

# **HB0429 Brian Shepter/HOCO Exectutive FAV**

Uploaded by: Brian Shepter

Position: FAV



## HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

3430 Courthouse Drive ■ Ellicott City, Maryland 21043 ■ 410-313-2013 Voice/Relay

Calvin Ball  
Howard County Executive  
cball@howardcountymd.gov

www.howardcountymd.gov  
FAX 410-313-3051

February 8, 2026

The Honorable Marc Korman, Chair  
Environment and Transportation Committee  
250 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT of House Bill 429: On-Farm Organics and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Programs - Established**

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton, and Members of the Committee:

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, organic waste—such as food scraps—accounts for approximately 30 percent of the local solid waste stream. When food waste is sent to landfills, it becomes a major source of methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), a greenhouse gas with more than 25 times the global warming potential of carbon dioxide. Composting food waste significantly reduces methane emissions while creating valuable, soil-enriching products.

Howard County has already demonstrated leadership in this area through its Feed the Green Bin program, which enables residents to divert food waste from landfills to compost. The program currently provides weekly food waste collection to more than 58,000 households, substantially reducing landfill waste and greenhouse gas emissions.

At the same time, Howard County farmers have long been leaders in organic recycling. For generations, farmers have composted animal waste to improve soil health and farm productivity. With assistance from the Howard Soil Conservation District, farmers responsibly recycle organic waste and apply it to their fields in accordance with state nutrient management plans. These practices protect the environment, improve soil health, increase crop yields, and ultimately enhance farm profitability.

This legislation, which establishes the On-Farm Organics Diversion and Recycling Grant Program, will provide critical funding to expand and strengthen these efforts. The grant program will support on-farm organic recycling and compost utilization, wasted food prevention initiatives, and food rescue programs. These investments will reduce and divert food waste, protect our environment, and provide valuable soil amendments for agricultural use.

In short, this legislation represents a win for our community, our environment, and our farmers. For these reasons, I respectfully urge a **favorable report on HB 429**.

Respectfully,

Calvin Ball  
Howard County Executive

# **MRN re HB429 On-Farm Organics and Wasted Food Redu**

Uploaded by: Chaz Miller

Position: FAV



**February 11, 2026**

**To: Maryland House Environment & Transportation Committee  
Re: HB429 On-Farm Organics and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Programs Support**

Maryland Recycling Network members are public and private sectors recyclers and recycling advocates. Our members are county and municipal government sustainability and recycling managers, private sector recyclers, non-profit recyclers and citizens who support recycling. We have direct experience operating recycling and composting programs at the county and municipal government level. We know the ins and outs of recycling in Maryland. Our experience informs our comments.

We promote sustainable reduction, reuse and recycling (the 3 "R's") of materials otherwise destined for disposal and the purchase of products made with recycled material content. We achieve these goals through educational programs, advocacy, technical assistance, and the development of markets to purchase recycled materials and manufacture products with recycled content.

We support HB 429

The MRN supported legislation creating a composting work group to advise the state on how to improve management of Maryland's organic wastes. We also supported follow-up legislation establishing a task force to aid in writing regulations based on those recommendations. We were active members of both state task forces carrying out that legislation. Maryland now enjoys regulations in place to manage organic wastes.

Food waste is the biggest part of Maryland's waste disposal stream. Marylanders sent 849,756 tons of food waste to disposal in 2024. That's 18.8 percent of the solid waste generated in Maryland that year! (See Table 2-1, page 2-5 of Appendix A of Maryland's 2024 Waste Characterization study). We should be composting or using other methods such as edible food recovery instead! We realize that food waste is uniquely challenging to collect and compost. HB 429 tackles this problem through grants designed to increase organics recycling and compost use, waste food prevention and food rescue. This is a win for Maryland's environment!

We thank Delegate Boyce for introducing this bill and urge its speedy passage.

The Maryland Recycling Network is a resource for legislators and others interested in recycling and waste reduction. Contact us at [phoustle@marylandrecyclingnetwork.org](mailto:phoustle@marylandrecyclingnetwork.org), or 301-725-2508, or MRN, PO Box 1640, Columbia MD 21044, if you have any questions or would like additional information regarding our comments.

