

## Zawitoski, John

---

**To:** Criss, Jeremy  
**Subject:** RE: Bill 28-16 Solid Waste (Trash)-Strategic Plan to Advance Composting, Compost Use and Food Waste Diversion

---

### Item 12

---

**From:** Criss, Jeremy  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 14, 2016 1:24 PM  
**To:** Floreen, Nancy; Berliner's Office, Councilmember; Leventhal's Office, Councilmember; Riemer's Office, Councilmember; Rice's Office, Councilmember; Elrich's Office, Councilmember; Navarro's Office, Councilmember; Katz's Office, Councilmember; Hucker's Office, Councilmember  
**Cc:** "Barbara Weitzer" ([weitzer@starpower.net](mailto:weitzer@starpower.net)); 'David Weitzer'; 'Lonnie.Luther@gmail.com'; 'Jillian Levine'; Aliza Fishbein; 'Fishbulb35'; Heather Bruskin; 'Susan Wexler'; Susan Eisendrath; Hamlin, Joseph  
**Subject:** Bill 28-16 Solid Waste (Trash)-Strategic Plan to Advance Composting, Compost Use and Food Waste Diversion

Dear County Council Members,  
On behalf of the Agricultural Advisory Committee please find attached a letter of support for Bill 28-16 Strategic Plan to Advance Composting, Compost Use and Food Waste Diversion.

Please let us know if you have any questions.  
Thanks J

Jeremy V. Criss  
Office of Agricultural Services, Director  
18410 Muncaster Road  
Derwood, Maryland 20855  
301-590-2830 (Office)  
301-943-9766 (Cell)  
301-590-2839 (Fax)  
[jeremy.criss@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:jeremy.criss@montgomerycountymd.gov)  
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/agservices>  
CONNECT WITH The Office of Agriculture





**AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

July 13, 2016

The Honorable Nancy Floreen  
Montgomery County Council President  
100 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Council President Floreen:

Bill 28-16-Strategic Plan to Advance Composting,  
Compost Use and Food Waste Diversion

On behalf of the Montgomery County Agricultural Advisory Committee-AAC, please accept this letter as our support for Bill 28-16-Strategic Plan to Advance Composting, Compost Use and Food Waste Diversion.

The AAC believes the Bill 28-16 and the Strategic Plan will help promote more composting opportunities in the County and at the same time assist the County on the Solid Waste Recycling Goal of 2020. The AAC and the Office of Agriculture-OAG would be very interested in participating with the Strategic Plan to offer our insight on the current environment of farming in the County.

There are some farmers that are actively involved with composting on a small scale basis and the Plan could be used to survey these farmers to better understand some of the barriers they are dealing with and address potential solutions to those barriers. Composting represents an additional income opportunity to farmers as they sell the final end product to customers interested in an alternative source of nutrients to grow plants and trees.

The AAC thanks the County Council for this opportunity to present our views in support of Bill 28-16 and please let us know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

David Weitzer, Chairman

## **Testimony to the Montgomery County Council**

**Re:** Concerning Bill 28-16, Solid Waste (Trash) – Strategic Plan on Composting

**By:** Aliza Fishbein, Non-Farmer Member, Montgomery County Agricultural Advisory Committee

**Position:** Support Bill 28-16

Good afternoon. Thank you for your time and consideration of Bill 28-16. My name is Aliza Fishbein, I am a Non-Farmer Member of the Agricultural Advisory Committee. The Committee is made up of farmers and non-farmers from across Montgomery County, all who have an understanding of the contributions and capacity of the agricultural community. Our members represent a spectrum of ages and farm types and sizes. Some of our members are new to farming and others are carrying on a tradition of farming that has run in their families for generations, sometimes on the same plot of land that has been in their family for 150 years or even more. We are stewards of our County's land; we know the very soil, and we live to work it and protect it.

The Committee asked me to speak on their behalf today because I have spent the last year writing my public health masters thesis at Johns Hopkins University on the topic of food waste composting in Montgomery County. I explored the strengths and opportunities of our current food waste disposal system, the threats it poses on health and the environment and the potential relief that food waste *composting* can provide.

I did extensive research, conducting literature reviews, going on site-visits, looking into historical and legal records, and perhaps most importantly, recording hours upon hours of stakeholder interviews. I discovered that most stakeholders recognize the benefits of food waste composting and would like to partake in it, but that for most, the regulatory scheme in the County makes it impossible.

Last year, the state of Maryland took an important step in encouraging composting on farms. Farmers in Montgomery County appreciate that these new rules are a helpful step in the right direction. But unfortunately, relying upon farms to carry the burden of food waste in the County is simply not realistic.

First, there is just not enough space on the County's farms to hold the amount of compost we would need to make an impact on the County's waste reduction goals.

Second, our farms are our livelihoods. We face many challenges in the agricultural industry, including fluctuating and unpredictable weather. Asking farmers to take on the extra burden of others' waste on the small scale currently permissible is not the strongest economic incentive.

Third, moving the waste all the way up-County from its source uses energy and brings more truck traffic to rural roads.

The Strategic Plan required by Bill 28-16 will involve a holistic assessment of opportunities for expanding food waste composting in Montgomery County. It will present a pathway forward to reaching our 70% recycling rate by 2020 goal.

We are grateful that the state of Maryland has begun to take small steps in the right direction, by recognizing the importance of composting. Relying on farms alone is not the answer. We would love to be part of a broader collaboration to address food waste disposal in our County.

We are grateful to Vice President Berliner for being the lead sponsor of this legislation and to those councilmembers who have joined him as co-sponsors.

It's time for the County to take seriously the need to dispose of its waste in-County in a sustainable manner. Our recycling goal is admirable, yet lofty. Bill 28-16 offers a real way forward to reach that goal and future goals.

I would like to submit into the record, a letter of support for Bill 28-16 from the Agricultural Advisory Committee.

Thank you.