

**Testimony of
Joshua Goodman, Deputy Commissioner, Public Affairs & Customer Experience
New York City Department of Sanitation**

**Hearing before the New York City Council
Committee on Sanitation & Solid Waste Management
Wednesday, September 25, 2024, 10:30 A.M.**

Oversight Hearing: Waste Diversion

Good morning Chair Abreu and members of the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management. I am Joshua Goodman, Deputy Commissioner of Public Affairs & Customer Experience at the New York City Department of Sanitation, and I am joined today by Jennifer McDonnell, Assistant Commissioner of Solid Waste Management, and by Kate Kitchener, Director of the Bureau of Recycling and Sustainability.

I would like to begin today by acknowledging the tragic loss of Sanitation Worker Richard Errico, a 19-year veteran of our Department who was killed in the performance of his duties this past weekend. All of New York's Strongest are in mourning, and we appreciate the words of support that have come from all corners of the City.

Every day, 24 million pounds of waste go from the curb and into the white trucks of the Sanitation Department. If observing life in New York City is the greatest show on earth, then New York's Strongest are its most dazzling performers, making the bags and bales of material disappear from our streets and sidewalks like master magicians.

But we all know that the rabbit doesn't really vanish inside the hat, and the waste – our waste, produced by 8.5 million New Yorkers, including you and me and everyone in this room – doesn't just “go away,” either.

Most of it is either sent to waste-to-energy facilities in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, or upstate, where it becomes heat and power for homes, or to landfills in Virginia, South Carolina, and elsewhere, where it can sit indefinitely and become nothing.

DSNY does not accept this as an inevitability, and the diversion of waste to differing forms of beneficial reuse has been part of our strategic planning for the Department's entire history, at least from the first contract to produce fertilizer, grease, and soap out of garbage on Barren Island in Brooklyn in 1896.

Today, those waste diversion plans are far more advanced, and proceeding at a far quicker pace. The Commercial Waste Zone program, now being implemented in the first of 20 zones, provides the first meaningful financial incentive for commercial diversion, with the collection of recyclable and compostable material both costing businesses less money than the collection of trash.

I would like to take the opportunity – as DSNY has done at three previous hearings – to again raise the issue of commercial organics separation. Local Law 146 of 2013 requires certain commercial establishments to separate their compostable material, but this law is now substantially out of step with the City’s commitment to diversion of compostable waste. While the Commercial Waste Zone system will improve commercial diversion, we also urge the Council to consider an update that would allow DSNY to require source separation at all commercial establishments, in line with the progress made in residential diversion.

Earlier this year, the Adams administration completed a promised expansion of composting to all NYC public schools, keeping material out of landfill and training the next generation of composters. In 2019, school food waste collection programs diverted approximately 16 million pounds of material from landfill. In 2023, that number was over 35 million, and in 2024 to date – with months left to go – it is already over 38 million pounds.

On the residential side, the FY2024 Mayor’s Management Report reported the third straight year in which the diversion rate increased. That means that the total share of waste kept out of landfills and waste-to-energy facilities is up every year thus far under this Administration.

The MMR also showed an incredible data point within overall diversion: the amount of compostable material saved from landfill has increased 65% over the last two years, to an astounding 260 million pounds. This is because New York City is now home to the largest, easiest to use curbside composting program ever – a program that goes citywide in less than two weeks, the culmination of more than a decade of advocacy and policy development.

This is a vindication of simple, customer-forward programs for waste diversion. It is all too easy for those of us who care deeply about waste diversion and environmental justice to forget that, whether right or wrong, it is not always at top of mind for busy, hard-working New Yorkers. Everyone wants to do the right thing, but it has to be easy.

And we’ve taken steps, through policy design and through the use of new technologies, to make it easy.

Recycle or compost your pizza box. Don’t worry that it has a little grease on it – we’ll take care of it.

Recycle the peanut butter jar. Don’t worry that it has some peanut butter residue in it – we’ll take care of it.

Recycle that plastic container regardless of what number is on the bottom – we’ll take care of it.

When you put your compost bin out on your recycling day, feel free to line it with a clear plastic bag, if you want to – we’ll take care of that, too.

Complicated rules, sign-up requirements, restrictions, exceptions...all of that makes it more likely that reusable or recyclable material just goes in the trash.

And wouldn't that be a shame?

Proposed Legislation

With that focus on universality and ease of use around diversion programs, I will now turn to the bills on today's agenda.

Int-256, sponsored by Council Member Hudson, would require the Department to study the feasibility and potential environmental effects of a recycling mandate for household textiles. We strongly support the goal of textile waste diversion, and as such, we are currently studying textile diversion options as part of our Solid Waste Management Plan, due to be completed in 2026. The Department also has a successful – although relatively small – voluntary textile recycling program, refashionNYC. We would welcome the Council's partnership in outreach around expanding this program, which operates at no cost to the City. Given our existing program and studies already underway, the bill as written and the study it mandates are unnecessary. I would also note that businesses whose waste stream is more than 10% textiles are already required to recycle them per DSNY rule, and that is a very significant amount of the textile waste produced citywide.

Int-351, sponsored by Council Member Nurse, would require DSNY to develop a plan for ensuring proper disposal of rechargeable batteries used for powered mobility devices. These batteries present a major problem for DSNY, causing fires in our trucks and facilities when they are improperly disposed of.

DSNY already complies with certain portions of this law. We have one Special Waste Drop-off site that accepts these items in each borough, open one day per week, whereas the law calls for two sites per borough open seven days per week. Adding a second site per borough and making both sites operational every day would cost an estimated \$7,721,000 per year.

