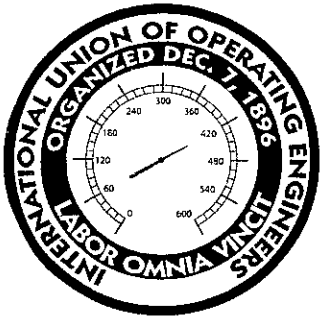


Committee  
on Education jointly  
with the Committee  
on Sanitation and  
Solid Waste  
Management

Date	6/3/08
Start Time	
Finish Time	



## Local 891

International Union of Operating Engineers

**ROBERT J. TROELLER**  
Business Manager/President

June 3, 2008

### **Testimony of Robert J. Troeller, President of Local 891 IUOE,**

The Union Representing NYC Department of Education Custodian  
Engineers

Presented to:

**New York City Council**

### **Joint Hearing on Recycling in NYC Public Schools**

Good Afternoon Ladies and Gentleman, Chairman <sup>McMahon</sup> deBlasio,  
Chairman Jackson and the other distinguished members of the New  
York City Council.

My name is Robert J. Troeller; I am the President of Local 891 of the  
International Union of Operating Engineers, the union which  
represents the Custodian Engineers who have served the children of  
New York City's public schools for over 100 years.

Local 891 fully supports any initiative which seeks to further educate  
our children and prepares them to become better citizens of our  
planet. We applaud your efforts to increase the rate of recycling and  
help make New York City a "greener" place to live.

Our major concern is funding. The members of my union are  
charged with the task of ensuring that our schoolchildren have a safe  
and clean environment in which to learn. That task is becoming  
increasing more difficult to accomplish.

1 | Page

The funding Custodian Engineers receive to operate their school building has been cut six times since the mid 1970's, three times in the past five years alone! Never have any of these cuts been restored, nor have we ever received an increase to our level of funding. The allocation each Custodian Engineer receives has gone up each time the unions representing our custodial workers negotiate a wage increase, but only by the exact dollar amount necessary to pay those increases.

The last budget cut we received at the end of 2006 was for over eleven (11) million dollars. The last four budget cuts alone had the effect of reducing the number of man-hours available by 1.6 million hours per year, which is the equivalent of over 800 full-time custodial positions.

Unfortunately, Local 891 is meeting tomorrow with officials from the Department of Education. At that policy meeting they will officially inform us of the next budget cut they intend to implement. Although we haven't been presented with their official plan, the next cut is rumored to be somewhere in the neighborhood of nineteen (19) million dollars.

With this proposed cut, hundreds more custodial workers will lose their jobs and still others will have the number of hours they work reduced. Considering how far they have been stretched due to past cuts, it is unimaginable that our reduced staff can take on additional responsibilities. Meanwhile, the number of unfunded mandates placed on my members continues to grow.

Last week, while testifying before the Council on budget cuts, Chancellor Klein spoke of the previous funding increases the schools have received from both the state and the city during his tenure. None of that money has ever gone towards custodial operational budgets. The Division of School Facilities has a management and support staff that continues to grow, while the number of people sweeping the floors continues to shrink.

Local 891 has always supported legislation and other initiatives to improve the environment of our schools, such as the use of green

chemicals. Even though green chemicals cost Custodian Engineers more than traditional cleaning chemicals and require the use of more man hours to achieve the same cleaning effect. The exclusive use of green chemicals is now mandated. Yet, the budget we receive for the purchase of cleaning chemicals has never been increased.

In fact, the allocation Custodian Engineers receive for the purchase of supplies and equipment is set at the same dollar amount for more than a decade. The figure has never been increased to cover the cost of inflation. How can anyone imagine we can continue to properly equip and maintain the schools under these conditions?

We were supportive of the opening of school-yard playgrounds for neighborhood use as part of the Mayor's PlaNYC 2030. Much of funding the city made available to the Department of Education to fund the additional staff needed to provide this service never made it to our budgets.

