

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE

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December 9, 2025  
Start: 10:00 a.m.  
Recess: 12:51 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway - 8<sup>th</sup> Floor - Hearing  
Room 1

B E F O R E: Shaun Abreu  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Chris Banks  
David M. Carr  
Simcha Felder  
James F. Gennaro  
Julie Menin  
Frank Morano  
Sandy Nurse  
Vickie Paladino  
Rafael Salamanca, Jr.  
Sandra Ung  
Inna Vernikov  
Susan Zhuang

## A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Kate Kitchener

Director, Resource Recovery at NYC Department of  
Sanitation

Josh Goodman

Deputy Commissioner, Public Affairs & Customer  
Experience

Jennifer McDonnell

Deputy Commissioner, Solid Waste Management

Celeste Perez

NYCEJA

Justin Wood

NYLPI

Eric Goldstein

NRDC

Rhonda Keyser

Gustavo Alcocer

Ironbound Community Corporation

Samantha McBride

Baruch College

Lacey Tauber

BK BP

## A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Justin Green  
Big Reuse

Matthew Civello  
SWAB

Mary Ellen Sullivan  
SWAB

Dior St. Hillaire  
SWAB

Susan Latham  
SWAB

Audrey Jenkins  
PHD Student at the new school, focused on  
organics management

Mary Arnold

Anna Sacks

Clare Mifflin

Christopher Leon Johnson

PSMS46 Harlem 5th grader

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Testing one, two, one, two.  
Today's date is December 9, 2025, Committee on Solid  
Waste Management being recorded in HR 1 by Keith  
Polite.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good morning. Good morning.  
Welcome to the New York City Council Hearing on the  
Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management.  
At this time, please silence all electronics and do  
not approach the dais. Thank you for your  
cooperation. Chair, you may begin.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: [GAVEL] Good morning  
everyone. Welcome to the Committee on Sanitation and  
Solid Waste Management. Thank you to the Members of  
the Committee and representatives of the  
Administration for joining us today.

I'd also like to thank the members of the public  
who are here to testify. To minimize disruption,  
please place electronic devices on vibrate or silent  
mode. I would also like to acknowledge Council  
Member Carr, who is here with us today.

The City of New York has drafted a local Solid  
Waste Management plan for the years 2026 through 2036  
which with the Council's approval will be submitted  
to the state for review prior to the city's adoption

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of the plan. The purpose of today's hearing is to  
examine the draft Solid Waste Management Plan in full  
to assess its strengths, its gaps and its alignment  
with the goals the city and state have already  
committed to. Apart from all waste produced from New  
York City's private businesses, solid waste from New  
York City residences, agencies and institutions,  
amount to nearly 4 million tons each year. That's  
about the same weight as 11 empire state buildings.

The city must have a long term plan for how it  
will manage this waste, from characterization  
assessment of the waste stream and waste processing  
facilities to presentation of methods to increase the  
amount of material that is reused or recycled instead  
of wasted. The Solid Waste Management Plan outlines  
actionable steps and timelines by which the city will  
manage waste over the coming decade.

Through January 16, 2026, at 5:00 p.m., the city  
is collecting public comments on its Draft Solid  
Waste Management Plan. To be clear, public testimony  
presented to the Committee today, will not be  
recorded as a public comment on the Draft Solid Waste  
Management Plan. If you wish to submit a comment on  
the Draft Solid Waste Management Plan, you may do so

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by emailing [swmp26comments@dsny.nyc.gov](mailto:swmp26comments@dsny.nyc.gov),  
[swmp26comments@dsny.nyc.gov](mailto:swmp26comments@dsny.nyc.gov) until 5:00 p.m. on  
January 16, 2026.

As part of its next draft of the plan, the city  
is required to prepare a responsiveness summary of  
the public comments it receives. We hope to hear  
from DSNY today about the Draft Solid Waste  
Management Plan, which we will refer to as SWMP  
throughout the entire hearing, its public engagement  
process and concerns it has heard from the public  
thus far.

I look forward to the dialogue today. I would  
like to thank everyone on my team for their work on  
this oversight hearing. I don't see any other  
Council Members here yet; they're on their way.

