on or before July 1, 2028, to adjust for inflation and to determine if other adjustments to the surcharge amount are recommended.
- Successful food waste reduction and diversion will ideally decrease tonnage disposed in landfills and incinerators. In order to provide steady annual funding for the grant programs as waste disposal tonnages (ideally) decrease over time, the surcharge amount may be increased.

What are the economic benefits to Marylanders?

- The estimated \$14 million in annual revenue is significant enough to make meaningful change in Maryland. This funding will fully cover the costs of setting up and administering the grant programs while also awarding significant funding to entities all across Maryland to implement wasted food reduction and diversion.
- Economic benefits to businesses and households include investment in local businesses, development of more local jobs, establishment of alternatives to not be reliant on disposal of organics.
- The average US family of four loses \$1,500 per year to uneaten food. This bill will help develop support for households to save resources and navigate alternatives to food waste.
- This bill nominally increases the cost of disposal in exchange for investment in robust and

locally-driven food waste reduction and organics management infrastructure. This is a way to insure against disposal costs that will exponentially increase moving forward due to shrinking landfill capacity and machinery upkeep and replacement needs.

- The goal is to achieve a significant enough decrease in disposal of organics and an increase in alternatives such that haulers can be paying less in tipping fees and the inevitable increases in the costs of disposal will be mitigated by the availability of alternatives across the board.

What are the other benefits to Marylanders?

- The benefits to Marylanders are beyond just economic. Funded projects will support food security, local communities, healthy soils, and a clean environment.
- With prioritization of projects that are locally-driven and provide direct benefits to the community, this bill will support community engagement and availability of local jobs.
- This bill prioritizes projects that use processes to create clean, minimally-contaminated soil amendments. This will ensure that funded organics recycling and composting projects are prioritizing high quality end products, with minimal contamination from microplastics and PFAS, that can be confidently used to grow food and build soil health.

Why is this funding mechanism and grant program carried out statewide instead of at the County level?

- Administration of the grant programs will be done at the state level, avoiding the need for Counties to each support their own administration.
- The state needs widespread investment and infrastructure and a collaborative approach to achieve its ambitious statewide GHG emissions, recycling, and waste diversion goals.
- The program will be championed at the state level, with direct funding to counties and the indirect benefit of greater infrastructure developing through many avenues and at all levels.
- Via the block grants, Counties that already have various food waste reduction and diversion programs set up can use this money to fund and expand those (e.g. residential compost collection programs). Other Counties can use this funding to set up desired programs and pay for staff.

Who was involved in the development of this bill?

- Over the past 4 years, the Institute for Local Self-Reliance (ILSR), with the guidance of Delegate Regina T. Boyce, has gathered input from numerous stakeholders in order to make sure that this bill fills programmatic gaps, is implementable, and fits Maryland's unique landscape. Some of these stakeholders include the Department of Environment, Department of Agriculture, Maryland Clean Water Action, US Composting Council's Maryland-DC Chapter, and others.

Does this disposal surcharge mechanism exist in other states?

- Yes, most states levy some surcharge on waste disposal to landfills, incinerators, and/or transfer stations. At least ten states have disposal surcharges that directly fund recycling, compost, and other environmental initiatives.¹ They include New Jersey, Indiana, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Ohio, Iowa, North Carolina, Wisconsin, Arizona, and Tennessee. The average per-ton surcharge among these states is \$3.97/ton.

¹ Jones, Sophia. February, 2022. "Surcharges on Waste Disposal Fund Composting." Institute for Local Self-Reliance.

- Some examples of surcharge policies administered at the local level include Alameda, San Mateo, and Santa Clara Counties in California.
- Recently, a handful of states have moved to establish, revive, or expand disposal surcharge mechanisms to fund waste reduction, including [New York](#), [Arizona](#), and [Pennsylvania](#).

How have these other states benefited from this mechanism?