Sincerely

Chaz Miller  
Chair, MRN Legislative Committee  
Maryland Recycling Network

# **Delegate Boyce Written Testimony - HB 429.pdf**

Uploaded by: Delegate Regina T. Boyce

Position: FAV

REGINA T. BOYCE  
Legislative District 43A  
Baltimore City

Environment and  
Transportation Committee

Subcommittees

Energy  
Chair, Natural Resources and  
Open Space



Annapolis Office  
The Maryland House of Delegates  
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Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-3476  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3476  
Regina.Boyce@house.maryland.gov

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 11, 2026

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.

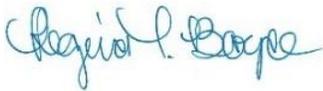
**County Wasted Food Reduction Block Grant Program:** All counties are eligible to receive funding in proportion to their population to reduce, rescue, and divert wasted food.

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.

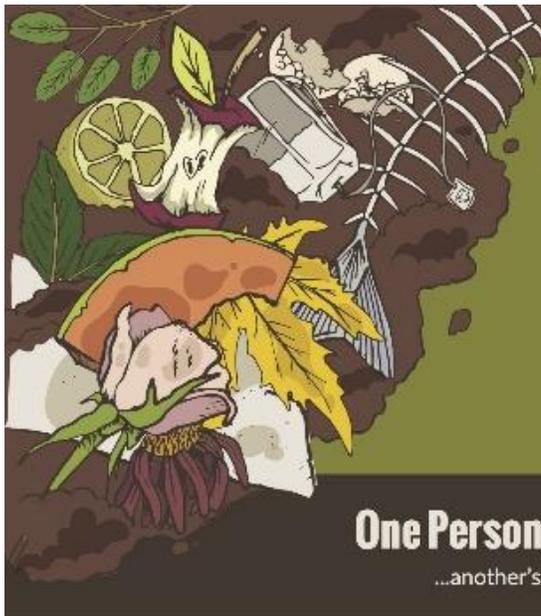
I thank the Committee for their time and consideration in support of HB 429.

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  
Local Self-Reliance

To learn more, visit: [ilsr.org/compost-impacts](http://ilsr.org/compost-impacts)



**HB0429-ET\_MACo\_SUP.pdf**

Uploaded by: Dominic Butchko

Position: FAV



**MARYLAND**  
*Association of*  
**COUNTIES**

## House Bill 429

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

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Environment & Transportation Committee

Date: February 11, 2026

From: Dominic J. Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 429. This bill would establish several grant programs to expand composting, strengthen environmental stewardship, and improve recycling outcomes.

Tackling climate change will require bold, practical investments across many core public services. Food waste sent to landfills generates significant greenhouse gas emissions—especially methane—and finding better ways to reduce and divert this material is one of the most important long-term challenges facing local governments. HB 429 would help counties turn a costly liability into a valuable resource by investing in new programs that reduce food waste upstream and redirect unavoidable waste into more productive uses.

HB 429 is a forward-looking, innovative approach to an age-old issue. Accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 429.

# **HB429\_CleanWaterAction.pdf**

Uploaded by: Emily Ranson

Position: FAV



**HB429: On-Farm Organics and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Programs - Established  
House Environment and Transportation Committee  
February 11, 2026**

Position: Favorable

Dear Chair Korman and Members of the Committee,

Clean Water Action urges a favorable report on HB429.

Maryland has commendable goals to reduce food waste and increase organic recycling. These efforts have significant co-benefits, improving food security for our residents, reducing greenhouse gas emissions from food rotting in landfills or burning in incinerators, and enables our farmers to diversify their income and reduce climate-polluting synthetic fertilizers. But we know that a major limiting factor for the expansion of infrastructure and programs reducing food waste and recycling organics is cost. Maryland has no dedicated funding streams for reducing and diverting food waste.

Maryland has made great strides reducing methane emissions from landfills, with more stringent methane regulations on landfills. Controlling the amount of methane from a landfill is great, but another effective strategy is to reduce the amount of methane-producing organic waste from entering the landfill in the first place.

HB429 will establish grants that, when funded, will provide opportunities for small businesses, non-profits, and local governments to pursue policies and practices that divert food waste from the waste system through activities like food rescue (getting usable food to people), composting, and preventing the food waste in the beginning. This could be cold storage to improve the capacity of our food banks, share tables and refrigerators at schools so uneaten food can be offered to a hungry child, or equipment on a farm to help a farmer incorporate food scraps into their manure compost piles and create high quality fertilizer.

