



Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
Josh Kurtz, Secretary
David Goshorn, Deputy Secretary

March 24, 2026

BILL NUMBER: HOUSE BILL 164 – THIRD READER

SHORT TITLE: STATE BUILDINGS AND STATE HIGHWAYS - COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL OF YARD WASTE

DEPARTMENT’S POSITION: SUPPORT

EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT’S POSITION

This legislation serves to improve the disposal methods of recyclable yard waste generated in the course of gardening, landscaping, and tree trimming activities occurring on the grounds of state facilities through the prohibition of single-use plastic containers for such purposes. It also requires that yard waste collected on the grounds of a state building or state highway be disposed of at in-state organics recycling facilities, natural wood waste recycling facilities, or state facilities with the on-site capacity to create mulch or soil amendments. The Department of Natural Resources supports this effort to enhance the sustainability of maintenance work on state-owned land.

This legislation would have minimal fiscal and operational impacts on the department, as compostable yard waste bags typically cost more than conventional plastic bags, and disposal of yard waste at one of the three named facility types may incur higher transport and disposal fees. However, the addition of a 30-mile radius cap has helped to mitigate any additional transportation costs.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Disposing of organic plant waste such as leaves, garden waste, lawn cuttings, weeds, and prunings in single-use plastic containers is generally poor practice in that plastic does not decompose at the same rate as yard waste and prevents effective composting of organic material.

Most DNR-managed sites do not routinely dispose of yard waste off-site in single-use plastic containers. However, contractors of the state may do so more frequently, and therefore contract costs may increase accordingly for larger projects and landscape services.

BILL EXPLANATION

This bill would prohibit a person from disposing of yard waste collected on the grounds of a State building or State highway in a certain container; require a person to collect yard waste on the grounds of a State building or State highway in a certain container; require all yard waste collected on the grounds of a State building or State highway to be disposed of in a certain manner within a certain established range, provides an exemption for noxious weeds or invasive species; and generally relates to the collection and disposal of yard waste on the grounds of State buildings and State highways.

Contact: Lydia McPherson, Director, Legislative and Constituent Services
lydia.mcpherson1@maryland.gov ♦ 410-260-8113 (office) ♦ 443-875-7785 (cell)