- ILSR produced an [article](#) in 2022 featuring examples of this program's results in other states and municipalities. Some notable investments and impacts on waste diversion include:
 - Ohio's [Community and Litter](#) grant program awarded \$3.4 million was awarded to 77 projects in 2021, ranging from organics composting, to public space litter cleanups, to recycling equipment like organic material chippers.
 - Indiana's [Recycling Market Development Grants](#) and the [Community Recycling Grant Program](#) awarded over \$1.8 million in grant funding in 2020, creating up to 47 new jobs and increasing the amount of recycled materials by almost 85,000 tons.
 - Pennsylvania's Environmental Stewardship Fund supports [agricultural best management practices and watershed protection efforts](#) in addition to waste reduction projects.
 - In North Carolina, almost \$1 million in recycling grant funding was awarded to 47 recipients in Fiscal Year 2019-2020, resulting in 45 new jobs created, 8 million additional tons of plastic recycled, and 55,000 tons of organic material diverted from landfills.

Testimony in support of SB0134.pdf

Uploaded by: Stephanie Lansing

Position: FAV



"Cultivating a collaborative, sustainable, and equitable food system for all Maryland communities."

February 7, 2025

2025 SESSION SUPPORT TESTIMONY

SB 134: Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant Programs – Established

SB 134: Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant Programs – Established

COMMITTEE: Environment and Transportation

POSITION: Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 134

Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit this statement for the record **in support of Senate Bill 134**.

This letter is submitted on behalf of the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council. The Food System Resiliency Council was established by the Maryland General Assembly during the 2021 legislative session to bring together 32 appointed council members from across the state, all with different points of entry and expertise, to work toward a more resilient food system and address the food insecurity crisis.

One of the key mandates of this Council is to develop equity and sustainability policy recommendations to increase the long-term resiliency of Maryland's food system. A key recommendation of the November [2024 Food System Resiliency Council Report](#) to the Maryland Legislature (Recommendation #2.2) was increasing the capacity for diverted organic materials through establishing grant and program funds using a waste disposal surcharge. This surcharge aligns with established programs in neighboring states and would help reduce waste and increase rescuing and recycling of food in the State. Currently, the State has minimal facilities for food diversion to increase food security or recycle non-recoverable food resources. Increasing food diversion, providing education on food waste reduction, and developing organic recycling infrastructure will increase our food system resiliency and build on emerging practices in the State. It is important that legislation is passed that addresses problems throughout the state, with resources allocated to organic diversion, composting, food rescue, education, source separation, upcycling, and exploring linkage between food waste and hunger.

A first step in increased food resiliency can be achieved by **passing SB 134**, which will not require state baseline funding but will establish grant funds to provide infrastructure, programming, and educational resources for on-farm food waste composting as well as increasing food rescue efforts. The passing of SB 134 would create the Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and the County



"Cultivating a collaborative, sustainable, and equitable food system for all Maryland communities."

Wasted Food Reduction Block Grant Program. Awarded grants from these programs will increase infrastructure, programs, and education that reduce, rescue, and divert wasted food in the State and within counties.

Over one-third of the food produced in the United States is never eaten, wasting the calories and production resources used to grow food that could have fed more than 150 million people each year. The wasted food comprises 1/4 of our landfill content. USEPA stated that reducing 50% of the food waste going to US landfills would be the equivalent of eliminating the greenhouse gas emissions from 21 coal-fired power plants or 15 million homes' annual energy use.

Passing SB 134 will benefit Maryland's Food System, create resources for important food system resiliency initiatives throughout the supply chain, and increase our circular bioeconomy. Each year, 119 billion lbs. of food are wasted in the US, equivalent to 1 lb./person/day or 130 billion meals at an economic value of \$408 billion per year. With 13.5 million US households being food-insecure at some time, there is a need to reduce this food waste impact. Based on the latest United for ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) data, one in three Marylanders (2 million people) are at risk of becoming food insecure. The SB 134 legislation will create the funds needed to execute important initiatives and help increase food resiliency and reduce food insecurity by funding important food infrastructure and education efforts.