HB429 reflects HB42 which passed the House in 2025. The substantive change from the bill as introduced is, as amended, it does not include the \$2 surcharge on trash that would have created a dedicated funding stream for the grants. Instead, HB429 establishes the grant framework, so it is available as the budget allows.

Thank you and we urge a favorable report,

Emily Ranson  
Clean Water Action  
[eranson@cleanwater.org](mailto:eranson@cleanwater.org)

Clean Water Action  
145 W Ostend St Suite 600  
Baltimore, MD 21230

**HB 429 - MoCo - DEP\_Fitzgerald\_FAV (GA 26).pdf**

Uploaded by: Garrett Fitzgerald

Position: FAV



# Montgomery County

## Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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ROCKVILLE: 240-777-6550

ANNAPOLIS: 240-777-8270

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**HB 429**

**DATE: February 11, 2026**

**SPONSOR: Delegate Boyce**

**ASSIGNED TO: Environment and Transportation**

**CONTACT PERSON: Garrett Fitzgerald (garrett.fitzgerald@montgomerycountymd.gov)**

**POSITION: Support (Department of Environmental Protection)**

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

This bill would establish three related new grant programs designed to help reduce food waste and improve the recycling of organic material in Maryland.

The On-Farm Organics Diversion and Recycling Grant Program would award grants for the development and implementation of projects involving on-farm organics recycling and compost use, wasted food prevention, and food rescue.

The Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Program would award grants for infrastructure, programs and education that reduce, rescue and divert food waste in Maryland. Local governments would be eligible to receive grants from this program.

The County Wasted Food Reduction Block Grant Program would award grants to counties in proportion to their population for projects to develop, maintain, or expand infrastructure, programs and education that reduce, rescue, and divert food waste in the county.

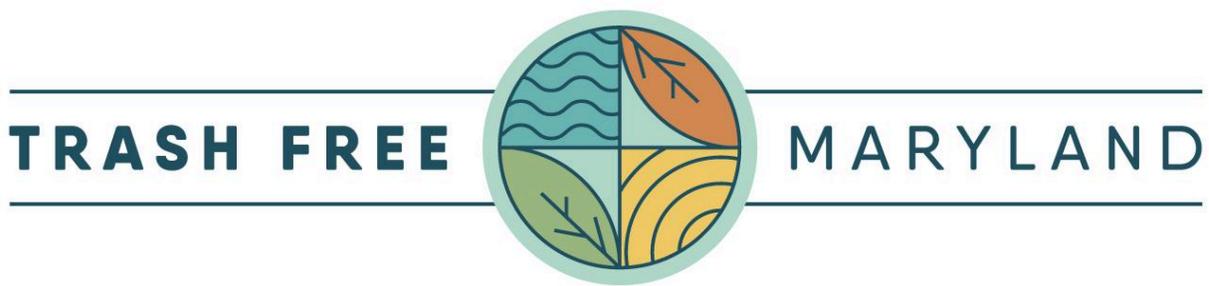
Each of these grant programs has the potential to benefit residents and local businesses in Maryland while helping to reduce food waste, improve food security, and create positive environmental outcomes. While the bill does not directly allocate funding into any of these grant programs, it represents an important step to establish program priorities and eligibility and sets the stage for future implementation.

We respectfully request that the Environment and Transportation Committee issue a favorable report on House Bill 429.

**HB429\_TrashFreeMD\_FAV\_021126.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kelly Doordan

Position: FAV



**Bill:** HB429 On-Farm Organics and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Programs - Established  
**Committee:** Environment & Transportation  
**Hearing Date:** February 11, 2026  
**Position:** Support

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

Trash Free Maryland strongly supports HB429, which will establish the On-Farm Organics Diversion and Recycling Grant Program in the Department of Agriculture to award grants to eligible entities to develop and implement on-farm organics recycling, compost use, wasted food prevention, and food rescue; and to establish the Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Program and the County Wasted Food Reduction Block Grant Program in the Department of the Environment to fund certain projects that reduce, rescue, and divert wasted food. Eligible grant projects include infrastructure development, collection, education, and technical assistance to support the transition from single-use food serviceware to durable and reusable food serviceware.

Trash Free Maryland works toward a state that is free of trash and litter, and where land and waterways are safe and healthy for all to enjoy. We see the establishment of grant programs to divert valuable materials from disposal and facilitate transitions from single-use to durable items as part of a critical bridge of seed funding investments toward a trash-free future.

