

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

**House Bill 429 – On-Farm Organics and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant  
Programs - Established**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

**February 11th, 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 and the undersigned 14 organizations support HB 429 and encourage the committee to pass this bill. We thank Delegate Boyce and the 13 co-sponsors for bringing this legislation forward to establish needed grant programs to reduce, rescue, and divert wasted food from disposal in Maryland.

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. This bill establishes three grant programs to develop alternatives to food waste and organics disposal, investing in local businesses, rural and urban farms, nonprofits, schools, local governments, and more. 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.

It is important to pass this bill now, regardless of presently-available funding sources, as a step toward fully funding the grant programs. HB 429 will codify the grant programs, which include detailed eligibility and priority factors that have been refined in collaboration with a wide array of stakeholders over 5 years. This bill prioritizes funding for projects that are locally-driven and that provide direct benefits to the community, supporting community engagement and availability of 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. Codifying the detailed grant program structure now will facilitate more straightforward allocation of funding once those sources are established or identified.

For these reasons, we, the undersigned 14 organizations, urge the Committee to pass HB 429.

Sincerely,



Sophia Jones

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

Attachment: FAQs on HB 429

**Signed-On Organizations:**

[Centro De Apoyo Familiar](#)

[Chesapeake Bay Foundation](#)

[Compostology](#)

[ECO City Farms](#)

[Eco MoCo](#)

[Full Circle Future](#)

[Indivisible Howard County](#)

[Less Plastic Please](#)

[Lunch out of Landfills](#)

[Mobilize Frederick](#)

[National Aquarium](#)

**Sustainable Hyattsville**

[Talbot Green Hands - Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake](#)

[Trash Free Maryland](#)