The law also calls for DSNY to accept these items at any disposal or collection event organized by the Department. While we do accept them at our SAFE Events, currently funded at one per borough per year, it would be unsafe and impractical to collect them at *all* Department-sponsored events, which is what the law requires as written. For example, accepting lithium-ion batteries at a compost giveback event would not be feasible.

For the third and fourth requirements of the bill as written – mandating coordination with businesses and outreach with the public – we would point out that many rechargeable batteries are already covered by a New York State-mandated drop-off program, where all stores that sell rechargeable batteries or items that include them **MUST** accept them for recycling, but that the current law exempts e-mobility batteries.

Given the cost of establishing new sites, expanding the hours of current sites, and adding hazardous waste material recovery to unrelated events, and the existing state infrastructure around work with businesses and the public for other battery types, we believe that the best plan for getting this hazardous item out of the waste stream is to close the state loophole and add e-mobility batteries to the existing state takeback law, which is funded by battery manufacturers.

The next bill on the agenda today, Int-695, also sponsored by Council Member Nurse, calls for a study of single use plastics. This Council has made substantial progress on the issue of single use plastics, particularly with the passage of Local Law 17 of 2023, the Skip the Stuff Act. Enforcement of this law has only just begun this summer, and given both that and the fact that we currently study the reality of single use plastics as part of our waste characterization efforts, a new study is premature. If the goal is a broader study of single use plastics in context and their impact on environmental justice communities, we believe that one of our sister agencies would be better suited to lead this impact analysis. We support the bill if it is in the right place.

The final bill, Int-697, sponsored by Council Member Nurse as well, renews the existing mandate to conduct Waste Characterization Studies, specifically requiring one in 2028 and one in 2032. We appreciate the Council Member's forethought on this – only by knowing what is in our waste can we hope to reduce and divert it – and we have found past studies to be useful.

Thank you, and we look forward to taking your questions.



OFFICE OF THE BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

ANTONIO REYNOSO

Brooklyn Borough President

City Council Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management Oversight Hearing – Waste Diversion 9.25.24

Thank you to Chair Abreu and members of the committee for holding this hearing today. I assume it is no coincidence that we are talking about waste diversion during New York City Climate Week, since diverting waste from landfills is an important tool in our toolbox of strategies to reduce the city's greenhouse gas emissions. I have long been a supporter of the goal set under the previous administration to send zero waste to landfills by 2030. Sadly, as that date draws closer, we remain far from achieving that goal.

I want to start by focusing on Intro 697, which I introduced with Councilmember Sandy Nurse, because it touches on all the proposals being heard today. As Commissioner Tisch said in the introduction to DSNY's 2023 Waste Characterization study, "To defeat the trash, one must know the trash." Waste Characterization Studies give us this insight. In these studies, DSNY examines what we throw away, considering factors such as seasons, residential density, income, and source (including homes, schools, public housing, and corner baskets). This gives us a comprehensive picture of what we're throwing away and how we can improve.

And improvement remains necessary. The recently released 2024 Mayor's Management Report shows that we still have work to do to meet DSNY's stated diversion goals, and even more work to do to get to zero waste. The 2023 Waste Characterization Study gives us important information, including:

- Our recycling capture rate for metal, glass, and plastic is down, and contamination of this waste stream is up. Additionally, participation rates correlate with higher incomes;
- Lithium-ion batteries are a new, frequent appearance in the waste stream; and
- Recent City and State policies banning single-use plastic bags and polystyrene foam have been effective in reducing the amount of these materials in the waste stream.

This information can and should inform our policy choices. For example, based on what we learned, we can target recycling education outreach to low-income communities to increase participation; create smart solutions for disposal of lithium-ion batteries (as proposed in Intro 351); and look to the potential for further bans (such as for single-use plastics, as proposed in Intro 695) or source-separation mandates (such as for textiles, as proposed in Intro 256).

That is why we proposed Intro 697 to require DSNY to conduct further Waste Characterization Studies in four and eight years – 2028 and 2032 – so we can continue tracking our progress and making informed choices about waste policy.

I also want to mention a few other policy interventions we can implement to increase waste diversion. As the City develops its next Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP) over the next year, we have an opportunity to set new goals and codify innovative policies. For example:

- **Expand local composting:** In less than two weeks, DSNY will expand curbside food scrap collection to the entire city. As participation increases, we should expand composting within the five boroughs. Composting locally has economic benefits for our communities, and avoids the pitfalls of anaerobic co-digestion, which can create increased emissions and toxic byproducts. My office and the Brooklyn and Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Boards will release a report soon about the benefits of composting over other methods of processing food waste and an analysis of how we can implement Intro 696, which would require the City to establish 180,000 wet tons of organics processing capacity in each borough.
- **Mandate that all commercial businesses source separate organics:** Right now, only certain commercial businesses must separate food waste. As DSNY has testified at previous hearings, expanding this mandate would help make significant progress in diverting this waste from landfills.
- **Support Extended Producer Responsibility legislation at the State level:** One of the most effective ways to keep waste out of landfills is to curb it at its source. Especially as more people are ordering delivery, regulating packaging is becoming more critical. The Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act unfortunately did not make it through the Assembly in the last session, but I am hopeful that with our continued advocacy, it can pass next year.
- **Containerize recycling:** As DSNY moves to containerize putrescible and organic waste, I am hopeful that we can expand these efforts to include recycling as well, especially in the form of shared, on-street containers that give users options for all three types of separated waste. I am concerned that requiring containerization for one type of waste but not another will disincentivize source separation and undermine our efforts to stop “the all-night rat buffet.”
- **Implement Save-as-you-throw:** This idea, which loosely means creating economic incentives for waste diversion, was floated under the de Blasio administration and subsequently abandoned. Despite being a controversial idea here, it is actually quite common in other cities – 7,000 of them in America in fact – using various methods (generally bins and/or bags priced by size, with cheaper or even free rates for everything except waste going to landfill). Moving to containerization presents an opportunity to revisit creating such a program for New York City.