After our Committee Counsel administers the oath,  
we will move to testimony by DSNY, then some time  
will be spent on dialogue between the Committee and  
DSNY followed by testimony from members of the  
public. I will now turn it over to our Committee  
Counsel.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Hello, good morning. Uh  
please raise your right hands. Do you swear to tell  
the whole truth and nothing but the truth and to

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respond to Council Member questions honestly? Thank  
you, you may begin when ready.

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Good morning.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Good morning.

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Chair Abreu and members of  
the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste  
Management. I am Jennifer McDonnell, Deputy  
Commissioner of Solid Waste Management at the New  
York City Department of Sanitation. I am joined  
today by Katherine Kitchener, Executive Director of  
Resource Recovery and by Joshua Goodman, Deputy  
Commissioner of Public Affairs and Customer  
Experience. I'd also like to welcome those who are  
joining us on livestream.

It has been close to 20 years since the City of  
New York last submitted a proposed Solid Waste  
Management Plan. In that time, DSNY has achieved  
significant progress on the goals of the 2006 SWMP,  
the waste stream and industry have noticeably  
evolved, and the State has clarified and updated the  
requirements for solid waste management plans.

Achieving the goals of the last plan has  
transformed the solid waste system serving New  
Yorkers and whether they see it each day or not, the

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experience of living in New York City. With the successful conversion of four marine transfer stations to the modern, efficient, fully contained, intermodal export facilities operating reliably and serving the city every day, coupled with a complement of rail-export land-based facilities, a majority of the solid waste exported by DSNY is leaving the city by rail, drastically reducing truck traffic and associated emissions.

Another goal achieved is the long-term contract with Sims Municipal Recycling, which resulted in the construction of the metal, glass, plastic, and carton sorting facility in the South Brooklyn Marine Terminal that continues to process residential curbside recycling to this day. And for paper recycling, the Pratt Paper Mill on Staten Island converts much of the residential paper recycling stream to new paper, a true example of the circular economy, right here in New York City.

We also advanced transformative programs that were not envisioned in the last SWMP. To divert organic materials that constitutes upwards of 30 percent of the residential waste stream, in 2023, DSNY announced a strategy for citywide, curbside



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organics collection. Later that year, the Council passed historic legislation to mandate residential source separation of all food and yard waste. As of October 2024, every New Yorker in all five boroughs can participate in the largest, easiest curbside organics collection program in the nation. Since full citywide implementation, we've seen staggering tonnage increases, including three consecutive weeks this past November, that each set records. Diverting six million pounds of material from the waste stream each week was long derided as impossible and now we've done it back to back. In response, the regional market is adapting and building to meet the demand of the city's leadership on organics.

All the while, DSNY continued a commitment to community recycling events, apartment-based collection programs and efforts further up the waste management hierarchy focused on reuse and waste prevention of all types of materials, through partnerships with businesses, nonprofit, and community organizations engaged in reuse, repair, and innovations in materials management. In sum, DSNY has some of the most comprehensive, residential solid waste programming in the country. From universally

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accessible curbside recycling and composting  
collection to free compost givebacks, safe disposal  
events, special waste drop-offs, refrigerant  
collection, and no-cost apartment bin programs for  
electronics and textile recycling, New Yorkers have a  
multitude of options to participate in waste  
reduction and recycling.

Before we discuss the proposed SWMP, I would like  
to emphasize again two points. First, the state DEC  
regulatory requirements have evolved significantly  
since 2006, notably requiring a ten year planning  
period rather than a twenty year planning period.  
And secondly, that while the SWMP provides a  
framework for diversion and efficient waste systems,  
the city can and must pursue specific programs that  
are not contemplated in the plan. This is, by  
design, a beginning rather than an end.

Our record here speaks for itself. Neither  
universal curbside organics nor Commercial Waste  
Zones were laid out in the 2006 SWMP, and yet the  
city took historic action to move both policies  
forward in partnership with the City Council. This  
is particularly relevant to keep in mind as we  
discuss SWMP26.