I want to thank the members of the Council for the continued concern they have shown for our schoolchildren and for the citizens of New York City. But, I must implore you to do all that you can to prevent the Custodian Engineer's budgets from being cut further and to provide necessary funding for the additional services and supplies my members are continually asked to provide. I also ask that the City Council seek from the State Legislature some level of financial oversight when the Education Law that granted Mayoral control is up for review and renewal.

Thank you.

52 Chambers Street  
New York, NY 10007

212-374-0200 tel  
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Joel I. Klein  
Chancellor

[JKlein@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:JKlein@schools.nyc.gov)

Testimony of Jeffrey Shear  
Chief of Staff, Division of Finance and Administration

Recycling  
Committees on Education and Sanitation

June 3, 2008

Good afternoon Chair Jackson, Chair McMahon, and members of the Education and Sanitation Committees. My name is Jeffrey Shear, Chief of Staff for the Finance and Administration Division of the New York City Department of Education (DOE). I am joined by James Lonergan, Chief Executive Officer of the Division of School Facilities. We are pleased to be here today to discuss the Department's recycling efforts.

We all know how important it is to reduce waste and reuse materials to help protect our environment and sustain our planet for our children and future generations. The DOE recycles at all of our buildings including our schools and administrative offices. I just want to say at the outset that the Department of Sanitation has been an outstanding partner for us in our recycling endeavors. You can probably imagine the challenges we face in successfully implementing a recycling program across a system with more than 1400 schools in over 1100 buildings, and DSNY's leadership and responsiveness to us as an agency have been critical.

Chancellor's Regulation A-850 outlines the Department's recycling policy and procedures, and it is currently being updated. While we still have a lot of work to do in this area, we have been working on expanding the scope of our recycling efforts across the board to include important initiatives as green buildings, book buyback and light bulbs. The Chancellor's regulation has not kept pace with our changing organization. We recognize the need to update it and will be doing so this summer. Improvements include: designating the executive directors (or their designees) at our Integrated Service Centers as district recycling coordinators, appointing a lead recycling coordinator at buildings with multiple schools, and giving the

recycling coordinator a related function as ombudsman for school staff or students who have concerns about their particular school's recycling efforts.

Items we recycle include motor oil, tires and batteries through our fleet management/maintenance unit, and we also recycle emergency light batteries, cordless tool batteries, concrete, brick and mortar and some chemicals used in stripping through our Division of School Facilities trades teams. Additionally, we procure paper goods with post-consumer recycled content.

#### Book Buy Back/IT Equipment

This year we're excited about the launch of our Book Buy Back/IT Equipment Asset Recovery Program. The purpose of this program is to remove obsolete books and Information Technology (IT) equipment from our schools, which in addition to the broader environmental benefits, will also help to free up space in schools for instructional use. We are inviting all schools to participate by registering online. We then conduct site visits at the schools to assess the books and IT equipment, and identify space for storage and pick-up that will be least disruptive to the school. The information from the site visits is then transmitted to the book buyback partners and our computer vendor, as well as the transportation company to schedule a date and time for pick up. Books and IT equipment are then sorted for sale or recycle at the transportation company's warehouse, which increases the amount of material that can be taken from the school and expedites the pace of the transportation company in and out of the school.

Through this program, all books will be purchased or recycled instead of dumped. IT equipment not identified for resale (usually greater than 3 years old) will be retired by the computer vendor and goes through a process of certified destruction. This includes the certified destruction of hard disk drives and the resale, reuse and recycling of parts and commodities. At this point, 665 schools have registered and are participating in the program. So far, pick-ups have been done at 67 of these schools covering 200,000 pounds of books and 35,000 pounds of IT equipment.

#### NYC Green Schools Guide and Rating System

As you know, New York City's new Green Building Law, Local Law 86, took effect on January 1, 2007. New York City is among the first districts (and the largest school district) in the nation to have sustainable school guidelines enforced by law. All applicable projects whose design began after January 1, 2007 are being designed and constructed in accordance with these Guidelines, and will meet stringent energy and water conservation requirements.

