



January 25, 2025
2025 SESSION SUPPORT TESTIMONY
HB0042: Wasted Food Diversion Grant

BILL: HB0042: Wasted Food Diversion Grant

COMMITTEE: Environment & Transportation

POSITION: Testimony in Support of the House Bill 42

BILL ANALYSIS: 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; establishing a solid waste disposal surcharge on the disposal of solid waste in the State; 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.

Dear Chair Korman and Members of the Senate Environment and Transportation Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. The Montgomery County Food Council (MCFC) urges you to SUPPORT the Wasted Food Diversion Grant Bill, which will help address the critical need for investment into wasted food reduction and recovery programs and infrastructure in Maryland and establish the Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant Programs. This program would assist with the costs of developing and implementing infrastructure and technical assistance for on-farm composting, compost use, food waste reduction, and food rescue projects across Maryland.

This legislation addresses a need for critical investments in wasted food reduction, edible food rescue, and diversion programs that support Maryland's climate goals and food system resilience. We hear from farmers and food assistance providers in our county that lack of funding for investments in infrastructure is a barrier to expanding local food recovery and composting. The Maryland Food System Resiliency Council has also recommended establishing a wasted food reduction and diversion grant program funded by a modest disposal surcharge (Recommendation 2.2: Establishment of Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant Programs. Maryland Food Systems Resiliency Council 2023 and



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2024 reports to the General Assembly). Expanding on-farm composting infrastructure and the availability of high-quality compost supports farmers and agriculture in Maryland and enhances soil health. Grants from this program could also provide funding for much needed cold storage infrastructure for edible food recovery that can benefit local growers, food assistance providers, and residents. This legislation creates the funding mechanism to invest and expand in these needed local programs. For these reasons, the Montgomery County Food Council supports House Bill 42 and urges a FAVORABLE REPORT for this bill. Thank you.

The Montgomery County Food Council is a nonprofit organization that serves as the primary connection point for businesses, nonprofits, government agencies, and residents around food system issues in our County. We bring together over 2,000 local and regional partners in community-wide education, advocacy, and capacity building initiatives. Our work cultivates a more resilient, sustainable, and equitable local food system by enhancing food access for the over 100,000 at risk for hunger, expanding food education opportunities for all residents, supporting our County's farms and food and beverage businesses, and addressing the impact of local food production, distribution, consumption and recycling on our natural resources.

For more information, please contact Nanya Chiejine, Executive Director, at nanya@mocofoodcouncil.org



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