Trash Free Maryland urges you to support this legislation for the following reasons:

- Single-use, disposable food serviceware contributes to unnecessary waste and plastic pollution found in our litter cleanups and is also a contaminant in recycling. A transition to durable and reusable food service ware can reduce plastic waste and pollution in litter and recycling processes.
- The shift from single-use to reusable food serviceware alternatives can require an initial investment in durable products or dishwashers; funding to support this transition can enable a permanent switch.
- Providing technical support and a state grant program helps leverage scarce dollars to share lessons learned and best practices and to take advantage of economies of scale where possible.
- Microplastics are an increasing concern for both environmental and public health. Providing grants to support a transition to reusable food service ware and to organics recycling projects that produce minimally-contaminated soil amendments would be a step toward reducing plastic pollution.
- Reducing and diverting wasted food supports Maryland's climate and waste reduction goals.

For these reasons, we respectfully request a favorable report on HB429.

Contact:

Kelly Doordan, Executive Director, Trash Free Maryland  
kelly@trashfreemaryland.org

# **2026\_HB429\_Organics\_Denali.pdf**

Uploaded by: Lindsay Thompson

Position: FAV



February 11, 2026

Environment and Transportation Committee

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

Position: Support

On behalf of Denali.Water.Solutions, I respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of HB 429, which establishes the On\_Farm.Organics.Diversion.and.Recycling.Grant.Program, the Wasted.Food.Reduction.and.Diversion.Grant.Program. This legislation will significantly strengthen Maryland's commitment to sustainable waste management, nutrient cycling, and water quality protection.

Denali Water Solutions is focused on innovative environmental solutions that improve resource recovery and enhance nutrient and water management. We work with agricultural producers, municipalities, and private companies to implement environmentally-sound practices that reduce waste, improve soil and water quality, and support sustainable local economies.

By funding on-farm organics diversion and composting, HB 429 helps keep organic material out of waste streams and repurpose it back into nutrient-rich soil amendments. This reduces pressure landfills, septic systems and wastewater infrastructure. The bill supports infrastructure development and technical assistance for composting food residuals and organic materials on farms and in communities. This creates practical solutions for handling organic waste at the source instead of relying solely on centralized waste collection or landfill disposal. All helping to strengthen local resilience while improving soils and reducing transportation-related emissions.

The bill's prioritization of job training, labor opportunities, and inclusive hiring practices ensures that environmental sustainability is paired with economic opportunity. In doing so, HB 429 supports communities across Maryland, urban and rural alike, in benefiting from a growing circular economy centered around resource recovery.

This bill advances practical, science-based solutions that align environmental protection with economic opportunity and community resilience. It is a critical step toward healthier soils, cleaner waters, and a more sustainable Maryland.

For these reasons, Denali.Water.Solutions strongly supports HB 429 and encourages the committee to issue a favorable report.

**HB 429\_MD Sierra Club\_fav 2-11-26.pdf**

Uploaded by: Martha Ainsworth

Position: FAV



P.O. Box 278  
Riverdale, MD 20738

**Committee:** Environment and Transportation  
**Testimony on:** HB 429: “On-Farm Organics and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Programs – Established”  
**Position:** Support  
**Hearing Date:** February 11, 2026

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club urges the Committee to support HB 429. The bill would codify a framework for three grant programs<sup>1</sup> within the Maryland Departments of Agriculture and of the Environment that aim to develop alternatives to food waste and organics disposal by investing in local businesses, rural and urban farms, nonprofits, schools, local governments, and more.

Reducing organic waste and its disposal in landfills and incinerators is a key strategy for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and fighting climate change. However, success depends on having in place the infrastructure for expanded composting and organics recycling. It requires investments in infrastructure by local governments, farmers, businesses, schools, nonprofits, and other local entities. By codifying the framework for these three programs in statute, HB 429 would be an essential first step in a multi-year strategy to establish grant programs and secure the resources for these needed investments, while encouraging reduction and diversion of food waste.

Earlier versions of this bill were introduced in 2022 (HB1070), 2023 (HB1139), 2024 (HB1318), and 2025 (HB 42) that also provided a source of funding for these grant programs. However, recognizing current budget challenges, HB 429 would codify the detailed grant program structure to facilitate allocation of resources once those funding sources are established or identified. The grant programs codified by HB 429 include detailed eligibility criteria that have been refined in collaboration with a wide array of stakeholders over five years. These criteria would prioritize funding for projects that are locally-driven and that provide direct benefits to local communities, supporting community engagement and availability of local jobs. They would also explicitly prioritize operations producing high-quality compost, avoiding contamination from microplastics and PFAS “forever chemicals,” to build local soil health and grow healthy food.

