



**HB 1450 - Maryland Green Schools Act of 2019 - Support**

Food waste presents economic, health and environmental challenges in schools throughout Maryland. Implementing solutions to reduce food waste will significantly reduce waste going to landfills, reduce fuel costs spent on vehicles transporting waste, and increase the nutrients in soils through composting. Maryland's K-12 schools are perfectly positioned to help address the challenges created by food waste. USDA states that schools "have a special role in not only reducing, recovering, and recycling food waste on their premises, but also in educating the next generation about recovering wholesome excess food for donation and about reducing food waste to conserve natural resources."

This bill provides much needed support for schools to reduce food waste by establishing a grant program that will help schools in the following ways:

- Reduce waste by providing methods for foods to be served during afterschool activities or the following day;
- Support student environmental literacy around food waste;
- Divert uneaten food to food banks or to families who wish to take the food home;
- Assist with transportation to food donation centers or composting sites;
- Compost food waste from meals at schools;
- Support professional development; and
- Support school projects that incorporate environmental best practices for food waste and composting, gardening, water conservation, or schoolyard habits.

This bill will fund student actions that create sustainable practices that are part of a holistic approach to Maryland Green Schools. Teacher and staff professional development and students learning about and being a part of solutions support Maryland's Environmental Literacy standards. Actions to reduce food waste will conserve resources and save money for all 24 of our school districts. Actions to reduce food waste can also support families and individuals living in the school community.

I urge a favorable report on HB 1450. Thank you.