Nationwide, 29 states have additional surcharges for solid waste, with over 1/3 of these states having a surcharge between \$1-\$2. The \$2 per ton fee proposed in Maryland is less than the disposal fees of our two neighboring states. West Virginia has a \$2.75 surcharge per ton of solid waste. Pennsylvania has a \$6.25 per ton surcharge spread across three initiatives. Pennsylvania's Growing Greener Grants has a \$4 per ton charge funding the Growing Greener Grants Program established in 1999, a \$0.25 per ton charge funding an Environmental Stewardship Fund (ESF) established in 2002, and a \$2 per ton charge for waste disposal at landfills and resource recovery facilities established in 1988 to finance the Recycling Fund to award municipal grants for recycling collection, education, processing facilities, and equipment.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our support of SB 134 and create opportunities for increased food security in the state of Maryland using a model that has been established and well-received in our neighboring states.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Lansing
Vice-Co-Chair, Maryland Food System Resiliency Council
Slansing@umd.edu

School Food Waste Testimony (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Tanvi Modugula

Position: FAV

Good afternoon, Chair and members of the committee. My name is Tanvi Modugula, and I'm a junior at Mount Hebron High School. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today in support of this bill.

A few years ago, I helped start a composting program at my school, and the results were eye-opening. In just four months, our pilot program diverted 7,000 pounds of food waste from landfills—that's the equivalent of offsetting 314 gallons of gasoline. But getting there wasn't easy. We struggled to secure funding for training, infrastructure, and educational materials. The only reason we were able to launch the program was because of a small, temporary grant.

That experience showed me how much schools can do to fight food waste—but also how much more support we need to make these efforts sustainable. Reliable funding, like what this bill provides, would allow schools to start and grow programs without the constant fear of running out of resources.

This bill isn't just about reducing waste. It's about education, empowerment, and community. Our composting program inspired younger students to get involved, brought families together, and showed that small changes can lead to big impacts. Imagine the difference we could make if more schools had the opportunity to implement these programs.

If we don't act now, schools could lose momentum and miss the chance to build on the progress we've worked so hard to achieve. With this bill, we can ensure composting and food waste diversion become the norm in Maryland schools.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Red

Uploaded by: Tom Taylor

Position: FAV

February 7, 2025

To: Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Subject: SB134: Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant Programs

Position: **Favorable**

I am writing in support of SB134, which will establish needed funds and grant programs to reduce, rescue, and divert wasted food from disposal in Maryland.

Maryland has good and significant policies supporting food waste recovery, organics recycling, composting, and healthy soils. However, funding for implementation and support remains a crucial obstacle to progress. This bill invests in capacity and infrastructure, establishing funding that addresses the budget deficit while protecting taxpayers from future disposal costs that are likely to increase over time.

SB134 will provide more than \$14 million per year for development of infrastructure, programs, and education for wasted food diversion in Maryland. This legislation establishes a nominal \$2/ton surcharge on final waste disposal to provide needed funding for the above-named efforts.

Maryland's stagnant recycling rate, high landfill emissions, shrinking landfill capacity, and increasing demand for alternatives to food waste disposal indicate the need for widespread investment into wasted food reduction and diversion.

As an active volunteer with local zero waste and food scrap recovery efforts, I can personally testify to the need for this legislation, and to the difficulty of establishing the needed infrastructure that this bill addresses.

The funding will prioritize projects that directly benefit local communities, especially underserved communities, and that produce high-quality soil amendments to support Maryland soil and water health. Counties will receive reliable annual funding to support and expand wasted food prevention and diversion programs, infrastructure, and education, including staffing costs.

These provisions support a collaborative approach to achieving better food and organics management throughout the state, with development via many avenues. This legislation is a win for Maryland taxpayers, for the state budget, for climate resiliency, and for food waste reduction across the state.

