

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AND WORKER
PROTECTION

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January 19, 2023
Start: 11:14 a.m.
Recess: 11:20 a.m.

HELD AT: COMMITTEE ROOM - CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Marjorie Velázquez, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Shaun Abreu
Erik D. Bottcher
Gale A. Brewer
Amanda Farías
Shekar Krishnan
Julie Menin
Chi A. Ossé
Julie Won

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2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: This is a microphone
3 test for the Committee on Consumer and Worker
4 Protection. Today's date is January 19, 2023.
5 Recorded by Edery Gonzalez-Rodriguez (phonetic).
6 Location Committee Room.

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Hello. Welcome to
8 today's Committee on Consumer and Worker Protection.

9 Everyone please place all electronic
10 devices to vibrate mode. Thank you for your
11 cooperation.

12 Chair, we are ready to begin.

13 CHAIRPERSON VELAZQUEZ: [GAVEL] Good
14 morning. My name is Marjorie Velazquez, and I am
15 Chair of the Committee on Consumer and Worker
16 Protection. Welcome to our Committee hearing and vote
17 on Proposed Intro 559-A.

18 I'm joined today by my Colleagues on the
19 Committee, Council Member Abreu, Council Member
20 Farias, Council Member Menin, Council Member Won,
21 Council Member Brewer, Council Member Krishnan, and
22 Council Member Osse.

23 Proposed Intro 559-A sponsored by myself
24 aims to restrict the provision of plastic eating
25 utensils, condiment packets, and extra eating

1 containers by food service establishments. Single-use
2 plastics are cheap to produce, lightweight, durable,
3 and easy to dispose of, but this convenience comes at
4 a cost. Once discarded, plastics take decades or even
5 centuries to break down, polluting waterways, killing
6 wildlife, and even ending up in our own bodies. It is
7 estimated that about 8 million tons of plastic leak
8 into the ocean every year. That is equivalent to
9 dumping a full garbage truck into the ocean every
10 minute. There's so much plastic in the ocean that it
11 has formed a land mass known as the Great Pacific
12 Garbage Patch floating between the coasts of
13 California and Hawaii. 99 percent of this patch,
14 which is twice the size of Texas, is made up of
15 plastic. The problem is only getting worse as the use
16 of plastic is expected to double over the next two
17 decades. If we maintain business as usual, the World
18 Economic Forum expects that there will be more
19 plastic in the ocean than fish by 2050. Although
20 recycling provides an avenue to redirect plastic
21 waste from landfills and oceans, it is nowhere near a
22 sufficient solution. Nationally, the plastic
23 recycling rate has hovered at just 9 percent since
24 2012, and, even if that rate increases, there is a
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1 high chance that plastic will end up in landfills or
2 oceans anyway. Recyclables must be properly cleaned
3 and sorted or they can contaminate the entire stream
4 and must be thrown away. In addition, the U.S. does
5 not have the capacity to process the high volume of
6 plastic waste Americans produce and ships more than 1
7 million tons of plastic offshore for recycling
8 annually. Unfortunately, destination countries such
9 as Malaysia, Indonesia, and Vietnam have been found
10 to improperly manage their own waste. Plastic
11 utensils pose a particularly big challenge. In the
12 U.S., over 100 million plastic utensils are used
13 daily, and some analysts estimate that Americans
14 waste 40 billion plastic utensils per year. Small
15 items such as plastic utensils and condiment packets
16 are often missed by machines that process
17 recyclables, and they are particularly damaging to
18 the wildlife. The Ocean Conservancy lists plastic
19 utensils as among the most deadly items to sea
20 turtles, birds, and mammals. I'm proud of the
21 legislation we are voting on today. This bill will
22 prevent food establishments and meal delivery service
23 providers from automatically providing utensils,
24 condiment packets, and extra eating containers to
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2 consumers, reducing the amount of unnecessary and
3 unwanted plastic products that are simply thrown away
4 after a single use or even no use. I've been
5 heartened to see the overwhelming support for this
6 bill among restaurants, consumers, and the
7 administration, and I urge my Colleagues to vote aye.

8 I now call on the Clerk to call the roll.

9 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank
10 you. William Martin, Committee Clerk. Roll call vote,
11 Committee on Consumer and Worker Protection, Proposed
12 Introduction 559-A. Chair Velazquez.

13 CHAIRPERSON VELAZQUEZ: Aye.

14 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Abreu.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER ABREU: Aye.

16 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Brewer.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Aye.

18 Congratulations. I see Eric Goldstein here so it must
19 be a good bill. Thank you.

20 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Farias.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER FARIAS: I vote aye.

22 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Krishnan.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Aye.

24 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Menin.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Aye.

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2 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Osse.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSE: Aye.

4 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Won.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Aye.

6 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: By a vote
7 of eight in the affirmative, zero in the negative,
8 and no abstentions, item has been adopted by the
9 Committee.

10 CHAIRPERSON VELAZQUEZ: We're leaving the
11 vote open. [GAVEL]

12 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank
13 you. Continuation roll call. Proposed Introduction
14 559-A. Council Member Bottcher.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Aye.

16 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Final
17 vote is now nine in the affirmative, zero in the
18 negative, and no abstentions. Madam Chair, that is a
19 full Committee.

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date January 23, 2023