



March 25, 2024

To: Maryland Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Re: Support for HB173 State Buildings and State Highways – Collection of Yard Waste

The Maryland Recycling Network promotes sustainable reduction, reuse and recycling (the 3 "R's"), to ensure that the use of virgin materials is minimized, materials otherwise destined for disposal are reused or recycled and strong demand exists for buying 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.

We support this bill. Yard trimmings, leaves, grass and branches, are commonly collected for composting by local governments throughout Maryland. In fact, MDE's most recent waste & recycling report showed 384,506 tons of yard trimmings managed at 22 permitted composting facilities operating in 12 Maryland counties. This is a tremendous success story. Adding yard waste collected from state-owned properties including highways will only add to our success in composting this material and decrease it going to disposal.

We are delighted the legislation includes an amendment we suggested identifying paper bags as one of the two collection containers (see Section 2-901(D)). Maryland local government yard waste programs generally require those materials be set at the curbside in either a reusable container or a paper bag. Allowing paper bags along with reusable containers creates consistency in our composting efforts.

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 improve recycling in Maryland.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Houstle".

Peter Houstle
Executive Director