



House Environment and Transportation Committee

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

Position: Support with amendments

February 8, 2017

The MD-DC Compost Council, an official committee of the US Composting Council, is in favor of this bill, with the amendments recently worked out between the concerned stakeholders.

The closure of the Peninsula Organics composting facility in Wilmington, Delaware, in 2014 served to underscore the composting capacity crisis that exists in the Mid-Atlantic region and, in particular, in Maryland. Little investment in Maryland composting infrastructure and associated capacity is currently contemplated by industry, and diversion options remain essentially nonexistent.

The MD-DC Compost Council has advocated for legislative initiatives designed to invite investment in composting infrastructure in Maryland for the past four legislative sessions. Because of the diversity of the Maryland stakeholder group, not all of those initiatives gained the broad-based support necessary to ensure successful passage into law after an initial introduction. HB 171 is a reintroduction of HB 743 from the 2016 session with changes that recognize the need for broad-based support from all stakeholders and invites participation in a study group by all members of the stakeholder group.

We are confident that a study group led by the Department of the Environment and comprised of diverse stakeholders (compost industry representatives, retailers, restaurants, waste haulers, counties, agriculture, supermarkets, and environmental groups) will fully vet the issues that attend the deliverables listed in the bill and result in findings which provide the right incentives to be a significant stimulus for investment in Maryland business.

Several clarifying amendments have been worked out by with MDE, the Institute for Local Self-Reliance, the American Biogas Council, the MD Horse Council, and others; we urge that these amendments also be made to HB171.

Thank you.