Thank you again for taking the time to examine these important policy proposals. On Climate week and every week, I look forward to working together with the Council and DSNY to achieve our zero waste goals.



**Testimony on behalf of the Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, and Bronx Solid Waste
Advisory Boards**

before the New York City Council Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management

In Support of Proposed Legislation

September 25, 2024

Testimony on Intro 256 – Textile Waste

The four solid waste advisory boards support Intro 256, which would require the Department of Sanitation to study the feasibility and environmental effects of a mandate for households to separate textile waste for collection. This study would assess the costs, benefits, and potential negative impacts of such a mandate.

I'm a 40 year veteran of the Fashion Industry, who grew up as the daughter of a fashion buyer for major department stores in Baltimore, I've seen firsthand the impact of textile waste.

Textiles are a significant part of our City's solid waste volumes. According to the DSNY's 2023 Waste Characterization study, 5% of aggregate curbside discards were textiles, equal to 92 pounds per household annually. The 155,000 tons of textiles we send to landfills and incinerators each year is just the visible tip of the iceberg.

What we don't see is the global supply chain behind every garment—contributing to environmental degradation, poverty wages, and water overuse. When clothing seems "unbelievably" cheap, someone else is paying the price.

We must stop treating discarded clothing as trash by building a circular system for textile collection, recycling, and innovation right here in New York City. This would create green jobs, support our local fashion industry, and reduce waste.

Intro 256 is a critical first step toward this vision by requiring DSNY to explore a sustainable future for apparel and household textiles.

Thank you for your consideration today and for holding this hearing.

Intro 351 – Rechargeable Batteries

The Solid Waste Advisory Boards of the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Queens strongly support the passage of Int 0351, with a suggested amendment.

As proposed, this Intro would add an important element to the Council’s adoption of LL 49 and 50, and the recent rulemaking supporting them – by focusing attention on the recovery, consolidation, transportation and re-processing of rechargeable batteries, in ways that are both safe and effective at achieving the recovery of the component materials of such batteries, which are valuable as industrial commodities once they are reprocessed.

At present, such attention is in its infancy. Millions of such batteries are now present in a plethora of various products, and even EPA – directed by the IRA - is in the process of workshopping both basic information and ideas about how to do so. One battery-industry veteran recently likened it to “we’re still singing the national anthem” when asked about the status of such initiatives in baseball game terms.

Not only is this an interagency challenge, the Intro also provides an important opportunity for cross-sectoral collaboration – with the city working in cooperation with various private sector and nonprofit organizations to promote common messaging, especially focused on safety.

One such possibility is the creation of an extended producer responsibility (EPR); such ideas are in play in other states, with legislation proposed in New York State. Harmonization among states of EPR-type programs will be necessary to make such programs fully effective.

A particular concern with the scope of Intro 351 is its exclusive focus on e-mobility devices, even as medium-format rechargeable batteries are used across a growing range of sectors, such as yard equipment, power tools, etc. The Intro should be amended for that purpose.

Testimony on Intro 695 – A study of single-use plastics

The Manhattan, Brooklyn, Bronx, and Queens Solid Waste Advisory Boards (SWABs) are supportive of Intro 695-2024 in its current form, which proposes a requirement to conduct a comprehensive study of new waste policy initiatives that would reduce the sale, distribution and use of single-use plastic items in the city and advance environmental justice through such reduction, with some recommendations.

To maximize the impact of future initiatives, the SWABs recommend amending the bill to prioritize studying the following:

- First, a ban on toxic chemicals in single-use food packaging, particularly the 14 known toxics prevalent in plastics today;¹
- Second, requiring any products intended as substitutions for single use plastic packaging be non-toxic. Many such alternative products currently on the market contain high levels of PFAS;² and, lastly,
- Banning plastics that are either difficult to recycle, such as polyvinyl chloride, or for which recycling is not an economically viable option, for example polypropylene.

Intro 695 would help build on New York City's legacy of reducing the use of single-use plastic materials. In the last decade, the City has instituted several initiatives that have undoubtedly contributed to New York City's over 100 pound reduction in per household aggregate annual refuse and recycling collections from 10 years ago.³ These initiatives include:

- Local Law 142 of 2013, which prohibits the use of single use foam and packing peanuts;

¹ Ortho-phthalates, bisphenols, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), lead and lead compounds, hexavalent chromium and compounds, cadmium and cadmium compounds, mercury and mercury compounds, benzophenone and its derivatives, halogenated flame retardants, perchlorate, formaldehyde, toluene, polyvinyl chloride, polystyrene, or polycarbonate.

² <https://www.consumerreports.org/health/food-contaminants/dangerous-pfas-chemicals-are-in-your-food-packaging-a3786252074/>

³ 2023 New York City Waste Characterization Study, p.22 -

<https://www.nyc.gov/assets/dsny/downloads/resources/reports/waste-characterization-studies/2023/wcs-2023.pdf>

Solid Waste Advisory Boards of Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, and Bronx

- Local Law 63 of 2016, which would have banned plastic bags. Unfortunately, it was quickly preempted in by the New York State legislature and later enacted as a statewide ban that went into effect in 2020.
- Local Law 17 of 2023 which prohibits restaurants and food delivery services from including silverware, napkins, and other extras in take-out orders unless customers expressly request these items; and, lastly,
- City-wide monthly Plastic Free Lunch Day where no single-use plastic packaging is served in cafeterias in New York City schools.