The aims of recycling are to reduce waste-streams, to reduce the use of virgin materials and to ease the burden on landfills. The New York City Green Schools Guide, issued to vendors pre-qualified to bid on SCA projects, requires recycling during both construction and occupancy, and calls for the use of building materials with specific levels of recycled content.

For new buildings, the SCA's standard specifications require that recyclable and reusable construction and demolition debris be diverted from disposal in



landfills and incinerators. Contractors are required to: 1) recycle and/or salvage non-hazardous construction and demolition waste; and 2) develop and implement a construction waste management plan that, at a minimum, identifies materials to be diverted from disposal, and plans whether the materials will be sorted on-site or commingled.

The SCA's specifications for projects subject to Local Law 86 require recycling or reuse of all materials that can be recycled or reused.

School occupancy recycling consistent with Department of Sanitation recycling policy is mandated in the design of all new school buildings. New school facilities include provisions to facilitate compliance with the recycling policy of the Department of Sanitation. For new buildings built in accordance with the Green Schools Guide, recyclable materials such as paper/cardboard and metals may be stored within the refuse and recycling room that is provided in new school designs. For pick-ups the custodian will transfer the bagged/bailed recyclables to the designated curbside pick-up area for DSNY collection. We are looking forward to the opening of our first green-designed school in Battery Park City, set to open in September 2010.

#### Light bulbs

In 2006, in accordance with State and federal laws, our Division of School Facilities (DSF) initiated an Interim Light Bulb Disposal and Recycling program which defined the proper procedures to be initiated in the handling of light bulbs containing heavy metals. Fluorescent light bulbs have become more energy-efficient and light spaces more effectively but they do contain

heavy metals. We issued a circular to all custodians and building managers detailing the Light Bulb Recycling Programs, and have partnered with a recycling vendor to transport the used light bulbs to their recycling facility. There, they are properly prepared and processed for disposal.

### School Food

All of our school kitchens recycle, particularly the metal containers and cardboard boxes that the food comes in. Our School Food Division is also conducting a pilot program recycling Styrofoam trays, and we have been working closely with Council Member DeBlasio on this initiative. The pilot has run for approximately 20 school days in 22 schools in Manhattan and the Bronx. So far, approximately 7000lbs of trays (or about 360 lbs per day) have been picked up. We have also had requests from additional schools to participate in the pilot. We look forward to learning the results of this pilot, including its effectiveness and whether there are costs to significantly expanding it.

### Schools

All of our schools recycle glass and paper to some degree. There are 372 schools with a designated recycling coordinator, and the level of recycling is undisputedly higher at these schools. A recycling coordinator develops an annual school recycling plan in consultation with the principal, the custodian, and interested members of the school community, oversees outreach and information to students and staff at the school, and reports on the school's adherence to the plan.

I mentioned earlier that we are revising the Chancellor's Regulation, to reflect the changes in our organizational structure as well as to reflect the ideals and commitment of this Administration to environmental issues. To address some of our shortcomings in recycling at the school level, we will not only rely on the revision of this Regulation; we will also be reaching out to every school to ensure they have a designated recycling coordinator. Furthermore, we are also moving to make the annual school recycling plans electronic and web-based so that statistics across the plans can be easily compiled and analyzed so the most frequent successes can be congratulated and replicated and the most frequent problems can be addressed systematically.

We are very proud of our schools that have been recognized by the Department of Sanitation for their outstanding and innovative recycling efforts under Sanitation's "Golden Apple" program. Twenty-five schools earned DSNY's Golden Apple award in 2007, including PS 229 in Queens, which established a recycling "police force" that monitors, enforces and fines classrooms and offices to enforce recycling throughout the school. Teachers also reinforce recycling throughout the curriculum, integrating lessons on recycling into English, Math, Social Studies and Science classes. Students in the Special Education Department and the Environmental Club at Edward R. Murrow High School in Brooklyn (another Golden Apple winner) partnered up to implement a successful recycling program as well. They have emphasized the importance of recycling throughout the school with flyers, fundraisers and announcements, overcoming the challenges of establishing such a program in a large high school.