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Given DSNY's rich history of evolution,  
continuous improvement, and innovation, this lays the  
foundation for this next solid waste management plan  
that we are proud to put forth, to guide future  
progress in waste reduction resource recovery over  
the next decade. With over 24 billion pounds of  
waste generated by hundreds of thousands of  
businesses and millions of residents across the five  
boroughs every year, the 2026 Solid Waste Management  
Plan is a flexible framework focused on the areas  
with the greatest potential impact on our existing  
Solid Waste Management System.

SWMP26 was designed to meet the regulatory  
requirements and guidance of DEC, and the program  
structure follows the stipulations for alternatives  
analysis that all planning units across the state  
must consider when developing a SWMP. And this SWMP  
was developed over the past three years, beginning  
with an extensive analysis of the current conditions  
for the Solid Waste Management System here in New  
York City. The first four chapters of the plan  
documents in great deal who is generating how much of  
what materials to the best of our knowledge, where  
they are going, and what the end of life options are

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for managing them. As a result of this data-driven analysis, and with input from best practices worldwide, the draft SWMP includes eight dedicated program areas designed to address the primary focus points needed to achieve continued progress in waste reduction, increased recycling and a path towards zero waste. These programs include waste prevention and reuse, organics diversion and recovery, residential recycling, residential municipal solid waste, commercial waste, construction and demolition waste, special waste and education and outreach.

For DSNY, this next SWMP is the beginning of the next chapter in our journey, one that has become more inclusive, more expansive, and more effective. As outlined in the 126 initiatives supporting around 20 strategies underneath each program, we have goals and objectives that we will partner with many agencies, offices, and stakeholders to implement. The SWMP is not a rigid blueprint for every possible action over the next decade, rather it provides strategic direction and guiding principles as well as comfortably specific objectives. This enables the Department and the city to continuously adapt our approach while in pursuit of our goals. It is a plan

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that lays the foundation for an ambitious future  
while providing flexibility that is necessary in our  
ever-changing world.

At the same time, the SWMP is not the only plan  
guiding DSNY's work, nor all solid waste management  
efforts throughout the city and there are specific  
programs and initiatives that it does not  
contemplate, such as containerization, curbing  
illegal dumping, or collection operations. DSNY will  
continue to innovate and plan in those areas and  
intersect them with SWMP programming as appropriate.

We will also continue to support others in their  
journeys on waste reduction and resource recovery, by  
serving as a technical expert, a resource for  
educational materials and programming, and a convener  
of collaborators in the circular economy.

To talk specifically about a few key objectives  
contained in the SWMP, organics remains a priority.  
Most importantly, continuing to increase  
participation and recovery rates. We plan to achieve  
this through a diverse combination of applied  
technology, diversification, and experimentation.  
For example, we will research alternatives to plastic  
liners for collection and investigate how we can

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leverage new equipment to better separate contamination from collected organics. Commercial waste zones are another priority and an additional focus that was not identified in the last SWMP. DSNY has already committed to full implementation of the zones by 2027, and we are excited about the data quality and diversion improvements that will follow from this thoughtfully designed and rigorous contract driven program.

Finally, we know very well the responsibility of having a reliable, safe, and resilient system for solid waste export. Yet we look to the future where the next generation of this requirement emerges. To get to that future, we have positioned the Waste Reduction program as the first program, one that will enable recovery of value, reduction of impacts, increased benefits, and better environmental outcomes.

This work is undoubtedly the most difficult work, and work that requires each and every one of us to steward the resources we consume. In that way, DSNY is serving as a leader, as this is a comprehensive plan for managing the waste of the entire city of New York.

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For that reason, the SWMP includes programs and commitments that are outside of our agencies' direct jurisdiction. However, we are proud to serve as the host for them under the umbrella of a more sustainable city.

The future DSNY envisions is one where all the resources in the city are managed responsibly and to the best value. Whether it's advancing textile to textile recovery, turning food scraps from our diverse cuisine into biogas to support a clean energy transition, or developing new ways to reuse materials in future manufacturing industries, the Solid Waste Management Plan is designed to address the full breadth of materials management in a city as complex, diverse, and innovative as ours.