All four examples of materials reduction initiatives resulted in a significant reduction in the consumption of single-use plastic in New York City and prove that these efforts are not only palatable for New York City residents, they work.

Thank you for holding this hearing to introduce this important bill and for your consideration today.

Testimony on Intro 697 – Waste Characterization Studies

The Solid Waste Advisory Boards of the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Queens strongly support the passage of Int 0697, which would amend Local Law 40 of 2010 (§16-316.2) to require two additional waste characterization studies in 2028 and 2032.

Since the passage of Local Laws 19 of 1989 and 40 of 2010, six waste composition studies have been conducted between 1990 and 2023. Each study offers a detailed analysis of the residential waste stream, examining materials such as metal, glass, paper, textiles, and organics.

Solid Waste Advisory Boards of Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, and Bronx

These reports provide critical insights into the management of our city's waste, showing not just what materials are collected, but also why some are recycled and others are not. For instance, they reveal that Manhattan residents excel at recycling cardboard, while some Brooklyn neighborhoods lead in food scrap diversion, helping policymakers refine and improve recycling programs.

Historically, these studies have tracked the rise and fall of various waste streams, such as juice boxes and phone books, and assessed the success of policy initiatives like the bans on expanded polystyrene and plastic shopping bags. In 2018, New York City used 10 billion plastic bags annually; today, that number is dramatically reduced, thanks to insights provided by these studies.

Looking forward, it is crucial not only to continue these studies but to enhance them. Future studies should present data in ways that support the elimination of non-recyclable packaging and products. By reclassifying materials into durable and non-durable categories and further segmenting durables as repairable, reusable, or reducible, we can better guide efforts toward an achievable Zero Waste goal.

**Comments Submitted by Justin Wood, Director of Policy of
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest on behalf of the
Transform Don't Trash NYC Coalition
to the New York City Department of Sanitation
On September 27, 2024**

Thank you Chair Abreu and members of the Committee for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of a package of legislation that will help New York City and State meet the Zero Waste goals established by Local Law 86 of 2023, the State Solid Waste Management Plan, and the economy-wide emissions reductions mandated by New York's Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA).

For more than ten years, The Transform Don't Trash NYC coalition has been dedicated to transforming New York City's commercial trash industry to reduce waste and pollution in historically disadvantaged communities, foster clean and healthy communities for all New Yorkers, and create good jobs. Members include the New York City Environmental Justice Alliance and its member organizations, Alliance for a Greater New York, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters Locals 813, New York Lawyers for the Public Interest, and the Natural Resources Defense Council.

We appreciate the Council's ongoing partnership in ensuring that Local Law 199 of 2019 is fully and rapidly implemented to realize the multiple goals of the City's forthcoming Commercial Waste Zones (CWZ) system.

We agree with DSNY that the mandated CWZ system should provide the first meaningful price incentives for businesses of all types to divert waste from the City's massive commercial waste disposal system. Moreover, for the first time Local Law 199 enables DSNY to collect data on the quantities of waste delivered to commercial transfer stations, incinerators, and recycling facilities by the private sanitation companies designated to participate in the new system.

However, detailed data on waste generated by diverse businesses ranging from restaurants to office buildings to manufacturing facilities is needed to ensure that the incentives, rules, and contractual requirements included in the CWZ system are sufficient to sharply reduce the amounts of commercial waste disposed in landfills and burned in incinerators over the next few years.

We therefore urge the Council to expand the scope of Intro 0697 (Nurse) to require DSNY to perform waste characterization studies on commercial waste streams in parallel with the residential and institutional waste studies mandated by the bill. We further suggest that the putrescible and recyclable trade waste stream to be managed by the CWZ system be studied separately from the City's massive construction and demolition waste stream which also contains many recyclable and reusable materials but is not regulated by Local Law 199.

We also support proposed legislation discussed at today's hearing that would require all commercial businesses to source, separate and recycle food waste for recycling, a requirement that currently only applies to a limited number of businesses that generate food waste. A universal commercial food waste recycling mandate will divert additional waste from disposal, simplify customer education and enforcement programs, and help create economies of scale and efficient collection routes for designated waste haulers collecting and recycling source separated food waste in each zone.

We look forward to working with you to amend and pass this legislation and to ensure that New York can become a national leader in reducing Greenhouse Gas emissions, reducing truck miles, improving worker and public safety, and creating good green jobs in recycling and reuse from commercial waste.

Yours,

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**Testimony of Alia Soomro, Deputy Director for New York City Policy
New York League of Conservation Voters
City Council Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management
Oversight Hearing on Waste Diversion
September 25, 2024**

Good morning, my name is Alia Soomro and I am the Deputy Director for New York City Policy at the New York League of Conservation Voters (NYLCV). NYLCV is a statewide environmental advocacy organization representing over 30,000 members in New York City. Thank you, Chair Abreu and members of the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management for the opportunity to comment.

One of NYLCV's top policy priorities is achieving our zero waste by 2030 goal to not only curb our greenhouse gas emissions but to send less waste to landfills, which are disproportionately located in low income communities and communities of color. The higher rates of pollution from landfills and incinerators in these communities cause disproportionately higher cases of asthma, cancer, and other health issues and compound already existing environmental and racial inequities. Due to these environmental injustices, the City needs to do everything in its power to continue moving towards organic waste recycling in order to reduce emissions, improve our quality of life, and get us back on track with our zero waste reduction goals.