I am happy to report that my daughter attends an elementary school that was a Golden Apple award recipient in 2007. Coincidentally, she is one of two “recycling checkers” in her Kindergarten classroom this week. After each class activity she checks to see that disposed items are in the correct receptacle (one for recycling and the other for food and other garbage). If they spot items in the wrong container, they ask their teacher for gloves so they can move the items to the correct container. On a weekly basis, fifth graders at the school check the classrooms containers to determine if the class has earned a “star”.

We work closely with the Department of Sanitation to support our schools. As situations or problems emerge, our agencies coordinate to find appropriate solutions. For example, back in January, we were contacted by a teacher at PS 19 in Brooklyn, who had asked for help with sanitation collection at her school. We referred this problem to the Sanitation Department Brooklyn North collection office and asked for their help in addressing the issues raised by the teacher. The Sanitation Department investigated and took the proper steps to resolve them. Later that same month we followed up with a visit to the school and a telephone call offering whatever assistance was required. From this we recognized the importance of adding the “ombudsman” function to the role of our central recycling coordinator. It is important for staff and students to have a clear point person to whom they can go for help, questions or concerns.

Thank you for the opportunity to be here today, and we are happy to answer your questions.



TESTIMONY

Council of School Supervisors and Administrators (CSA)

Ernest Logan, President

Presented to

The Sanitation & Solid Waste Management Committee  
And the Committee on Education

Hearing on  
Recycling in NYC Public Schools

Tuesday June 3, 2008

Good afternoon Chairman McMahon, Chairman Jackson and distinguished members of this joint committee. Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on behalf of the Principals, Assistant Principals, Supervisors and Education Administrators who work for the Department of Education. We applaud you for highlighting the importance of environmental education vis a vis proposals to modify and hopefully improve our recycling efforts within New York City schools.

Clearly, everyone is in favor of improving our recycling efforts and creating a "greener" New York. We know that this is part of the "reduce, re-use and recycle" curriculum that is taught to our children. As the educational leaders of the schools, principals should lead the way by modeling appropriate norms of behavior when it comes to recycling. The entire school community must learn and practice why it is essential to continually reduce,

re-use and recycle. Research has proven that a quality school environment is a key component for student success.

In order for our schools to improve upon their current recycling programs, we must recognize the obstacles to those programs. Namely, effective recycling at the school level will require additional resources in order to adequately and appropriately meet guidelines. With the cuts that have already impacted Custodial Engineers and their operating budgets, we must allow for additional time in the workday, additional funding for materials such as recycling bins, and an increase in human resources to get the job done. We do not want another "unfunded mandate."

In addition, it is critical that the refuse collected be stored in a dumpster(s), outside the building for daily pick up. We all know what happens to refuse that is left out over time. Therefore, for safety reasons, this refuse needs to be removed on a daily basis.

Our members remain committed to do everything in their power to be the educational leaders in our schools on a daily basis. As a city and a nation, we must all come together and do our part as citizens to ensure that the environment we create today will only improve for our children.

Thank you.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF  
ROBERT LANGE, DIRECTOR OF THE BUREAU OF WASTE  
PREVENTION, REUSE AND RECYCLING  
NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF SANITATION  
BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL  
COMMITTEES ON  
SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT AND EDUCATION**

**TUESDAY, JUNE 3, 2008 - 1:00 P.M.  
CITY HALL – COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
OVERSIGHT HEARING: RECYCLING IN NEW YORK CITY SCHOOLS**

Good afternoon Chairman McMahon, Chairman Jackson, members of the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management and members of the Committee on Education. I am Robert Lange, Director of the Department of Sanitation's Bureau of Waste Prevention, Reuse and Recycling. With me today is Peter McKeon, Chief of Recycling and Refuse Collections for the Department of Sanitation. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the status of recycling in public schools and the types of recycling services furnished by the Department to the New York City public school system.

