



7338 Baltimore Ave
Suite 102
College Park, MD 20740

Committee: Environment and Transportation

Testimony on: HB248 “Condominiums and Homeowners Associations – Rights and Restrictions – Composting”

Position: Support

Hearing Date: January 26, 2021

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club urges you to support HB 248. This bill will prevent condominiums and homeowner associations (HOAs) from restricting or prohibiting owners from: (1) composting organic waste materials for their personal use on their own land or land on which they have a right to exclusive use, or (2) contracting with a private entity to collect organic waste materials for composting at a composting facility.

There are an estimated 6,400 HOA-governed communities in Maryland. This bill will contribute to a major expansion in the group of homeowners able to participate in composting of organic materials (such as food waste), with many environmental and economic benefits:

- Diverting organic waste from landfills and incinerators.
- Contributing to reaching Maryland’s Zero Waste food scrap goals of 60% diversion by 2025, 70% diversion by 2030, and 90% diversion by 2040.
- Reducing future methane emissions from anaerobic decomposition of food waste in landfills, reducing a potent contributor to global warming.
- Conserving resources and increasing the use of compost, a valuable soil amendment for gardeners and local farmers.
- Creating new green businesses and jobs and supporting existing green businesses and jobs.

Diverting food waste from the waste stream by expanding access to organics composting among condominium owners and homeowners subject to HOA regulations would: conserve space in our landfills; reduce future greenhouse gas emissions; create green businesses and jobs; and benefit the agricultural sector and local food movement. It is an important step on the path to zero waste. We respectfully request a favorable report on HB 248.

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Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America’s oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 75,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has over 800,000 members and nearly four million supporters.