We appreciate both the City Council's leadership on passing zero waste legislation and the Administration's prioritization of waste initiatives over the past couple of years and we look forward to working with the Council, Administration, and advocates to continue passing strong zero waste legislation and ensuring it is implemented equitably. We are very excited that the mandatory organics program is finally beginning in the Bronx, Staten Island, and Manhattan on October 6th.

While we have made great strides in the past couple of years passing legislation and rolling out the curbside organics program, New York City still has a long way to go when it comes to recycling rates and enforcement. According to the [2023 NYC Waste Characterization Study](#), 75% of New York City residential waste is made of up materials that can be diverted from landfill with currently available DSNY managed programs and private recycling operations. In FY23, DSNY's overall recycling diversion rate was 20.2% and FY24 the diversion rate was 20.6%, still smaller than the FY20 rate, which was 21.6%, according to [the latest Mayor's Management Report \(MMR\)](#). Additionally, the 2023 Waste Characterization Study stated that metal, glass, plastic and paper recycling outcomes have declined from previous study years; capture rates have decreased, while contamination rates have increased. When it comes to enforcement of recycling regulations, while an improvement from FY23 to FY24 was made according to the

latest MMR (increasing from 47,267 to 51,848), FY24 was still below FY20's amount of 55,610 summonses. Let's not forget commercial waste—we underscore the importance of rolling out the City's Commercial Waste Zones law, which was passed in 2019, in a timely manner. If implemented in a comprehensive, timely, and transparent manner, the CWZ law will bring New York City closer to its zero waste goals and improve the safety of workers, pedestrians, and cyclists. While there have been small improvements over the past couple of years regarding waste diversion, we think the City can and must do better, especially when it comes to reducing and recycling textiles, electronics, plastics, organics, and rechargeable lithium-ion batteries.

Intro 256

NYLCV supports Intro 256, sponsored by Council Member Hudson, requiring DSNY to study and report on the feasibility and environmental effects of a mandate for households to separate, and DSNY to collect, textile waste. The study would consider, among other things, the costs, potential benefits, and potential negative effects of such a mandate. As of the 2023 Waste Characterization Study, 5% of residential waste consists of textiles, which are divertible but for which DSNY has no scaled curbside collection. Textiles are currently diverted either through DSNY-managed donation programs, private donation centers, public and private collection bins, or retail takebacks. Moreover, the 2024 MMR stated that tons of textiles recycled declined for a fifth consecutive year. While the decline was slight between FY23 to FY24, the decline was even greater when compared to FY20. NYLCV believes this bill is a good start to identify opportunities and challenges when it comes to mandating households to recycle textile waste.

Intro 351

As advocates of sustainable modes of transportation, NYLCV supports Intro 351, sponsored by Council Member Nurse, requiring DSNY to develop a plan for promoting the proper disposal of rechargeable batteries used for powered mobility devices, such as motorized bicycles and scooters. Such plan would include, but not be limited to: (i) maintaining collection locations for such rechargeable batteries; (ii) accepting such rechargeable batteries at disposal events; (iii) coordinating with private entities regarding voluntary participation in in-store collection programs for such rechargeable batteries; and (iv) conducting public education and outreach regarding proper disposal of such rechargeable batteries. Given recent increases in lithium-ion battery fires and injuries around the City, NYLCV stresses the importance of comprehensive e-bike safety outreach, education, and battery disposal in order to save lives.

We also urge the City to work with manufacturers towards longer-term solutions to ensure batteries are responsibly disposed of or recycled, such as an extended producer responsibility program at the State level in which retailers and distributors who sell lithium-ion batteries must accept used batteries from customers and bear the costs of their recycling or safe disposal. We recognize that this is a policy area in which we need State leadership, both in providing incentives for e-bike purchases that encourage more New Yorkers to use this zero-emission form of transportation and in ensuring that e-bike batteries are safe and safely recycled at the end of their lifespans. As often happens with sanitation policy, we believe that if the City steps up, it will encourage the State to take action.

Intro 695

NYLCV also supports Intro 695, sponsored by Council Member Nurse, requiring DSNY, in consultation with the DCWP, DEP, and the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, to conduct a comprehensive study of new waste policy initiatives that would reduce the sale, distribution and use of single-use plastic items in the city and advance environmental justice through such reduction. We recommend that the bill consider adding language about specific recommendations city agencies can adopt to reduce single-use plastics, including, but not limited to, reducing or eliminating single-use plastic use at city-sponsored events and the feasibility of installing more water bottle-filling stations in publicly accessible areas throughout the city. We also recommend that the Council consider how Intro 695 could be effectively aligned with Intro 741, a bill that would prohibit city agencies from entering into or renewing contracts for the purchase of single-use plastic water containers or meals or refreshments that include such containers, with exceptions for protection of public health and safety, emergencies, or for contracts that were in existence before the bill's effective date.

Intro 697

Lastly, NYLCV supports Intro 697, sponsored by Council Member Nurse, which would continue the existing mandate on DSNY to conduct waste characterization studies to determine the composition of the City's residential and institutional waste streams by requiring two additional studies to be completed in 2028 and 2032. While the City is required by state law to update its Solid Waste Management Plan (DSNY is working on one for 2026), Intro 697 amends Local Law 40 of 2010 (which originally required the City's waste characterization studies) by requiring two additional waste characterization studies in 2028 and 2032. Requiring two additional waste characterization studies would produce more useful data on new initiatives like organics source separation, which is ramping up this fall.