I will limit my remarks today to cover only the most relevant details. However, for your further attention, I have assembled a package for each member of the Committee to review that addresses the full extent of the Department's efforts to date. The Department has provided the Department of Education over the last nineteen years with an unprecedented level of hands-on assistance in implementing recycling in public schools.

Over the same period of time there has been substantial inter-agency cooperation between the Department of Sanitation and Department of Education. All New York City public schools are now well positioned to implement the City's recycling program: The Department of Sanitation and the Department of Education have both supplied recycling containers for use in classrooms and offices for collecting source separated recyclables from students and staff. Sanitation has developed and supplied annually a whole host of public education materials for use by Department of Education schools. The Department of Education has insured that clear plastic bags are available to school custodians for the set-out of recyclables by custodial staff; and the Department of Sanitation has supplemented the curbside collection of recyclables at public schools through the use of our dual-bin trucks as part of the night "school truck" route program. Lastly, public schools that can accommodate Department mechanized dumpster service have already had such dumpsters supplied to them directly by the Department of Education or the School Construction Authority. The decision on whether a school can accommodate dumpster service depends on many factors including: generation rates, available space to accommodate dumpsters, access and egress for Department vehicles and the safety of school employees and children.

The service provided to public schools by the Department of Sanitation is not a static affair; instead it evolves over time to accommodate changes instituted by Department of Education. Each school year and in the summer the Department of Sanitation in cooperation with the Department of Education develops a complete list of New York City schools that identifies the names of schools along with addresses and the specific contact information at each for the principals and head custodians. Each of these schools is visited by a uniform officer who in consultation with the school's executive staff sets the final collection service arrangements.

Most of the City's schools receive collection services for both refuse and recycling collection more than once a week. In fact, in most cases of curbside service, the majority receive three to four mixed paper collections and two to three metal, glass and plastic collections per week. At the beginning of every school year, district officers are assigned to educate each individual school's supervisory staff about the Department's recycling program, including the materials to be collected and the days of service.

In regards to Intro No. 752, it is the opinion of the Department of Sanitation that this bill is not necessary to ensure that recycling services are provided to New York City public schools. The Department of Sanitation and the Department of Education have both in the past supplied public schools with recycling receptacles for use in classrooms and offices for collecting source separated recyclables from students and staff. A survey of receptacles would be needed to determine any additional need for receptacles before deciding which agency should supply any new bins. For well over a decade, the Department of Sanitation has supplied decals to public schools that can be used to label or rather rededicate any type of receptacle for recycling purposes. As previously indicated the Department of Sanitation has assisted the Department of Education over the years in establishing a recyclables collection infrastructure, developing a recycling education program and curricula and most importantly in providing the necessary collection services to each school.

Additionally, Intro No. 752 calls for the Department of Sanitation to provide mechanized collection services and dumpsters to schools that collect sufficient material for such services. However, the type of service a school receives is not solely dependent upon that school's generation rates. Another important factor that must be considered is the space available at each individual school. The safety of school children and school staff is another important factor that must be considered when determining what type of collection service a school can receive. The Department of Sanitation works closely with the Department of Education in order to determine the frequency and type of collection service that each school receives.

Additionally, as discussed earlier many public schools receive far more collections of recyclable materials than mandated by Intro No. 752. Thus, Intro No. 752 acts only to mandate services that the Department has already been providing for well over a decade.



Whether a school successfully recycles is ultimately the responsibility of the school community. As I have testified, the Department has provided the Department of Education over the last nineteen years with an unprecedented level of hands-on assistance in implementing recycling in public schools. We will continue to work with the Department of Education and individual schools to ensure that this information and service is translated into a successful recycling program.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify here today. The Department of Education will now further elaborate on the status of recycling in schools, after which time I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.



NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL

**STATEMENT ON THE NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL  
BEFORE THE SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT  
COMMITTEE OF THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL  
IN SUPPORT OF INTRO. 752 AND RESO. 1388,  
TO EXPAND SCHOOL RECYCLING**

**June 3, 2008**

My name is Eric A. Goldstein and I am an attorney at the Natural Resources Defense Council, Inc. ("NRDC"), a national, non-profit legal and scientific organization. NRDC has long been active on solid waste issues around the nation and has paid particular attention to the issues of recycling both nationally and in New York City, due to the important environmental and economic benefits offered by this waste disposal strategy. We thank you, Chairman McMahon, for holding these hearings and for your continuing leadership on these issues. And we congratulate Councilmember De Blasio for his vision and commitment, as exemplified by the legislation and resolution that are before us today.

We are pleased to be here today to testify in support of Intro 752 and Reso 1388 -- both of which would advance recycling in public and private schools in New York City. In sum, NRDC is extremely disappointed that almost two decades after the passage of New York City's landmark recycling law -- Local Law 19 of 1989 -- the majority of our schools still do not have effective recycling programs up and running. By this failure, the Department of Education is setting a terrible example for the more than one million public school students and is undermining the effectiveness of one of the city's most important environmental laws.

A recent study commissioned by NRDC on the economics of recycling demonstrated that the costs at curbside of recycling vis a vis out-of-state export are quite close to one another and that within five years, it is expected that it will be less expensive for New York City to recycle a ton of refuse than it will be to send it out-of-state for landfilling or incineration (to say nothing of the environmental impacts of such policies). Moreover, the NRDC analysis has confirmed that recycling can play an important role in reducing the city's global warming emissions. According to this study, the city's curbside recycling program today is already reducing carbon emissions by the equivalent of taking 338,000 passenger cars off the road each year. (See attachment.)

Moreover, as noted above, the anemic response of the Department of Education is inconsistent with city law. Local Law 19 of 1989 specifically envisioned that all city

agencies would be required to collect designated materials for recycling. Specifically, section 16-307 directed the Sanitation Commissioner to adopt and implement regulations requiring the collection and processing of designated recyclable materials generated by city mayoral and non-mayoral agencies.

Despite this directive and efforts by the Sanitation Department to secure compliance, the Department of Education has undertaken only partial compliance with the recycling mandate. NRDC interviews with students and teachers over the years have revealed that there is no uniform citywide compliance with the Local Law 19 recycling directive, 19 years after the statute took effect. Whether recycling exists at a particular public school usually depends upon the commitment of individual teachers or students, or occasionally a dedicated principal or custodial staffer. But this appears to be the case in a minority of the city's 1,100 public schools. And as long as the Department of Education sends the signal that public school recycling is a very low priority, the program is destined to flounder.

The failure to implement an effective, across-the-board recycling program in the city's public (and private) schools has at least three adverse consequences. First, there are wide-ranging adverse environmental impacts, including the additional of global warming gases, when school refuse is landfilled or incinerated, rather than being recycled. Second, as the NRDC report notes, curbside recycling is now on the verge of becoming less costly than landfilling and incineration for New York City. With respect to school recycling, it is NRDC's belief that schools -- because of their waste stream that is composed heavily of paper -- even today can reduce their waste disposal costs if they implement full-scale recycling programs. Finally, by failing to establish an effective recycling program, our school system misses an important educational opportunity to make our school children aware of the limits of our resources and to facilitate the long-term success of the city's curbside recycling program.

To its credit, Intro 752 would attack the continuing program of school system recycling. It would require the Department to supply every public and private school with a sufficient number of bins for the collection of recyclables, signs to encourage participation, containers to collect and store recyclables, and weekly recycling collections. These are worthwhile steps forward and NRDC is supportive of such an initiative. We also urge Councilmember De Blasio and the Committee to consider adding an enforcement mechanism to this legislation, to help assure compliance with its terms and provisions.

NRDC is aware that the New York City's public and private schools face many challenges. We understand that how the schools dispose of their trash may not seem like a very high priority. But the effort required to make recycling work in our schools is modest and the long-term rewards could be quite significant. We urge the Department of Education to heed the call of this legislation, and to turn their long-running grade of "incomplete" into a passing score by September.