I urge a favorable vote on SB134.

Sincerely,

Tom Taylor
11-G Laurel Hill Road
Greenbelt, MD 20770
301-513-9524

MDFB - Support - SB134.pdf

Uploaded by: Tyler Hough

Position: FAV



Maryland Farm Bureau

3358 Davidsonville Road | Davidsonville, MD 21035
410-922-3426 | www.mdfarmbureau.com

February 7, 2025

To: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

Re: **Support of SB134 - Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant Programs - Established**

On behalf of our member families, I submit this written testimony in support of SB134, legislation that will create grant programs to divert compostable waste from landfills as well as on-farm composting and compost use. Funded by a nominal surcharge on waste disposed at landfills, incinerators, and waste transfer stations, this grant program could generate as much as \$30 million per year to be made available to mobilize investments in waste prevention, reuse, repair, recycling, and composting.

A significant amount of the grant funds would be earmarked to support on-farm composting and compost use. Expanding the ability to compost on farms is essential for farmers to generate the needed organic matter and natural fertilizer to improve soil health and make farm fields more resilient. Programs like this one would inject money into a fledgling industry that would help divert compostable materials from the landfill and to a farm for a much better and more sustainable use.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS SB134

Tyler Hough

Director of Government Relations

Please contact Tyler Hough, though@marylandfb.org, with any questions

SB0134_IndivisibleHoCo_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Virginia Smith

Position: FAV



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 entices 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.

Virginia Smith
Columbia, MD 21044

Green Grove Written Testimony in Support of SB0134

Uploaded by: Yara Aziz

Position: FAV



Green Grove
greengrovenonprofit@gmail.com
667-786-2244

Written Testimony in Support of SB0134: Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant Programs - Established

Submitted by Phu Tran, Yara Aziz, Fatou Savage, Kashvi Mehta, Addysen Whitfield, Erin Park, Green Grove

Maryland Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee February 11, 2025

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee,

We are high school students in Maryland and representatives of Green Grove, a youth-led organization dedicated to bridging the food accessibility gap and educating students about sustainable practices. Our mission is to empower the next generation with the knowledge and resources necessary to address food insecurity and environmental sustainability through advocacy, education, and direct action. We are writing to strongly urge a **favorable** vote on **SB0134**, a bill that will directly benefit students like us, as well as schools and communities across the state.

The Need for SB134 in Schools and Student Communities

As students, we have seen firsthand the staggering amount of food waste that occurs daily in school cafeterias. Despite efforts to provide meals for all students, a large portion of uneaten food is discarded instead of being recovered for redistribution or composted for environmental benefit. The implementation of **food recovery and composting programs through SB0134 would directly impact students in the following ways:**

1. **Reallocating School Funds for Student Enrichment** Currently, schools across Maryland spend significant amounts on waste disposal services, including tipping fees at landfills and waste collection contracts. Worcester County, for example, charges \$80 per ton in landfill tipping fees, while Baltimore County charges \$125 per ton for excess waste disposal. These costs add up and divert funding from critical student programs. By reducing food waste through recovery initiatives, schools can **save thousands of dollars annually**, allowing these funds to be redirected toward extracurricular activities, sports programs, and educational resources that benefit students directly.
2. **Reducing Unnecessary Food Purchases** Schools frequently purchase additional food while simultaneously throwing away untouched, perfectly edible meals. Rather than continuously increasing food budgets, **this bill would encourage the preservation and redistribution of surplus food**, ensuring that students in need receive meals while reducing overall food procurement costs. This allows money to be spent on improving school facilities, increasing access to mental health resources, and expanding educational opportunities.