Organics waste diversion investments are critical to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. By creating and codifying the framework for these three grant programs, HB 429 would be a significant step toward achieving this goal. The Sierra Club respectfully requests a favorable report on HB 429.

Ben Fischler  
Chapter Zero Waste Team  
[brf57@yahoo.com](mailto:brf57@yahoo.com)

Josh Tulkin  
Chapter Director  
[Josh.Tulkin@MDSierra.org](mailto:Josh.Tulkin@MDSierra.org)

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<sup>1</sup> On-Farm Organics Diversion and Recycling Grant Program; Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Program; and County Wasted Food Reduction Block Grant Program.

Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America’s oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 70,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has over 800,000 members and nearly four million supporters.

# **HB 429 - On-Farm Organics and Wasted Food Reductio**

Uploaded by: Matthew Capodanno

Position: FAV

## **HB 429**

### **On-Farm Organics and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Programs – Established House Environment and Transportation Committee February 11, 2026**

#### **SUPPORT**

House Bill 134 aims to reduce food waste by creating new grant programs that would fund infrastructure, projects, education, food rescue, and other food waste reduction programs to donate usable food and compost what remains.

The Maryland Food Bank estimates that 1 in 3 Marylanders are at risk of food insecurity. A person who is food insecure does not have consistent access to healthy and nutritious food on any given day, and this problem persists in every area of the state.

The Maryland Food Bank understands the importance – and challenges – of reducing and minimizing wasted food. We are an integral part of the local food system as the statewide food assistance safety net organization, last year providing food to over 1 million unique Marylanders. To carry out this critical work, we rely in part on donations of food. These donations come from a variety of sources, including partnerships we organize with local grocery, wholesale, and retail organizations, as well as farms located around the state. Specifically, the Food Bank facilitates a Retail Recovery program that connects grocery stores and wholesalers to local food pantries and partners with farms who donate produce and allow staff and volunteers to glean extra crops. We believe these are critical efforts to re-distribute food before it becomes wasted.

This work requires adequate resources and the partnership of the entire food system working together. HB 429 helps make that more realistic and achievable by providing resources to non-profit organizations and small businesses, local governments and communities, and our friends in agriculture. By involving the entire food supply chain, Maryland has the opportunity to not only combat wasted food productively and responsibly, but also to strengthen necessary infrastructure, increase education and awareness, and achieve environmental goals.

The Maryland Food Bank appreciates your consideration and respectfully requests a favorable report on HB 429.

**Maryland Catholic Conference\_FAVHB429\_.pdf**

Uploaded by: Michelle Zelaya

Position: FAV



MARYLAND  
CATHOLIC  
CONFERENCE

February 11<sup>th</sup> 2026

HB429

**On-Farm Organics and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Programs -  
Established  
Environment and Transportation Committee  
Position: Favorable**

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in support of **House Bill 429**. The Maryland Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

**House Bill 429** establishes a comprehensive statewide effort to reduce food waste and expand organic recycling through three grant programs. The On-Farm Organics Diversion and Recycling Grant Program within the Department of Agriculture will support farmers and agricultural partners in developing on-farm composting, organics recycling, soil-building practices, and food-rescue initiatives. Additionally, the bill creates the Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Program and the County Wasted Food Reduction Block Grant Program within the Department of the Environment to fund community and county-level projects that reduce, rescue, and divert wasted food before it reaches landfills.

**House Bill 429** takes a proactive, solutions-oriented approach to one of Maryland's most persistent environmental and economic challenges: the overwhelming amount of organic waste and edible food that ends up in our landfills. Food waste is not just an environmental issue; it is a moral and economic one. When salvageable food is discarded, families lose access to nutrition, farmers lose revenue, and communities carry the burden of increased disposal costs and rising methane emissions. This legislation provides the necessary tools to reverse that trend through prevention, rescue, and responsible recycling.

From a Catholic perspective, **House Bill 429** also reflects our shared moral responsibility to care for creation and to uphold the dignity of every person. Catholic social teaching reminds us that the goods of the earth are meant for all and that waste—especially of food—undermines both stewardship and solidarity. By reducing unnecessary disposal and strengthening systems that rescue edible food for those in need, this legislation embodies the principles of the common good and preferential option for the poor. It calls us to be faithful stewards of God's creation, ensuring that the blessings of our land are used wisely, sustainably, and in service to our neighbors.

