

February 24, 2016

Delegate Shane Robinson
223 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401



Testimony of Vinnie Bevivino – President, Chesapeake Compost Works
RE: House Bill 743 – Yard Waste and Food Residuals Diversion and Infrastructure Task Force

Dear Delegate Shane Robinson and the Maryland House of Delegates:

Thank you for allowing me to testify today for this important bill that would establish a task force focused on answering important questions as Maryland develops the infrastructure to process organic waste and divert that material from the traditional waste stream. If done right, the organics processing industry in Maryland could support hundreds of jobs, increase the state's recycling rate, and support a product vital to the health and sustainability of our neighborhoods and watershed.

I am the President of Chesapeake Compost Works, a food scrap composting company started in Baltimore in October 2012. The last three and a half years of operating Chesapeake Compost Works has been exciting, but also the most challenging endeavor in my life. I'm excited to be here today to promote this task force to address some key issues that I see as preventing our business, and others like it, from flourishing. These issues are broad in scope, and best answered by the breadth of experience that will come with a private / public task force like the one set up by this bill.

As a composter, I would recommend three priorities for the task force:

- First, composters need appropriate real estate, particularly in the more developed central Maryland, and local government agencies could do a better job assisting in finding real estate for composting. Jurisdictions could work better with private industry to locate composting facilities on public land. We were close to an agreement when the Northeast Maryland Waste Disposal Authority issued an RFP for organics processing, but that was pulled at the 11th hour without explanation. This task force could revive that effort and lease underused public land for organics processing.
- Second, I see the financing of organics processing businesses as a chicken and egg situation. It is difficult to find investors and financing for such a nascent industry. This task force could help facilitate access to capital for compost entrepreneurs, whether from private sources or through State-backed low interest loans.

- Third, we could research the many benefits and uses of compost at research institutes across the State, and apply those findings to strengthen commitments from state and local governments to buy more compost for its numerous benefits. Maryland could do a better job of researching, promoting, and using compost for stormwater management, sustainable landscaping best management practices, and farm nutrient management. This would result in an increase in demand for our products, and a healthier composting industry.

I look forward to this task force addressing these issues, and the issues that are unique to organics haulers, public works departments, retailers, and other important stakeholder that collectively makeup a robust state-wide organics diversion program. I know that this task force will lead to higher recycling rates, green jobs in the manufacturing, distribution, retailing, and the use of compost, a cleaner watershed, and healthier neighborhoods.

Thank you for your time,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'V. Bevivino', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Vinnie Bevivino
President
Chesapeake Compost Works