



House Bill 264

Solid Waste Management - Organics Recycling and Waste Diversion - Food Residuals

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Environment and Transportation
Committee

Date: January 27, 2021

From: Alex Butler

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) OPPOSES HB 264 as it would mandate many facilities to direct food residuals to specific composting facilities. While MACo generally shares in the goal to increase food residual composting, the specific mandates in HB 264 could inappropriately place many challenging and burdensome requirements on local government facilities.

HB 264 requires facilities that generate food residuals in certain volumes (starting with two tons per week in 2023) to separate residuals from other solid waste and divert them to an organic composting facility within 30 miles. Currently, Maryland has a rather limited number of organic composting facilities, and a requirement that residuals be diverted to these facilities could lead to a significant rise in costs for local government facilities.

Large local government facilities like jails and schools could apparently be subject to the bill's requirements, and would therefore need to determine whether the provisions in the bill apply, and then undergo costly changes to the way they handle food residuals. Even the mere determination of whether a given facility is covered by the bill's provisions could trigger outside consulting costs, as these matters are beyond the expertise of wardens, school facility staff, and others within local government.

Amidst a health pandemic and an accompanying fiscal uncertainty, counties are struggling to maintain service levels to meet essential needs – including in educational and correctional facilities. Placing an added cost burden onto those facilities will only divert resources. MACo believes that the bill should not apply to local government-owned facilities.

MACo recognizes the intent of HB 264 but believes it poses significant cost and implementation challenges. Accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to provide an **UNFAVORABLE** report for HB 264.