Supporting these grant programs is a meaningful step toward building a cleaner, healthier, and more sustainable Maryland. It invests directly in our agricultural communities, improves local soil and water quality, strengthens food security, and advances our statewide climate goals. Most importantly, it encourages collaboration, creativity, and long-term solutions—values Marylander’s share.

I respectfully urge a favorable report on this proactive and practical legislation that supports our farmers, protects our environment, and ensures that less food goes to waste and more goes to Maryland families.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference urges a favorable report on **House Bill 429**.

# **MDFB - Support - HB429 On-Farm Organics and Wasted**

Uploaded by: Ryan Snow

Position: FAV



## Maryland Farm Bureau

3358 Davidsonville Road | Davidsonville, MD 21035  
410-922-3426 | [www.mdfarmbureau.com](http://www.mdfarmbureau.com)

February 11, 2026

**To:** House Environment and Transportation Committee

**From:** Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

**RE:** **Support of HB429 On-Farm Organics & Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Programs**

On behalf of the nearly 7,000 member families of the Maryland Farm Bureau, I respectfully submit this written testimony in support of HB429 On-Farm Organics & Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Programs. This legislation establishes three coordinated grant programs that will strengthen Maryland's agricultural economy, expand food waste reduction efforts, and advance science-based composting and soil health practices across the state. HB 429 creates the On-Farm Organics Diversion and Recycling Grant Program within the Maryland Department of Agriculture to support farmers, urban farmers, agricultural producers, soil conservation districts, and nonprofit partners in developing and implementing on-farm organics recycling, compost use, wasted food prevention, and food rescue activities. It also creates the Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Program and the County Wasted Food Reduction Block Grant Program within the Maryland Department of the Environment, providing essential funding for infrastructure, education, and technical assistance that reduce, rescue, and divert wasted food at the state and county level. These programs prioritize projects that provide direct, meaningful, and assured community benefits; reduce and rescue wasted food; and promote compost that meets Maryland's "general use" standard and the U.S. Composting Council's Seal of Testing Assurance, ensuring high-quality, minimally contaminated materials that protect farm soils and public trust.

This legislation aligns with long-standing agricultural policy principles supporting value-added on-farm enterprises, soil conservation, and responsible nutrient management. The Maryland Farm Bureau policy book affirms farmers' right to produce mulch and compost from both on-farm and off-farm sources and recognizes the importance of science-based best management practices that protect the environment while sustaining agricultural viability. HB 429 advances these goals by enabling farmers to invest in clean, source-separated composting systems, on-farm processing improvements, and workforce capacity tied directly to soil health and food waste reduction outcomes. Furthermore, MDFB supports urban farming, infrastructure grants for urban agriculture, and programs that strengthen Maryland's food systems through increased local sourcing and food rescue. HB 429's inclusion of urban farmers and agricultural producers, alongside its emphasis on food rescue and community-based benefits, reinforces those priorities and strengthens the connection between Maryland agriculture and the communities it serves.

The county block grants established under the bill will help ensure that local governments can invest in practical, shovel-ready solutions such as community drop-off sites, rural composting pads, and educational programs that support farmers and residents alike. These investments complement existing conservation programs and allow counties to collaborate with soil conservation districts and agricultural stakeholders to maximize waste diversion while improving soil structure, nutrient retention, and water quality. The bill also includes straightforward application processes and mechanisms to support



## Maryland Farm Bureau

3358 Davidsonville Road | Davidsonville, MD 21035  
410-922-3426 | [www.mdfarmbureau.com](http://www.mdfarmbureau.com)

applicants with limited resources or language barriers, making the program usable for small and mid-sized farm operations that often lack access to competitive grant funds. Taken together, HB 429 offers voluntary, incentive-based tools that expand opportunity without imposing new regulatory burdens, ensuring that farmers retain flexibility while gaining access to the resources necessary to enhance economic resilience.

House Bill 429 supports Maryland farmers, reinforces science-driven conservation principles, strengthens local food systems, and provides counties with targeted, flexible funding to reduce wasted food while expanding the supply of high-quality compost. These outcomes directly benefit both agricultural producers and Maryland communities. For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report on HB 429.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tyler Hough". The signature is written over a horizontal line that extends to the left and then curves upwards and to the right.

