

Bill Title: House Bill 589, Solid Waste Management - Organics Recycling and Waste Diversion - Food Residuals

Committee: Environment & Transportation

Date: February 19, 2020

Position: Favorable

This testimony is offered on behalf of Bioenergy Development Company (BDC), a world leader in the finance, design, construction, engineering, and operation of anaerobic digestion facilities. For over 20 years and more than 220 biogas plants, our qualified team of engineers, biologists, chemists, agronomists, designers and marketing experts has significant experience in the design, construction and operation of anaerobic digester power plants and thus offers expertise in service, consultation and biological support. We are proud that BDC's United States headquarters is located in Howard County, Maryland.

This bill defines "food residuals" and requires that within a 30 mile radius, beginning January 1, 2021 a generator that produces 2 tons a week must take the waste to a organics recycling facility. The tonnage requirement for waste diversion reduces in half each year until January 1, 2024.

The Maryland Department of the Environment estimates that the state generates 998,630 tons of food waste each year. Most reports suggest that between 30%-40% of food is wasted along the supply chain, from processing through in-home and dining-out consumption. Only 5% of food waste is currently diverted to compost or anaerobic digestion (AD) facilities. As a result, food waste is typically the first or second largest component of the municipal solid waste stream. Excess organic waste is typically disposed of through unsustainable means such as incineration, crowded landfills, or worst of all, left to pollute local communities.

The issue of food waste has significant impacts on the environment, the economy, and on food insecurity. As awareness of the problem has grown, federal, state, and local governments have explored policy avenues to reduce and manage food waste. On the state level, California, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Vermont have passed laws related to diverting food waste from landfills. Promoting organic recycling

infrastructure, like anaerobic digestion, allows waste to be repurposed into truly renewable natural gas and organic soil amendment to improve the soil, water and air quality of our communities.

While there are valid concerns related to possible impacts on waste disposal fees, it is important to highlight that in states where this legislation has been implemented more organic recycling infrastructure has been built out to meet demands of new regulations and offset fee increases for haulers, business owners and consumers. A recent report published by the Harvard Law School Food Law and Policy Clinic emphasized the importance of creating networks of smaller processing facilities in geographically dispersed locations to reduce impacts on the cost of hauling. We would welcome input from EPA Region 3(Mid-Atlantic) representatives and other relevant regulatory bodies to ensure successful implementation of this legislation.

For these reasons, we respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 589.

For additional information, please contact Aaron Greenfield at 410.446.1992