3. **Addressing the Glaring Gap Between Compostable Materials and Composting Programs**
Schools like Reservoir High School already use compostable lunch trays, yet many lack the infrastructure to **compost** these materials. This creates a **major financial inefficiency**, as we are paying for compostable materials without reaping their environmental benefits. SB0134 would help ensure that composting systems are properly established, making our schools more environmentally responsible while aligning our spending with sustainable waste management practices.
4. **Empowering Students to Lead Environmental Change** SB0134 would provide Maryland youth with **hands-on experience in food waste reduction, environmental stewardship, and sustainability practices**. Through food rescue initiatives and composting programs, students gain valuable life skills, leadership opportunities, and exposure to real-world applications of sustainability science. This bill would equip the next generation with the tools to combat food waste not just in schools, but in their communities and future careers.
5. **Tackling Food Waste at Its Root – A Perspective from Our Nonprofit’s Work** Through our work with farms, restaurants, and food banks, we have witnessed how the lack of structured food rescue and composting programs exacerbates food waste and food insecurity. Many local food producers are forced to discard excess food due to logistical and financial barriers that could be addressed through this bill’s grant program. Implementing **SB134 would create a system that not only prevents unnecessary waste but ensures that surplus food reaches those who need it most**.

In conclusion, SB0134 is an essential step toward a **smarter, more sustainable approach to food waste management in Maryland’s schools and communities**. It would lead to **better financial decision-making, increased student opportunities, and a stronger commitment to environmental sustainability**. As students who will see the direct impacts of this legislation, we respectfully urge the committee to **vote favorable on SB0134** to support a future where Maryland's youth can thrive in a more resourceful and responsible school system.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Phu Tran, Yara Aziz, Fatou Savage, Kashvi Mehta, Addysen Whitfield, Erin Park
Green Grove
greengrovenonprofit@gmail.com

SB134_MRA_FWA.pdf

Uploaded by: Sarah Price

Position: FWA

MARYLAND RETAILERS ALLIANCE

The Voice of Retailing in Maryland



SB134 Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant Programs - Established Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee February 11th, 2025

Position: Favorable with Amendments

Background: SB134 would establish a grant program to fund projects that aim to reduce food waste in Maryland, and would establish a surcharge for a certain amount of solid waste.

Comments: The Maryland Retailers Alliance supports the establishment of a grant program to incentivize and support programs to reduce food waste in Maryland. Efforts to reduce food waste often lead to symbiotic relationships between food retailers and entities like food banks and local farms. Many of our members have engaged in contracts and relationships with farms and charitable organizations to divert unsold food products for many years, even before recent State laws drew more attention to the issue. The establishment of a grant award to further incentivize food waste diversion will benefit a variety of industries in Maryland and assist in efforts to find new uses for unsold products within the food retail industry.

Regarding other portions of the bill, MRA has concerns related to the impact of establishing a surcharge fee per tonnage of solid waste. The proposed surcharge fee extends beyond the issue of food waste and would appear to impact all sources of solid waste in the state. Given the current existing mandates regarding food waste reduction and the variety of other proposals designed to encourage and increase recycling in the state, we believe that the proposed fee would be punitive. Some categories of waste cannot be avoided, whether through intentional diversion at the business level or through increased recycling. The proposed surcharge would impact both businesses and consumers in Maryland at a time when costs are increasing across the board, and we would respectfully recommend that the Committee consider removing the related language.

Thank you for your consideration.

SB0134_UNF_NWRA_Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge & W

Uploaded by: Drew Vetter

Position: UNF

Maryland-Delaware Solid Waste Association

a chapter of the



Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

February 11, 2025

*Senate Bill 134 – Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion
Fund and Grant Programs – Established***POSITION: OPPOSE**

The Maryland chapter of the National Waste and Recycling Association (NWRA) is a trade association representing the private solid waste industry in the State of Maryland. Its membership includes hauling and collection companies, processing and recycling facilities, transfer stations, and disposal facilities. NWRA and its members oppose Senate Bill 134.