The City has been behind schedule on meeting our zero waste goal of reducing the amount of waste we send to landfills 90% by 2030, so it is imperative that the City take bold action to drastically reduce waste over the next few years. Investing in recycling, composting, and other zero waste initiatives and enforcement are not only important for furthering environmental justice, improving the environment, and fighting climate change, but they create green jobs. We look forward to working with the City Council, Administration, and fellow advocates so we can move New York City towards a sustainable and equitable future, improve our quality of life, reduce garbage collection costs, increase street hygiene and attractiveness, and benefit the health of our planet and community.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.



Testimony for City Council Sanitation Committee Oversight Hearing September 27th, 2024

Re:

- [Int 0256-2024](#) - Requiring the commissioner of sanitation to study the feasibility and potential environmental effects of a recycling mandate for household textiles.
- [Int 0351-2024](#) - Requiring the department of sanitation to develop a plan for ensuring proper disposal of rechargeable batteries used for powered mobility devices.
- [Int 0695-2024](#) - A study of single-use plastics
- [Int 0697-2024](#) - Updated waste characterization studies

The Center for Zero Waste Design is a nonprofit that develops research, advocacy campaigns, and policy tools for buildings and cities to achieve zero waste. We work with community organizations, nonprofits, and municipalities to provide thought leadership to ensure policies and systems are aligned for circularity. We thank City Council for this opportunity to comment on these bills.

We support all of these policies, with important adjustments, especially to the single-use plastics study.

[Int 0256-2024](#) - Requiring the commissioner of sanitation to study the feasibility and potential environmental effects of a recycling mandate for household textiles.

Much of the discarded household textiles are reusable or recyclable and they make up a significant percentage of the waste stream. While I am sure it doesn't make sense for 1-30 unit buildings to have a separate bin for textiles, shared bins alongside shared trash, recycling and organics bins within the street would make sense. For large buildings I do think the current refashionNYC program works well. A mandate and sensible plan could ensure that all New Yorkers have an easy way to dispose of textiles without additional individual bins and truck traffic.

[Int 0351-2024](#) - Requiring the department of sanitation to develop a plan for ensuring proper disposal of rechargeable batteries used for powered mobility devices.

These batteries are very flammable and should not be disposed of in the trash or recycling streams. I think DSNY should coordinate with DOT here, as bike shops could take them back for example, or have drop-offs outside.



[Int 0695-2024](#) - A study of single-use plastics

We are in support of a study to look at single-use plastics, but it has to be studied in comparison with reusable alternatives, otherwise the best solution - environmentally and economically - will not be achieved. The bill as written could easily lead to a study suggesting paper-based and compostable alternatives that likely won't even be composted, so won't bring benefits to streetscapes overflowing with single use disposable plastics, overworked BID waste teams, communities around transfer stations or the environment.

[Reuse Wins](#), a report by Upstream, shows clearly that reuse is the best option. The legislation should investigate single-use plastics against reusable alternatives, and consider how citywide reusable cup and take-out container systems could be set up and implemented. It has been shown that with legislation and initial city investment in the infrastructure - take back stations in public space for example - these programs soon pay for themselves. The study should also solicit input from DOT for this reason.

We would also be very happy to support this work, as it follows on from our work on waste containerization, and with developing a vision and supporting legislation for supporting beverage container recycling and reuse systems within New York City's urban fabric.

[Int 0697-2024](#) - Updated waste characterization studies

Waste characterization studies are incredibly important to understand the waste stream, diversion opportunities and should be done every few years.

Thank you, and we would be happy to be involved in helping move forward any of these policies.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Clare Miflin".

Clare Miflin
Executive Director
Center for Zero Waste Design

Oral Testimony for 9/25 Sanitation Hearing

Testimony on Intro 256 – Textile Waste

Good [morning/afternoon], I'm Sharon Silbermann, Chair of the Textile Committee for the Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board, speaking on behalf of all four SWABs.

Thank you Chair Abreu and members of this Committee for providing me the opportunity to testify at today's hearing.

The four solid waste advisory boards support Intro 256, which would require the Department of Sanitation to study the feasibility and environmental effects of a mandate for households to separate textile waste for collection. This study would assess the costs, benefits, and potential negative impacts of such a mandate.

I'm a 40 year veteran of the Fashion Industry, who grew up as the daughter of a fashion buyer for major department stores in Baltimore, I've seen firsthand the impact of textile waste.

Textiles are a significant part of our City's solid waste volumes. According to the DSNY's 2023 Waste Characterization study, 5% of aggregate curbside discards were textiles, equal to 92 pounds per household annually. The 155,000 tons of textiles we send to landfills and incinerators each year is just the visible tip of the iceberg.

What we don't see is the global supply chain behind every garment—contributing to environmental degradation, poverty wages, and water overuse. When clothing seems "unbelievably" cheap, someone else is paying the price.

We must stop treating discarded clothing as trash by building a circular system for textile collection, recycling, and innovation right here in New York City. This would create green jobs, support our local fashion industry, and reduce waste.

Intro 256 is a critical first step toward this vision by requiring DSNY to explore a sustainable future for apparel and household textiles.

Thank you for your consideration today and for holding this hearing.

Bill Sponsors

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[Shahana K. Hanif](#)

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Bill/ Intro 256:

Int. No. 256

By Council Members Hudson, Bottcher, Restler, Brewer, Hanif, Abreu and Cabán

A Local Law in relation to requiring the commissioner of sanitation to study the feasibility and potential environmental effects of a recycling mandate for household textiles

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. a. Definitions. For the purposes of this section, the following terms have the following meanings:

Commissioner. The term “commissioner” means the commissioner of sanitation.