Tyler Hough

Director of Government Relations

*Please reach out to Tyler Hough, [though@marylandfb.org](mailto:though@marylandfb.org), with any questions*

**HB429\_MRA\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Sarah Price

Position: FAV

# MARYLAND RETAILERS ALLIANCE

*The Voice of Retailing in Maryland*



**HB429 On-Farm Organics and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant  
Programs - Established  
Environment and Transportation Committee  
February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

**Position: Favorable**

**Background:** HB429 would establish a grant program to fund projects that aim to reduce food waste in Maryland.

**Comments:** The Maryland Retailers Alliance supports HB429, which would establish a grant program to incentivize and support actions to reduce food waste in Maryland. Efforts to reduce food waste often lead to symbiotic relationships between food retailers and entities like food banks and local farms. Many of our grocery and other food retail members have engaged in contracts and relationships for many years with farms and charitable organizations to divert unsold food products, even before recent State laws drew more attention to the issue. The establishment of a grant award to further incentivize food waste diversion will benefit a variety of industries in Maryland and assist in efforts to find new uses for unsold products within the food retail industry.

We would respectfully urge a favorable vote on HB429. Thank you for your consideration.

# **HB429 FAQs - Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion.p**

Uploaded by: Sophia Jones

Position: FAV

# Frequently Asked Questions

## [HB 429](#) - On-Farm Organics and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Programs

### What does House Bill 429 do?

- The bill will create three new grant programs for:
  - (1) Reducing, rescuing, composting, and recycling wasted food (including infrastructure, operations, education, and technical assistance,) and transition away from disposable food service ware;
  - (2) On-farm organics recycling and compost use, wasted food prevention, and food rescue;
  - (3) Counties to reduce, rescue, and divert wasted food in the county.
- This bill is part of a multi-year strategy to establish grant programs and secure funding for wasted food reduction and diversion. HB 429 will codify the grant programs, which include detailed eligibility and award priority factors that have been refined in collaboration with a wide array of stakeholders over 5 years.

### What are the economic benefits to Marylanders?

- According to the EPA, the average US family of four loses \$3,000 per year to uneaten food. This bill will develop support for households, businesses, and schools to save resources and navigate alternatives to food waste.
- This bill would provide direct investments in local businesses, develop more local jobs, and establish alternatives to avoid reliance on disposal of organics.
- Investment in robust and locally-driven food waste reduction and organics management infrastructure is crucial as landfill capacity shrinks and disposal costs rise. The expected increases to disposal costs will be mitigated by the availability of alternatives across the board.

### What are the broader benefits to Marylanders?

- The benefits to Marylanders are beyond just economic. Projects using grant funding will bolster food security, local communities, healthy soils, and a clean environment.
- This bill prioritizes projects that use processes to create clean, minimally-contaminated soil amendments. This will ensure that funded organics recycling and composting projects are prioritizing high quality end products, with minimal contamination from microplastics and PFAS, that can be confidently used to grow food and build soil health.
- With prioritization of projects that are locally-driven and that provide direct benefits to the community, this bill will support community engagement and availability of local jobs.

### **What will the grant programs support?**

- The Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Program (administered by the Maryland Department of Environment) will fund projects, infrastructure, and education to reduce food waste, rescue edible food, compost or recycle food residuals, and to transition away from single-use food serviceware.
- The On-Farm Organics Diversion and Recycling Grant Program (administered by the Maryland Department of Agriculture) will support farmers in food preservation and rescue, including: cold storage; recovering food to feed animals; organics recycling; compost use; and the equipment, infrastructure, labor, technical assistance, testing, and other needs to achieve food waste reduction and diversion.
- The County Wasted Food Reduction Block Grant Program (administered by the Maryland Department of Environment) distributes flexible, annual funding to County governments, in proportion to their population, for infrastructure, programs, and education to reduce, rescue, and divert wasted food.

### **Who will be eligible for grants?**

- The Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Program will be accessible to: units of local government, local educational agencies, institutions of higher education, non-profit organizations, for-profit businesses, and farmers including urban farmers. This includes waste haulers looking to move their businesses toward waste reduction and diversion activities.
- The On-Farm Organics Diversion and Recycling Grant Program will be accessible to: farmers including urban farmers, Soil Conservation Districts, institutions of higher education, non-profit organizations, and for-profit businesses.
- The County Wasted Food Reduction Block Grant Program directs funding to all Maryland counties, including Baltimore City and the Mid-Shore Counties.
- Priority funding for all programs will support projects that provide direct benefits to their local communities and address community needs, serve overburdened or underserved communities, follow relevant best management practices, produce minimally-contaminated compost, and more.

