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Environment and
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Subcommittees

Energy

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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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Testimony in Support of HB 429

On Farm Organics and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Programs - Established

In 2019, 66 million tons of wasted food was generated in the food retail, food service, and residential sectors, and most of this waste (about 60%) was sent to landfills, as estimated by the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#). Lack of access and support for preventing, recycling, or reusing wasted food are one of the main reasons for this high tonnage. According to analysis by [ReFED](#), an estimated **annual investment of \$16.2 billion globally can reduce food waste by 20.4 million tons each year**. Investment and support for these actions, which can take many different forms, would cut greenhouse gas emissions, save water, and rescue and save food for those in need ([Institute for Local Self-Reliance](#), Appendix A).

For historical reference, HB 429 was introduced in 2025 as HB 42, in 2024 as HB 1318, in 2023 as HB 1139, and in 2022 as HB 1070. **HB 429** establishes three food waste reduction and diversion grant programs. These programs are designed for **reducing, rescuing, composting, and recycling wasted food**, along with supporting **on-farm organics recycling and compost use**. The bill's purpose is to fill gaps in state programming around organic waste, composting, and food waste reduction, and to create the infrastructure needed to bolster organic waste diversion.

Programs Established:

Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Program: Supports projects, infrastructure, and education to reduce food waste, rescue edible food, compost or recycle food residuals, and transition away from single-use food service ware. Administered by the Maryland Department of Agriculture.

On-Farm Organics Diversion and Recycling Grant Program: Supports wasted food reduction and organics diversion via cold storage. Food rescue, composting, compost use, and more. Administered by the Maryland Department of the Environment.

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

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

This year's bill does not prescribe a funding source for these grant programs but rather instructs the Maryland Department of Environment and Maryland Department of Agriculture to work collaboratively to apply for funding to support these grant programs. **Opportunities such as the EPA's [Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling Grant Programs](#) and the Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling Program are perfect examples of programs that exist now to encourage multi-agency waste diversion initiatives.** These grants would 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. HB 429 aligns with the [United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#), which are 17 goals aimed at addressing the global challenges we face, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice, all to be achieved by 2030. In particular, HB 429 mirrors [SDG 12](#) (Appendix B) which aims to reduce food waste and promote sustainable consumption across the globe.

I thank the Committee for their time and consideration in support of HB 429.

Sincerely,



Regina T. Boyce

Appendix A.



COMPOST: Impacts More Than You Think

Composting is the aerobic decomposition of organic materials by microorganisms. It transforms raw materials—such as leaves, grass clippings, garden trimmings, food scraps, animal manure, and agricultural residues—into compost, a valuable earthy-smelling soil conditioner, teeming with life.

One Person's Trash is...
...another's black gold.

Every year, U.S. landfills and trash incinerators receive **167 MILLION TONS** of garbage.

Landfills and incinerators are dangerous. Every bag thrown out contributes to:

-  Pollution of surrounding soil, air, and water
-  Climate change
-  Health hazards to humans and animals

> 50% of typical municipal garbage set out at the curb is compostable.



SOURCES:

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.
US EPA, *Advancing Sustainable Materials Management: Facts and Figures 2013*, June 2015, pp. 12, 46.
Brenda Platt, Eric Lombard, and David Clark, *Stop Tossing the Climate*, Institute for Local Self-Reliance (ILSR), 2009.
Brenda Platt, Bobby Bell, and Cameron Hanks, *Pay Girl: Composting in Maryland to Reduce Waste, Create Jobs & Protect the Bay*. Institute for Local Self-Reliance (ILSR), May 2013.
Mike Ewell, *Trash Incineration Factsheet*, Energy Justice Network web page, <http://www.energyjustice.net>, accessed April 2016.

ILSR INSTITUTE FOR
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To learn more, visit: ilsr.org/compost-impacts