**Table 8**  
**Estimated Carbon Emissions Savings from Curbside Recycling in New York City**  
**(In Metric Ton Carbon Equivalent for FY 05)**

Material	Recycling		Alternative Landfilling		Alternative Combustion		Net Total GHG Emissions in MTCE
	Tons	GHG Emissions in MTCE	Tons	GHG Emissions in MTCE	Tons	GHG Emissions in MTCE	
Aluminum Cans	4,204	(14,917)	(3,363)	(84)	(841)	(14)	(15,015)
Glass	32,688	2,505	(26,150)	(652)	(6,538)	(91)	1,763
HDPE	14,689	(3,338)	(11,751)	(293)	(2,938)	(744)	(4,375)
PET	13,329	(3,559)	(10,663)	(266)	(2,666)	(787)	(4,611)
Corrugated Cardboard	78,879	(54,908)	(63,103)	(7,808)	(15,776)	2,794	(59,921)
Newspaper	167,129	(101,765)	(133,703)	29,711	(33,426)	6,757	(65,296)
Mixed Paper, Resid.	152,689	(124,013)	(122,151)	(10,250)	(30,538)	5,405	(128,858)
Mixed Metals	182,406	(233,739)	(145,925)	(3,636)	(36,481)	10,594	(226,781)
<b>Total</b>	<b>646,013</b>	<b>(533,734)</b>	<b>(516,810)</b>	<b>6,723</b>	<b>(129,203)</b>	<b>23,915</b>	<b>(503,096)</b>

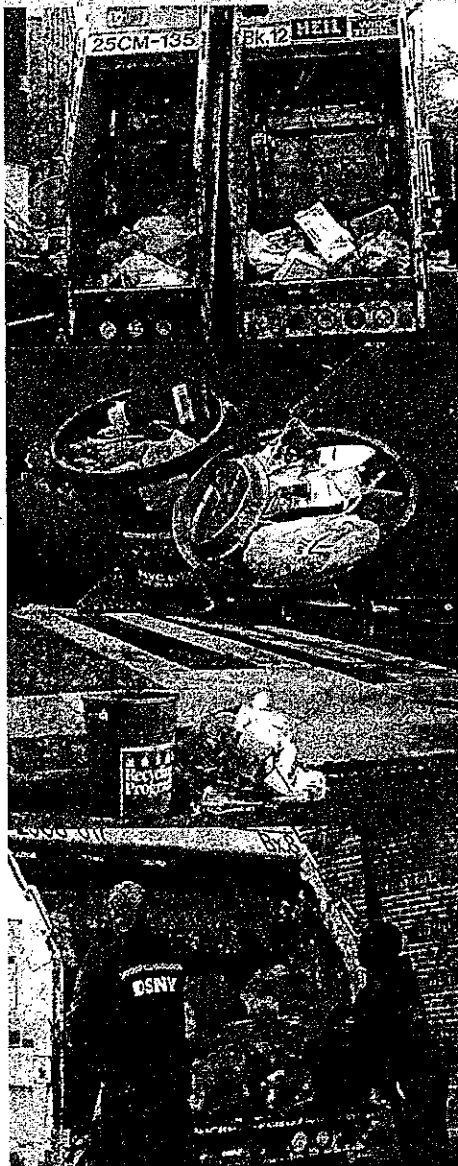
*Parenthesis denote negative numbers*

Using the coefficients in the EPA WARM model, these savings associated with DSNY's recycling activities are equivalent to taking roughly 338,000 passenger cars off the road each year, or providing electricity for 244,000 homes.<sup>38</sup> DSNY's costs associated with achieving these estimated savings in carbon emissions through curbside recycling can be compared against the cost of alternative means to achieve these same reductions in carbon emissions.

<sup>38</sup> Calculations made using the *Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator, Clean Energy, US EPA* based on data from: EPA (2007). *Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks: 1990-2005*, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Washington, DC, Table 3-7 (p.3-9); and, Table A-108 (p.A-126); and, *Highway Statistics 2005*, Office of Highway Policy Information, Federal Highway Administration, Table VM-1.



