

# HB 150

## Grants for School-Based Food Waste Diversion

**This Bill creates a competitive grant program to support school-based initiatives to prevent, reduce, and compost pre- and post-consumer food waste.**

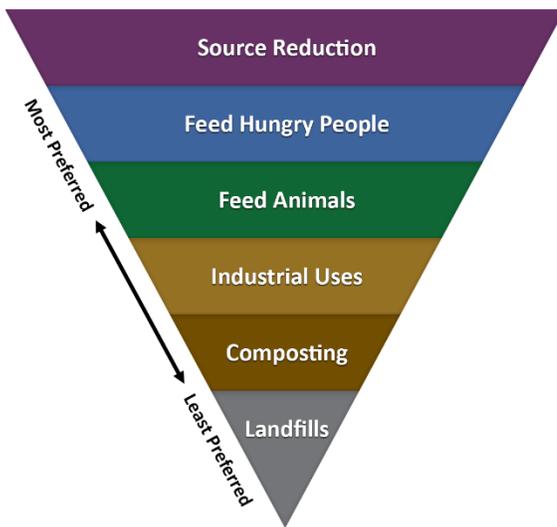
Initiatives can include:

- Education for students, staff, parents
- School infrastructure improvements
- Training and education on food waste reduction and composting for staff
- Training and education on Offer-Versus-Serve (OVS) in cafeterias
- Developing innovative systems to maximize opportunities to serve food that has already been prepared such as during after school activities or as take-home meals
- Contracts with commercial composters
- Purchase of On-site composting bins
- Other innovative techniques for managing school-based food waste

### Why divert food waste from schools?

#### **Maryland is not on track to meet national goals.**

In September 2015, The U.S. set a national goal to reduce food waste by 50% by the year 2030.<sup>1</sup> However, in Maryland almost a million tons of food waste is generated each year with only 15.5% of these scraps being diverted and the remainder is sent to the landfill or incinerators where it produces greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to climate change.<sup>2</sup>



Source: EPA's Food Recovery Hierarchy

#### **Food waste diversion involves a lot more than composting.**

The primary goals of these initiatives is to feed hungry students and reduce plate waste before the food becomes inedible. Citing the EPA's Food Recovery Hierarchy, allowing edible food to go to waste creates missed opportunities in the school food value chain.

#### **Food security**

1 in 7 children in Maryland face hunger<sup>3</sup>. School based meals are essential sources of nutrition for these children.

#### **Opportunities to compost**

Food waste suffocates in landfills creating highly potent greenhouse gases such as methane. In contrast, when converted into compost, food waste can sequester carbon in soils. Compost is a valuable soil amendment that enhances soil fertility, soil

water-holding capacity, soil organic matter, and soil structure. In addition to farming and gardens, compost can be utilized for managing stormwater run-off and preventing soil erosion (for example, via rain gardens, green roofs, bioswales, compost filter socks, and other "green infrastructure" projects).

#### **For more information please contact:**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2015/09/16/usda-and-epa-join-private-sector-charitable-organizations-set>

<sup>2</sup> <https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/land/recyclingandoperationsprogram/pages/foodscraps.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/maryland>