### **How will this bill be funded?**

- In previous years, versions of this bill included a nominal surcharge on trash disposal that would have generously funded the programs. HB 429 does not include that funding source, so funding will need to come from another source and is at the discretion of the legislature and governor. Advocates and sponsors are working to identify further funding options for this bill.
- It is important to pass this bill, regardless of funding source, as a step toward funding the grant programs. Having the detailed grant program structure codified will facilitate more straightforward allocation of funding when future funding sources are identified.
- As written, the Departments of Agriculture and Environment are responsible for identifying funding for their respective grant programs. The grant programs may be funded through additional sources including funding mechanisms established in the future.

# **ILSR - HB 429 Sign-On Testimony - FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Sophia Jones

Position: FAV

**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](#)

**HB 429 MDA LOI.pdf**

Uploaded by: Harrison Palmer

Position: INFO



# Maryland Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary

Wes Moore, Governor

Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor

Kevin Atticks, Secretary

Steven A. Connelly, Deputy Secretary

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## Maryland Department of Agriculture

### Legislative Comment

Date: February 11th, 2026

**BILL NUMBER:** HB 429  
**BILL TITLE:** On-Farm Organics and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Programs - Established  
**MDA POSITION:** INFORMATION

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The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) respectfully submits this letter to provide context and information regarding *House Bill 429 - On-Farm Organics and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Programs - Established*, and appreciate the commitment of the sponsor to finding innovative opportunities to reduce food waste and generate sustainable soil amendments that improve soil health.

On-farm composting is an area of growing interest with farmers and provides both agronomic and environmental benefits. Compost can reduce chemical nutrient inputs requirements for crops, thus reducing input costs for the farm. Well managed compost provides a carbon-rich material that can increase organic matter levels and improve soil health. The diversion of food waste for on-farm composting will address state environmental goals for food waste reduction and diversion, while creating a circular economy model. Additionally, grants under the Program can enable training, education, and projects to reduce or redistribute food waste to support local communities.

The establishment of the On-Farm Organics Diversion and Recycling Grant Program at MDA would have specific challenges in funding, as a source is not outlined to sustain the program, and would require the expansion of the Conservation Grants Program to ensure projects are compliant with composting standards and general use classifications. The Department recognizes the challenges implementing this policy would pose without sustainable funding, and would request the members to consider this during deliberation.

If you have additional questions, please contact Harrison Palmer, MDA Chief of Staff at [Harrisonb.palmer@maryland.gov](mailto:Harrisonb.palmer@maryland.gov) or (410) 980-9887.

**MDE HB 429 INF.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jeremy D Baker

Position: INFO



**The Maryland Department of the Environment  
Secretary Serena McIlwain**

***House Bill 429***

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

**Position:** Informational  
**Committee:** Environment and Transportation  
**Date:** February 11, 2026  
**From:** Jeremy D. Baker, Director of Government Relations

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The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) submits this **LETTER OF INFORMATION** for HB 429.

**Bill Summary**

HB 429 would establish three grant programs: On-Farm Organics Diversion and Recycling Grant Program, Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Program, and the County Wasted Food Reduction Block Grant Program.

**Position Rationale**

MDE supports this bill's goals and is appreciative of the work the sponsor has done to elevate this issue, but note the absence of a funding mechanism. The Office of Recycling already manages two programs—electronics and school compost—that are inactive due to a lack of resources. To successfully implement new programs outlined in the bill, MDE would require additional funding and staff, and suggests incorporating into the bill a sustainable funding mechanism.

MDE also proposes transitioning from individual project grants to a County Block Grant model to reduce administrative overhead. Under this system, funding would be distributed to counties proportional to their population, bypassing the need for a resource-intensive State review process. This approach allows counties to use their local expertise to better serve overburdened communities, while MDE retains its role in verifying eligible expenses at the end of each year.

MDE hopes this **INFORMATIONAL** testimony regarding HB 429 is helpful. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

**Contact:** Jeremy D. Baker, Director of Government Relations  
Cell: 443-931-0937, Email: [jeremy.baker@maryland.gov](mailto:jeremy.baker@maryland.gov)