# Analysis of New York City Department of Sanitation Curbside Recycling and Refuse Costs



Prepared For



Natural Resources  
Defense Council

FINAL REPORT

May 2008

Prepared By

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## Recycling Failure at the Board of Ed

When it comes to recycling, New York is all talk and little action. The City Council passed one of the most ambitious recycling laws in the nation more than four years ago, but the city has failed to comply with it. One of the worst offenders is the Board of Education, which has been in violation of the law for more than three years and is only now in the process of issuing regulations to guide schools in their recycling efforts. There is no excuse for the board not to have set a better example, for schoolchildren and for other agencies in the city.

The Council passed a law in 1989 that requires 25 percent of the city's average daily waste stream to be recycled. Mandatory recycling by city agencies was instituted in 1990. An audit that year estimated that the city's 1,069 schools generate 120,000 tons of waste annually, or about 3 percent of its non-residential garbage. Of the total waste produced by the schools, the auditors concluded, 33,000 tons could have been recycled. That would be a sizable addition to the city's current recycling load of 500,000 tons a year.

Most of the Board of Education's central administrative buildings have bins and containers for paper, cans, metal and other recyclable materials. But only in the past month has the board's own division of school facilities prepared final regulations for individual schools.

While waiting for guidelines from central headquarters, about 100 schools, less than 10 percent of the total, have started modest recycling programs on their own. But the board's failure to push such programs at more schools has lost valuable time and allies. Students who are taught recycling in school are likely to take the message back to their homes and neighborhoods; today's students are not.

The city, well behind schedule in its recycling efforts, needs all the help it can get. A recent State Court of Appeals decision upheld a ruling that the city was effectively breaking the 1989 law by failing to meet its required levels of recycling.

The Board of Education bears its share of responsibility. It should have been leading the city's efforts, not helping to drag it further behind.

# School Board Is Criticized On Recycling

## Schools Still Violate Law Requiring a Plan

By JOE SEXTON

Nearly five years after enactment of the mandatory recycling law, New York City's public-school system has no formal recycling program, and for three and a half years has been in violation of that law. The Board of Education has yet to adopt regulations placing responsibility for meeting the law's requirements.

A wide range of city officials and environmentalists, from the City Councilman who wrote the 1989 recycling legislation to frustrated school administrators to Department of Sanitation specialists, have sharply criticized the Board of Education's failure. They have also expressed regret at what they call a lost opportunity to use the schools as the training ground for future generations for whom recycling would be essential.

Last week Amy Linden, the Board of Education official in charge of recycling, said a draft of institutional regulations was being circulated and likely would be adopted by Chancellor Ramon C. Cortines within the month. But she offered no reasons for the delay in producing the regulations or answers for why the city's public schools still lacked a comprehensive and functioning recycling program.

"I'm not going to make excuses," said Ms. Linden, the chief executive for school facilities at the Board of Education. "There was a long delay."

### 'A Significant Disgrace'

"The Board of Education has been mocking one of the most important city laws adopted in its history," said Mark Izeman, a lawyer with the Natural Resources Defense Council. He asserted that "absolutely nothing had changed" since the group's 1992 public report on recycling in the schools, which sharply criticized the board for its failure to recycle. "It's a significant disgrace," Mr. Izeman said.

The Board's effective violation of Local Law 19 has prompted a range of elected officials and environmentalist to call for punitive measures, like having the city, which picks up garbage free at the schools, charge the Board of Education for garbage removal. Mark Green, the city's Public Advocate, sent a letter to Mr. Cortines on Friday asking that the board's recycling regulations be adopted and released as soon as possible.

"It's inexcusable that the Board of Education's foot-dragging has gone on for five years," Mr. Green said. "We can't undo the board's malfeasance, only hope that other governmental institutions do everything possible to accelerate the recycling programs."

Sheldon S. Leffler, the City Councilman from Queens who wrote Local Law 19, which requires recycling, said, "There have been many gross violations of the law since it was enacted, but this one by the Board of Education is especially unacceptable be-

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