

House Environment and Transportation Committee

Senate Bill 171 – Yard Waste and Food Residuals Diversion and Infrastructure Study

Position: Support with amendments

February 8, 2017

Testimony by Greenbelters for Zero Waste

Greenbelters for Zero Waste is a group of Greenbelt citizens committed to reducing the city's landfill waste. We work with festivals and other public events in Greenbelt to provide collection of recyclable and compostable materials, while educating the public about the need for diverting these materials from the solid waste stream. It is educational efforts such as this that can help the state achieve the ambitious and worthwhile 90% food recovery target established for 2040. However, one of our biggest challenges is finding facilities where compostable materials can be taken. The lack of facilities and infrastructure for composting has been acknowledged in MDE's Zero Waste Plan; this plan also identified organic material recycling as one of eight core priorities. House Bill 171 would direct the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to study the diversion of yard waste and food residuals from refuse disposal facilities in Maryland with the goal of achieving food recovery goals and addressing the need for more composting facilities. This study by MDE, in consultation with a diverse group of stakeholders, is to result in recommendations by July 2019 for best practices and policies for Maryland. Several clarifying amendments have been worked out by with MDE, ILSR, the American Biogas Council, the MD Horse Council, and others; we urge that these amendments also be made to HB171.

We urge a favorable report on House Bill 171 with amendments. Thank you.

Greenbelters for Zero Waste:

Hally Ahern
Susan Barnett
Ben Fischler
Beth LeaMond
Luisa Robles
Lore Rosenthal
Tom Taylor