



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

*Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education*

House Bill 589

Solid Waste Management-Organics Recycling and Waste Diversion-Food Residuals

CBF POSITION: **SUPPORT**

TO: Environment and Transportation Committee

DATE: February 19, 2020

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) SUPPORTS HB 589. This bill would require persons producing a large amount of food waste and who are in the vicinity of an organics recycling facility willing to accept food residuals for recycling to separate that food from other solid waste, and divert the food waste to the recycling facility or otherwise reduce their food residuals.

HB 589 takes reasonable steps to increase organic recycling, composting, and food waste diversion in Maryland. With a phased-in approach, the legislation requires first only those producing more than two tons of food waste a week, and who are within 30 miles of a food recycling facility to divert their food residuals from traditional disposal in landfills and incinerators. The legislation also provides those producing large amounts of food waste with options of reducing the amount of food residuals generated; donating servable food; managing the food residuals in an on-site system; and utilizing food residuals for agricultural use.

Food waste diversion from landfills and incinerators helps reduce the amount of carbon dioxide and methane released by those traditional methods of waste management. Reductions in greenhouse gases improves resilience in our ever-changing climate. Some methods of composting add nutrient-rich product to soils, replenishing bacteria improving soil health for growing plants and nutrient rich food.

This bill also encourages donating servable food to those in need as an option for food waste diversion. For the past 30 years, CBF's own Claggett Farm has supported the Capital Area Food Bank by donating about 35,000 pounds of produce to lower income communities. Efforts to make use of excess food through donation may help reverse social inequities and provide at-risk communities with fortifying local produce.

Burning and burying food residuals are not the only ways to address food waste. Increasing recycling, composting, reuse, and reduction of food waste benefits air and water quality, improves soil health, helps fight the effects of climate change, and contributes to a more equitable society.

For these reasons, CBF SUPPORTS HB 589 and urges a FAVORABLE report. For more information, please contact Carmera Thomas, Baltimore Program Manager at 443.482.2011 or carmerathomas@cbf.org.

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The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 300,000 members and e-subscribers, including over 107,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.