



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE ACTING COUNTY EXECUTIVE

BILL: **House Bill 42: Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant Programs - Established**

SPONSORED BY: **Delegate Boyce**

HEARING DATE: **January 29, 2025 1:30PM**

COMMITTEES: **Environment and Transportation**

CONTACT: **Intergovernmental Affairs Office, 301-780-8411**

POSITION: **INFORMATIONAL ONLY**

The Office of the Acting Prince George's County Executive submits this letter of information regarding its position on **House Bill 42: House Bill 42: Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant Programs**. As a leader in waste diversion, resource recovery, and stormwater management in Maryland, Prince George's County stands ready to engage the state in the collaborative work needed to brighten the future of urban agriculture in Maryland.

Yet, while the County generally agrees with the concept of the state helping to fund such initiatives, it is our understanding that in its current form, this bill will unfairly dilute the progress achieved locally, by potentially imposing an additional \$2 surcharge which will likely result in an increase in cost for those utilizing our local landfill. This surcharge would be collected locally and sent to the State, to be meted out to other jurisdictions to fund the development of their waste diversion facilities.

As you know, Prince George's County has expended significant resources to be the state's leader in waste diversion. Instead, Prince George's County proposes to work with the sponsoring Delegate and members of the committee to explore the following changes and alternatives to the proposal.

First, we ask that the legislation exclude waste delivered to County-owned and operated facilities that collect waste from residential properties, pursuant to a fee paid on the residential property taxes, from the fee. Today, Prince George's County collects waste from approximately 180,000 households. As presented, we believe that

a tax increase would be required if the County had to provide \$2 to the state for every ton collected. As this fee does not currently fully cover the costs of collecting and processing waste, we utilize revenues from recycling/composting, the solid waste benefit charge, and other County funds to offset the additional costs. We suggest that the bill, either 1) provide that the program be directly administered, and funds retained by the County, or 2) the program be administered by the comptroller, but a minimum amount of 95% of the revenues (the remainder being used for administration) collected in the County be returned to the County for use in our recycling, composting, and re-use efforts to include on-farm composting.

In 2024 PG County generated approximately 617,000 tons of municipal solid waste that was NOT recycled/composted, and approximately 423,000 tons of construction debris. At a minimum, the County should receive the full \$2 surcharge for all waste generated & disposed of in the County to fund our programs. A total of \$2,080,000 in revenues would be received if this program was administered directly by the County.

Further concerns cause some level of pause in the draft's definitions contained therein. First, it is unclear if Municipal Recycling Facilities, Organics Composting Facilities, and lot storage of items for recycling/reuse/composting are excluded from this surcharge. The definition in 9-201 that is cited is unclear as well. Second, it is unclear if private waste facilities – such as rubble fills, demolition material fills, coal ash facilities or transfer stations – are included. Third, there is no definition of “final disposal” contained in this legislation.

Finally, it is important to note that increases in the costs (the 2\$ surcharge, plus administrative costs) will increase the cost of waste disposal charged to our local landfill users. These added costs raise the burden on users, which may lead to additional illegal dumping. As you may be aware, while the County has made major advancements in streamlining its enforcement and prosecutive efforts, cleaning up illegal dumping remains a 14-million-dollar a year problem in our County.

Still, the Office of the Acting Prince George's County Executive sees this proposal as a worthy effort to pursue. We thank Delegate Boyce for their strong advocacy and collaborative spirit as we continue to work together on improving resource recovery operations throughout the state. We look forward to further discussion on this matter with the bill's sponsor and committee.