Senate Bill 134 proposes establishing an On-Farm Organic Diversion and Recycling Grant Program funded by establishing a new solid waste disposal surcharge on the final disposition of solid waste in the State. The solid waste disposal surcharge will impose a surcharge of \$2 per ton of solid waste processed by a refuse disposal system. The surcharge must also be adjusted every two years after establishment in accordance with the Consumer Price Index for the Mid-Atlantic Division and gives the Maryland Department of the Environment the authority to evaluate the surcharge to determine whether it should be increased.

NWRA does not object to the intent of this legislation, which is to identify ways to offset the costs of developing and implementing on-farm composting and compost use, food waste prevention, and food rescue projects. However, we do not believe the proposed surcharge is the proper funding mechanism for this worthy goal. Our members in the waste disposal business are simply managing waste after it is generated. In many cases, we are providing this service on behalf of county or municipal governments. The proposed surcharge does not account for food waste producers and focuses only on the end-of-life waste management sector. In designing a funding solution for food waste diversion programs, we feel that food waste producers should be a part of the solution. Additionally, any new solid waste disposal surcharge will most likely be passed on to the producers of solid waste, meaning nearly every household and business in Maryland would have higher charges for waste disposal. At a time when household budgets are being squeezed by inflation and other economic pressures, legislation resulting in higher waste disposal costs is not prudent. In addition to increased costs for consumers, this legislation would also increase costs for local governments. This surcharge would apply equally to the public and private refuse disposal systems. Local governments are already struggling financially to provide essential public services. A new cost in the form of a surcharge would place another burden on local governments and taxpayers.

We encourage the Committee to look at alternative funding sources for on-farm organics and recycling grant programs. The proposed surcharge will lead to higher costs for Maryland businesses, consumers, and local governments during a time of economic strain and increased operating costs. Unless and until these concerns about the surcharge area are addressed, we request an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 134.

For more information:

Andrew G. Vetter
J. Steven Wise
Danna L. Kauffman
410-244-7000

SB134 letter.pdf

Uploaded by: Larry Foster

Position: UNF



January 27, 2025

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

My name is Larry Foster, and I am here today on behalf of my company, Evergreen Disposal. We are a family-owned, local business proudly serving the Southern Maryland community for the past 16 years. Throughout this time, Evergreen has been a cornerstone of the community, remaining committed to dumping locally in Southern Maryland, even when out-of-state options were available.

I am here to express my strong opposition to SB134, an unnecessary tax that will place undue burdens on small haulers like myself and the residents we serve. If passed, this tax will force small haulers to either absorb the increased costs—placing additional strain on already thin margins—or pass them on to homeowners, many of whom are already feeling financial pressures.

Here are some figures that highlight the challenges our industry has endured over the past few years:

1. The cost of a new trash truck has increased from \$285,000 to \$445,000 in just three years—a 64% jump.
2. Tire prices have risen by 32% during the same period.
3. Recycling dumping fees have escalated from \$68.00 per ton to \$105.00 per ton—a staggering 64% increase.
4. Our local county run landfill just had the largest yearly increase in history with an 11% increase.

These numbers illustrate the financial strain that haulers like Evergreen are already navigating. Adding a tax that can be reviewed and adjusted every two years by the Maryland Department of the Environment creates further uncertainty. Where do these increases stop?

Additionally, this proposed tax could have unintended consequences for Maryland's environment. Historically, taxes on waste disposal have led to increased illegal dumping and other unregulated practices, which can result in significant environmental harm. The purpose of this legislation could be undermined by the very behavior it inadvertently encourages.

Another critical concern is the economic impact on local communities. By forcing haulers to seek cheaper disposal options out of state, this tax could reduce revenue for local landfills and transfer stations, thereby negatively affecting local economies.

With these facts in mind, I strongly urge you to vote **NO** on SB134. This tax would harm small businesses, burden homeowners, and create potential risks for Maryland's environment and economy.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Larry Foster

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