Department. The term “department” means the department of sanitation.

Recycling. The term “recycling” means any process by which recyclable materials are separated, collected, processed, marketed, and returned to the economy in the form of raw materials or products.

Textile. The term “textile” means cloth, fabric, and other flexible materials made of animal skin, hair, fur, or fleece; plants; minerals; or synthetic materials.

b. No later than 1 year after the effective date of this local law, the commissioner shall submit to the council and to the mayor a report on the feasibility and potential environmental effects of a mandate for the source separation by households and the collection by the department of textiles for recycling and reuse and whether the implementation of such mandate would require a municipal textile recycling facility to process collected textiles. Such report shall include, but need not be limited to:

1. An evaluation of market demand for recycled and reused textiles, including whether there is greater demand for certain types of textiles, and potential impacts of recycling mandates on market demand;

2. A comparison of the net cost to the department, at the time of the report, of collecting, processing, recycling, reusing, and disposing of textile waste with the projected net cost of collecting, processing, recycling, reusing, and disposing of textile waste if the recycling mandate is implemented;

3. An evaluation of the potential benefits to the environment resulting from the recycling mandate, including reductions in greenhouse gases and pollution;

4. A discussion of the potential negative effects of the recycling mandate, including the possibility of increased consumption of textiles caused by perceptions that textile

recycling has eliminated the negative environmental effects of textile disposal and impacts on non-profits and other private entities that currently collect textiles for recycling;

5. An estimate of what percentage of textiles collected under the recycling mandate would ultimately be recycled, reused, or landfilled, taking into account whether such textiles would likely be transferred to a third party after collection or processing and how such a third party would likely dispose of such textiles, and actions the commissioner could implement to increase the percentage of collected textiles that are recycled or reused;

6. An assessment of whether the recycling mandate would require a municipal recycling facility to process the collected textiles, including the capacity of existing private recycling facilities and the costs of contracting with existing private recycling facilities compared with the costs of establishing and operating a municipal facility;

7. An assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of partnerships with private entities to collect textiles and operate textile recycling facilities; and

8. A discussion of any potential barriers to department collection of textiles and any other information relevant to assessing the feasibility the recycling mandate.

§ 2. This local law takes effect immediately.

Testimony for September 25, 2024 Waste Oversight Hearing

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony for the Waste Oversight hearing.

With less than 2 weeks until curbside composting collection expands to Manhattan, Bronx and Staten Island, we need all hands on deck to raise awareness and promote this program to encourage compliance with the new mandatory “composting” law for all residents. While diverting food waste is easy, we have a lot of work to do to influence and drive the new behavior required to change kitchen habits.

I drafted a document which I sent to Manhattan Council Members to share with their constituents. However, this information needs to be shared with all Council Members and beyond, in hopes they can share with as many community organizations in their districts as possible.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1DpVmm_1Dgq1_RQmuHOe-s8gJHSF_2JLdi0fEEtNbaOw/edit

It is important to stress that the program is mandatory. Enforcement/fines will begin January 2025 for leaf/yard waste and April 2025 for food waste violations and that there is a deadline for ordering a free bin.

We have already seen confusion with building management refusing to offer the program and stating it’s not mandatory. Your help with clarifying and reinforcing this would be extremely helpful. We learned at this week’s hearing that DSNY encourages residents to report their buildings to 311 and/or DSNY if they refuse to comply.

I think we can all agree we have a rat problem, so any time you talk about rats, talk about the importance of participating in the curbside organics collection as a top rat mitigation tactic. By using the rat proof brown bin for food waste, we finally remove all the rat food we currently leave out for them in black plastic garbage bags.

There also should be strong collaboration with the Rat Czar. Any and all DOH outreach related to rats should include mention of the brown bin as a critical rat mitigation tool. We have already seen waste containerization succeed in reducing rat complaints. However, we’ve all also seen containers that are not securely shut, with open lids and

overflowing black bags that continue to provide access for rats. We have a much better and effective solution - divert rat food/food waste into “compost” bins and out of black plastic bags. We need to get this word out every time we talk about rats and/or containerizing waste.

For those concerned about climate change, there is a great EPA graphic that shows how sending food waste to landfills generates significant methane emissions. Wasted food causes 58% of methane emissions from municipal solid waste landfills. I encourage you to use this graphic wherever possible.

<https://www.epa.gov/land-research/quantifying-methane-emissions-landfilled-food-waste>

According to the United Nation Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), global food waste represents more greenhouse gas emissions than any country in the world except for China and the US. Globally, food waste is the 3rd largest emitter of greenhouse gas!

I also suggest the city get out in front of all the pumpkins that will be destined for trash in November. In a large building, pumpkins can fill a bin quickly. Plus, pumpkins are extremely heavy. This is the first year that New Yorkers will be required to divert pumpkins from trash and I encourage DSNY to consider allowing intact pumpkins and gourds to be set out in clear plastic bags next to compost bins as is allowed for yard waste and xmas trees. Or, perhaps Council Members can sponsor pumpkin collection events or smashes with DSNY, similar to mulchfest.

As organics and textiles combined comprise approximately 50% of our exported waste stream, **we have the opportunity to reduce our waste by 50%** and come much closer to our goals of a zero waste city. We just need adequate resources for an ongoing in-your-face marketing campaign using every touchpoint available, to promote the importance of this new program and maximize participation.

Thank you.