Before moving on to your questions, I would like to share details on the public outreach and engagement we have conducted as part of plan development. These statistics are not included in the plan but are a testament to DSNY's desire to make the SWMP a roadmap for all. We began formal outreach for this SWMP last year, starting with city agencies that, in collaboration with DSNY, would have a major role in implementing SWMP26. These agencies include NYCHA,

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Parks, DEP, Public Schools, DCAS, DOT, EDC, DDC, and the Mayor's Offices of Environmental Remediation and Climate Change and Environmental Justice. DSNY conducted 15 meetings with New York City agencies in 2024 and 2025. DSNY has also been an active participant on the Clean Construction Executive Order 23 Implementation Working Group and the Environmental Justice Interagency Working Group. These engagement efforts identified synergies between many planning efforts including the State's SWMP, the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, PlaNYC on Climate, and Food Forward NYC, as well as the EJNYC Plan, the New York City Industrial Plan, and the Urban Forest Plan, also under review. We have included many strategies that commit to this continued agency and office collaboration in the SWMP.

DSNY after completing those engagement efforts, began outreach with elected officials, specially this Committee and Borough Presidents. Since the spring, we have met with of you or your staff and welcome you to share information about the proposed SWMP framework with constituents and to solicit feedback. Additionally, DSNY met with the stakeholder groups



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including the Solid Waste Advisory Board, Chairs,  
Town and Gown's Urban Resource Recovery Working  
Group, the Regional Planning Association, the New  
York City Climate Leadership Group, the EJ Advisory  
Board, and the Transform Don't Trash NYC Coalition.

The comments received through these efforts have  
already shaped the draft plan. For example, a  
resiliency assessment of key export infrastructure  
was added after meeting with the citywide EJ Advisory  
Board.

On October 27<sup>th</sup> of this year, DSNY held a virtual  
public meeting to share information on SWMP26 and to  
response to questions from the public. The meeting  
was recorded and the recording and presentation are  
posted on DSNY's website. We also heard from  
advocates and from many of you a desire for more time  
to review the draft SWMP and provide comments. In  
response to your request, DSNY was pleased to extend  
the public comment period an additional 60 days, now  
concluding on January 16<sup>th</sup>, as you mentioned Chair,  
rather than the original public comment conclusion  
date of November 17<sup>th</sup> of this year. This more than  
doubles the legally required 45-day review time.

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2       Additionally, DSNY is grateful to the SWAB's for  
3 hosting a series of listening sessions, open to all  
4 residents and organizations to gather feedback that  
5 will be shared with DSNY incorporated into the plan.  
6 We look forward to addressing all comments received,  
7 as well as relevant feedback from testimonies  
8 received today.

9       Finally, unlike the 2006 SWMP, no new physical  
10 infrastructure is proposed in SWMP26. Some may be  
11 proposed as part of implementation and as discussed  
12 at the public meeting, there would be dedicated  
13 engagement around any specific facility, including  
14 requisite environmental reviews. This SWMP will be  
15 implemented over a ten year period and DSNY will  
16 report on implementation every other year in biennial  
17 reports to DEC, which are posted on DSNY's website  
18 after their approval.

19       While drafting the plan, DSNY identified the need  
20 for a minimum of six stakeholder focus groups and  
21 nineteen strategies that rely on collaboration with  
22 community organizations in composting groups during  
23 implementation. These groups will be formed after  
24 the plan is formerly approved by both Council and DEC  
25 next year. We welcome you to stay engaged throughout

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the implementation process and are glad to be working  
with all of you to make this plan a reality.

Thank you for your interest in the Solid Waste  
Management Plan, I look forward to answering your  
questions.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thank you Commissioner.  
We've also been joined by Council Members Morano and  
Nurse.

Commissioner, in addition to what was said in  
your opening statement, what else was realized by the  
Department regarding the 2006 SWMP?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: We are proud to say that we  
achieved a majority of the goals that were outlined  
in the 2006 Solid Waste Management Plan, similar to  
this plan that had a number of specific goals and  
objectives and we have reported on them biennially in  
those DEC reports, so they'll go on the website. So,  
we've achieved many things rolling out the  
comprehensive recycling program, we've advanced  
textiles, we've advanced e-waste, and then sort of at  
the tail end of that 20 year period, organics and  
commercial waste zones, as I discussed.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: And what are some of the  
commitments made by the city in the 2006 SWMP that

