



THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401-1991

June 22, 2009

Dr. Jerry Weast, Superintendent
Montgomery County Board of Education
850 Hungerford Dr.
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Dr. Weast:

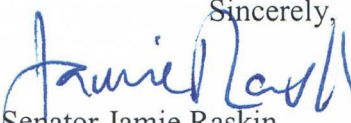



We are writing in enthusiastic support of the Piney Branch Elementary School's Young Activist Club's petition for a pilot program to replace the polystyrene lunch trays and plastic utensils with reusable trays, utensils and a dishwasher. It is our understanding that the Board of Education made the unfortunate decision to deny the students' petition on June 1st. We respectfully request that the Board revisit this decision or research and implement an alternative, environmentally friendly means of serving school lunches.

Disposable serving ware is hazardous to our environment. When incinerated, it releases toxic chemicals into the air. When produced, it uses fossil fuels and produces toxic waste. As educators, our schools should be teaching students to be environmental stewards, not encouraging waste and environmental degradation.

Schools across the country, including schools in Missouri, New York, Texas and California are banning the use of polystyrene lunch trays in favor of biodegradable trays, utensils, napkins and more. The U.S. Capitol serves thousands of meals a day, all using biodegradable trays, take out containers, utensils, cups and paper products.

Montgomery County Public Schools should be a leader in environmental stewardship. That leadership can start by reducing the school system's carbon footprint by eliminating toxic disposables in our school cafeterias.

Sincerely,

 Senator Jamie Raskin	 Delegate Sheila Hixson
 Delegate Tom Hucker	 Delegate Heather Mizeur