Allison Allen
MSWAB Board Member
Organics Committee Chair

TESTIMONY ON INTRO 695

I wish to support and add to the testimony made on this bill by the Solid Waste Advisory Board of Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx.

That document recognized the council for passing a number of bills reducing plastic. I would like to add to that list -- into 1161 2023 -- about allowing refillable beverage containers at stadiums.

In addition, I would like the study about single use plastics to include plastic lining used on food and plastic food and beverage containers.

In producing plastic thousands of chemicals are used, many of which are toxic. As the food and drinks we consume touch plastic lining or containers the plastic and its chemicals leach, with a result that we are eating and drinking microplastics. Microplastics have been found in every part of our bodies, and the chemicals are associated with endocrine disruption, cancer, and heart disease.

Thus, I am asking that 695 include studying the possibility of banning the use of plastic lining on our food and the sale of plastic food and beverage containers. Thank you for your consideration of these additions.

Best,

Joyce Bialik

Residing in District 7

Member of the Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board, chair of its Residential Recycling, and Reuse Committee

Member of WE ACT for Environmental Justice

Member of Beyond Plastics

SWAB Testimony for 9/25 Sanitation Hearing In Support of Intro 256

I'm Sharon Silbermann, the Textile Waste Committee Chair of the Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board, submitting testimony on behalf of all Four Solid Waste Advisory Boards of Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx. Professionally, I'm a 40 year veteran of the Fashion Industry, designing and producing for some of the best known American brands, and I'm the daughter of a fashion buyer for major department stores in my native Baltimore.

I've watched fashion transform from an industry of lasting style and quality that builds a lifelong wardrobe using durable natural fibers to one of cheap, mass produced, trend-focused items that cost curiously too little. Too much of what's on the market today doesn't last past a few wears. This situation encourages constant overconsumption, discourages repair, and ends up making consumers feel they can dispose of their clothing in the municipal trash.

BUT CLOTHES ARE NOT TRASH.

The global supply chain that goes into everything we wear is massive and when clothing is unbelievably cheap it's because *someone else or the planet is paying the price* - in the form of poverty level wages (or slavery!), harmful chemical usage, environmental and watersupply degradation, carcinogenic and hormone disruptive human and animal health impacts. Under a Capitalist system without environmental or social reings, modern fashion is designed to keep us consuming in a linear model at lightning fast pace.

Textile waste is choking the planet and NY City residents are contributing to that at a dizzying pace. According to DSNY's 2023 waste characterization study of NYC residents ONLY - not the fashion industry - NYers dispose of 155,000 tons of apparel and textiles annually in the municipal solid waste stream which is sent to landfills and incinerators, causing more GHG emissions (climate change), and groundwater

contamination. Textile waste is 5% of the MSW, equal to 92 pounds per household annually. This is down from 6.3% in 2017 but the recent impact of cutting the GrowNYC program will likely raise that back up to the 123 pounds of textile waste per household annually. And those 10 year contracts increase in cost every year! So, even if I personally didn't enjoy the use of these items, I pay for their improper disposal with no attempt to recover value through circular systems of waste management.

Waste stats across all product categories are staggering, but clothing in particular is consumed multiple times daily and qualifies as the worst offender since, according to the EPA, textiles is the FASTEST GROWING waste category. So, what do we do, continue landfilling and burning OR begin establishing a circular textile collection, recycling and innovation system that will serve the fashion industry located in our own city? Upfront investment may cost more, but we can use the savings from smaller landfilling and incineration contracts to help finance the needed infrastructure for establishing a new circular textile industry, bringing green jobs, financial investment, and taxes to NYC.

Intro 256 will start us down this path to circularity by requiring DSNY to study the feasibility and potential environmental effects of a collection and recycling mandate for apparel and household textiles in the MSW.

In a May 2023 study of 151 American cities, only 8 offer curbside collection of textile waste as part of a regular recycling program (Bethke):

- Boston, MA
- Atlanta, GA
- Honolulu, HI
- Yonkers, NY
- Little Rock, AR
- Lansing, MI
- Allentown, PA
- Warwick, RI

It follows that NYC could learn a lot by meeting with officials from these cities to understand set up, costs, benefits, and pitfalls in order to design a study and execute a plan that fits into NYC's Zero Waste goals. Please endorse this bill and include the city's SWABs in helping make textiles our next curbside recycling category. Thank You.

Int 0695-2024 - A study of single-use plastics

Thank you for the opportunity to give testimony regarding a study of single use plastics. 350 Brooklyn's Plastics Committee is in support of a study to look at single-use plastics, but it is critical that this study look at and consider the value and importance of reusable options.

The study is an opportunity to look at the value both environmentally and economically of reusable options. NYC's garbage bins are overflowing with single use plastic cups and bottles- it is easy to see that we are on the wrong path.

The study should investigate single-use plastics against reusable alternatives, and consider how citywide reusable cup and take-out container systems could be set up and implemented. This study is an opportunity to raise the understanding and awareness of the need for better reusable options in our City.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/25/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Deputy Commissioner Josh Goodman

Address: _____

I represent: DSNY

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/25/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Assistant Commissioner Jenny McDonnell

Address: _____

I represent: DSNY

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/25/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Director Kate Kitchner

Address: _____

I represent: DSNY

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/25/2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jessica Schreiber

Address: _____

I represent: myself

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 0756 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/25/2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Maddalene MacGillivray-Wallace

Address: [Redacted] Brooklyn NY 11215

I represent: Myself

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/25/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Christopher Lee Johnson

Address: [Redacted]

I represent: Self

Address: _____