



March 5, 2020

**2020 SESSION POSITION PAPER**

**BILL:** HB1450 – Education- Food Waste Grant Program - Established  
**COMMITTEE:** House Ways and Means Committee  
**POSITION:** Testimony in Support of House Bill 1450 - Food Waste Grant Program Establishment  
**BILL ANALYSIS:** Establishing the Food Waste Grant Program to provide grants to county boards or public schools to reduce food waste during afterschool activities; authorizing a county board of education or a public school to apply for a grant under the Program; requiring the Governor to provide \$250,000 in the budget for the Program beginning fiscal year 2022; authorizing the State Department of Education and Maryland Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education to retain a portion of the funds for administrative costs of the Program; etc.

Chair Kaiser, Vice-Chair Washington, and Members of the House Ways and Means Committee:

The Montgomery County Food Council urges you to **SUPPORT** this bill as it seeks to expand food waste reduction efforts statewide, effectively advancing the State’s Zero Waste goals, while providing an insightful environmental education opportunity to Maryland students.

In Montgomery County alone, roughly 147,000 tons of food scraps are generated on an annual basis. Several Montgomery County Public Schools have recently established innovative in-school composting programs, many of which are student-led, as a mechanism to reduce food waste, advance composting, and engage the student body in school-based sustainability efforts. The grant program that HB1450 would establish will enable public schools state-wide to improve environmental literacy amongst students, by supporting in-school and afterschool initiatives that incorporate environmental best practices for food waste, composting, gardening, water conservation, or schoolyard habits, as well as incentivizing food rescue and food donation efforts, among other projects. Currently, 1 in 7 Maryland children struggle with hunger, making it even more critical for all Marylanders to understand the importance and impact of diverting food waste to feed food insecure residents, and to implement these strategies in their communities.

HB1450 would encourage schools throughout Maryland to evaluate their environmental impact and allow students to develop and implement solutions, thus benefiting our environment, reducing food insecurity, and enhancing our students’ educational experiences. For these reasons, the Montgomery County Food Council supports HB1450 and urges you to vote **FOR** this bill.

The Montgomery County Food Council is an independent council formed and led by individual community members and representatives of local businesses, government, non-profit organizations, and educational institutions. Our mission is to bring together a diverse representation of stakeholders to improve the environmental, economic, social and nutritional health of Montgomery County, Maryland through the creation of a robust, local, sustainable food system. Our vision is to cultivate a vibrant food system in Montgomery County that consciously produces, distributes, and recycles food, making it accessible to all residents while promoting the health of the local food economy, its consumers, and the environment.

For more information, please contact: Heather Bruskin, MCFC Executive Director at the email and phone number below.

