

Hello House Finance Committee,

My name is Ella Kilpatrick Kotner and I am writing in support of **HB5195**. I run a non-profit composting program in Providence. We collect food scraps from over 830 residents, and turn them into high quality compost that we then redistribute to the people whose food scraps we collected. We turn what many consider waste into wealth, that is being used to grow food and rejuvenate our depleted urban soils. I believe firmly in community based composting, and I know it can have huge impacts both on diversion metrics and community resilience and vitality when it has robust investment. I also believe that we all need to be responsible for the waste that we generate. The surcharge implemented through HB5195 would put some accountability on waste generators while also contributing robust support to composters. It is a win win.

Every year we are sending over 100,000 tons of food to the landfill. That represents about $\frac{1}{3}$ of our waste stream. Additionally, Rhode Island's only landfill will be full in 2046. Once the landfill is full, we'll be forced to ship our waste out of state, which will cost exorbitant amounts of money. Reducing the amount of material we send to the landfill is a critical step in prolonging the life of the landfill, and food waste is a great place to start. Food in the landfill is not only wasted space, but a wasted resource. Compost does wonders for our soil, food system, and community, and we should invest in infrastructure and the organizations dedicated to capturing and using it as a resource. This bill would provide a steady source of funding for composting and waste diversion programs while also incentivizing people and municipalities to reduce their waste. It's a positive feedback loop that will quickly pay for itself. A win win on all fronts.

I urge you to support HB5195 and invest in our soil, our climate, and our future.

Sincerely,
Ella Kilpatrick Kotner
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