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were not realized? And what were the challenges that  
made this realization difficult?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: There are a few that we note  
were not completed as planned. One would be a  
transfer station for recyclable, a marine transfer  
station for recyclable material out of Manhattan and  
the second would be the use of the DSNY Transfer  
Stations for Commercial Waste. The first one that I  
mentioned, we actually through our planning and  
current operations, have determined that we are not  
in need of an additional marine transfer station.  
Our current infrastructure network supports our needs  
in that way and for the second, the use of the marine  
transfer stations for commercial waste, we have  
carried that over into the next SWMP. It's something  
that we are going to continue to evaluate as the  
commercial waste zone program is fully rolled out.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Is that in reference - so the  
second part being the transfer station for commercial  
waste is supposed to be considered in the 2026.

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: It's in this current SWMP  
year.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Regarding Marine Transfer  
Stations, I understand that you're saying it wasn't

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something that was necessary from your perspective  
but was there anything that was operationally  
challenging to bring on new Marine Transfer Stations?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: When we did construct the  
other Marine Transfer Stations, certainly some of the  
uhm, difficulties with engineering design,  
construction siting, the timelines for those types of  
things are always a challenge with infrastructure in  
New York City, so uhm, those would certainly be  
something we would have to consider when building any  
new solid waste infrastructure.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Has the New York State  
Department of Environmental Conservation ever  
expressed concerns that the city has failed or is  
close to failing to adhere to commitments made in the  
2006 SWMP?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: No.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Has DSNY received  
communications from the New York State Department of  
Environmental Conservation regarding the city's 2005  
biannual update on the 2006 SWMP?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Yes, so every two years we  
submit our biannual report to DEC that demonstrates  
how we've complied with our last plan and it gives a

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recap of tonnages and other information about our programs and every time we submit one of those reports, we usually have a back and forth with DEC. They have some questions. We may make some revisions to the report and then they'll issue a final approval letter for that report and that's when we post it on the website.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Can you describe those communications?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: They generally ask for more information about a specific program, like for example, with the Food Scrap Drop-Off program, they may ask us where all the drop-off points are and we point to resources like the map on our website.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Alright, now pivoting to the 2026 SWMP draft. If implemented fully, will the waste reduction and diversion programs proposed in the draft SWMP meet the goals established by the city's zero waste act, diverting 100 percent of recyclables and compostable waste from landfills incineration by 2030?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: DSNY is very confident that if every New Yorker participates in the programs that

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we put forth, we can achieve that goal but it does  
require all of us to participate all the time.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: So, if implemented fully, is  
it your belief that the waste reduction and diversion  
programs proposed in the draft SWMP would meet the  
goals established by the city's Zero Waste Act?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Yes, it's my belief. I  
think it's also important to acknowledge however, and  
we know this from our waste characterization studies  
that a quarter of the material in our waste stream is  
not recoverable currently. So, there's certainly  
work to do upstream if you will or in material design  
in order to really achieve the future I think we all  
hope for.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: What funding does DSNY need  
to fully implement the waste reduction and equity  
programs outlined in the draft, the SWMP?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Our plan going in is to do  
the best we can with the resources that we have. We  
are not requesting any formal new funding request as  
part of this plan, however, as mentioned if we do  
during implementation identify the need for new  
facilities, new programming, then we would put

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together a funding request specifically for that, in  
support of implementing a certain -

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: So, you believe you have all  
the resources you would need to fully implement the  
waste reduction and equity programs outlined in the  
draft?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: We do.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Is New York City planning to  
advocate for state funding via the Sustainable  
Futures Fund and Extender Producer Responsibility  
Program or the Cap and Invest Program to help DSNY  
fulfill the bills of the SWMP?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: DSNY has a good track record  
of securing a state funding in particular in support  
of many of our programs. I know for example, the  
Special Waste programs and our safe events are  
generally supplemented by state funding every year  
and certainly we keep an eye on all of those  
opportunities and do submit applications whenever we  
meet the criteria. We were successful in a few  
federal funding boards but of course those are not as  
available right now.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: But at the moment, there is  
no anticipatory applications before the state



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2 regarding a request for funding? Are you  
3 anticipating any applications?

