

**TESTIMONY TO THE MARYLAND HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT &
TRANSPORTATION**

Senate Bill 599 –On-Farm Organics Diversion and Recycling Grant Program - Established

Position: FAVORABLE

April 1st, 2026 Public Hearing

Institute for Local Self-Reliance
1120 Connecticut Ave, NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20036

Dear Members of the Committee,

The Institute for Local Self-Reliance is a strong supporter of SB 599, which is an identical bill to HB 429. This legislation will establish a grant program to reduce, rescue, and divert wasted food from disposal in Maryland, administered by the Department of Agriculture.

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 direct support for program infrastructure and implementation remains a crucial obstacle to progress.

Entities that will be eligible to receive grants under this program include farmers, urban agricultural producers, soil conservation districts, universities, nonprofits, or businesses in partnership with farmers. This bill prioritizes funding for projects that are locally-driven and that provide direct benefits to the community, supporting community engagement and local jobs. It also outlines explicit priority for operations producing high-quality compost, avoiding contamination from microplastics and PFAS, to build local soil health and to grow healthy food.

For these reasons, I urge the Committee to move SB 599 forward.

Sincerely,



Sophia Jones
Associate Director for Policy and Advocacy, Composting for Community
[Institute for Local Self-Reliance](#)