



February 27, 2023

To: Maryland House Environment and Transportation and Economic Matters Committee
Re: HB 586 State Procurement - Purchasing Preferences - Compost, Mulch, and Soil Amendments

The Maryland Recycling Network promotes sustainable reduction, reuse and recycling (the 3 "R's") of materials otherwise destined for disposal and the purchase of products made with recycled material content. We achieve these goals through education programs, advocacy activities to affect public policy, technical assistance efforts, and the development of markets to purchase recycled materials and manufacture products with recycled content.

Our members are county and municipal government recycling managers, private sector recyclers, non-profit recyclers and citizens who support recycling. We have direct experience operating recycling and composting programs at the county and municipal government level. We know the ins and outs of recycling in Maryland. Our experience informs our comments.

HB 586: State Procurement - Purchasing Preferences - Compost, Mulch, and Soil Amendments

We support HB 586 with amendments.

Managing food waste is Maryland's next big step forward in recovering and turning it into useful products. The legislature took the first step with the enactment of HB264 in 2021, a bill we supported. We look at this as an extension of HB164, sponsored by Delegate Stein and enacted into law in 2021.

HB 586 will help to create market demand for compost, mulch and soil amendments from a variety of sources including food waste. In particular, it makes the state of Maryland one of those markets.

We suggest two amendments to the bill. First, add (III) "The products are readily available". Along with (I) and (II) that is a part of EPA's Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines.

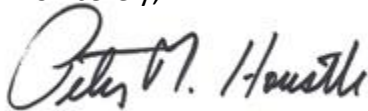
Second, percentage price preferences are no longer commonly used for recycled content procurements. Instead, the state procurement agency establishes a standard and specifies that standard in the procurement request. For instance, it could be "compost made of at least 50 percent organic materials from municipal solid waste, food waste, sludge, yard waste, clean wood waste or other organic materials".

We thank Delegate Stein for introducing this bill and for the support he has shown in expanding markets for our recyclables and organic materials.

The Maryland Recycling Network stands ready to serve as a sounding board and resource for legislators and others interested in pursuing our mission. Please do not hesitate to contact me via email phoustle@marylandrecyclingnetwork.org, phone 301-725-2508 or mail - MRN, PO Box 1640, Columbia MD 21044 if you have any questions or would like additional information regarding the above.

We look forward to working with you to continue the strides we have all made to improve Maryland's recycling programs in a time- and cost-effective manner.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter M. Houstle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Peter M. Houstle
Executive Director