4 JENNIFER MCDONNELL: We apply for funding with  
5 the state every year and it's like an ongoing thing  
6 for us, so we always have an active application with  
7 them generally.

8 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Okay and are these  
9 applications - are they - are you applying in order  
10 to come into compliance with the 2026 SWMP plan or  
11 this is just independent of that plan?

12 JENNIFER MCDONNELL: A lot of the work that we're  
13 applying for is related to things outlined in the  
14 2026 SWMP. So, I would say it's related but not  
15 specific, no.

16 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Okay. What measures will the  
17 city use to hold itself accountable to its upcoming  
18 plan for managing solid waste through 2036?

19 JENNIFER MCDONNELL: So, in addition to the  
20 biennial reports that we spoke about a little bit, we  
21 within DSNY, utilize data on an ongoing basis to  
22 monitor how our programs are doing and we will  
23 continue to do that. So, we will check in more  
24 periodically then the biennial reports, certainly is  
25 just by virtue of our operations, for example, one of

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the things that my borough is responsible for is paying all of our bills. So, we see a lot of information about tunnage just in our routine work and that helps us keep an eye on how we are doing with our programs.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: To make it clear on the record, what is the latest date that DSNY is eligible to submit its strap SWMP to New York State DEC for initial review?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: So, uhm, I'd like to answer that question in two ways. It's difficult to pinpoint a specific day on the calendar, however, there is a general requirement under DEC regulations that all actions such as this, including things like permit renewals are submitted 180 days in advance of the expiration of the current coverage. And that's related to the Administrative Procedures Act that provides you cover through administrative processes. That said, uhm, the regulations for solid waste management plans also include many variations on how to get to the end point. Many of which include extended review timelines with DEC back and forth 60 day review periods, 30 day response periods, etc..

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So, from DSNY's perspective, to account for any of those scenarios, we believe that it needs to be submitted to DEC, at least the initial draft by the end of January 2026.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: What is DSNY doing to plan for the change in mayoral administration to ensure that individuals at the agency are oriented to the SWMP and aligned on its priorities and values?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: So, DSNY is commencing engagement with the new administration to bring them up to speed on this plan and many of our other activities and we look forward to engaging with the new Council, new Committee in support of that as well.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Can you describe the role of Engine Meter, the engineering firm that was hired to assist in drafting the SWMP?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Most certainly. So, when I joined DSNY it was to help prepare this plan and that was about a little over four years ago and we proceeded with our first step of issuing a competitive procurement, an MWBE solicitation for outside support knowing that this was a discreet project that would require a supplement to our normal

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staffing levels to get it done. So, in that competitive procurement, Engine Meter was selected as a minority women business to support this work.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: What was the start date for engineers work on the 2026 SWMP?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: So, after we completed the procurement that I discussed, the commenced work late, summer, early fall of 2022.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: That's about four years. They've been working on it for four years now.

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Three, yeah.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: How much money has Engine Meter been paid to date?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Uh in sum, it's been about one million dollars over those three years, so averaging about \$300,000 a year.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Okay, how many virtual or in person meetings are calls, specifically pertaining to information or plans in the 2026 SWMP did DSNY or Engine Meter have with representatives of waste management?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: As part of our work developing the base plan as well as the uhm attachments and appendices; I don't know if you've

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1 looked at the entire format of the SWMP but we have  
2 some technical attachments that go into detail on  
3 certain things and as part of that, Engine Meter in  
4 concert with DSNY did survey the regional market  
5 players but we didn't have any dedicated meetings to  
6 specific providers to develop the plan. We developed  
7 the plan.  
8

9 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Okay, so no meetings right,  
10 fair to say?

11 JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Yes.

12 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: And you wouldn't have the  
13 names of the Waste Management Reps who worked on the  
14 plan because there were no meetings with them, right?  
15 So, I can pass on that. Were there any virtual or in  
16 person meetings with Wee World? No, right?

17 JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Same, same, same response.

18 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: What are the names of reps  
19 and organizations in the New York City Compost  
20 network who work with DSNY or Engine Meter on the  
21 2026 SWMP?

22 JENNIFER MCDONNELL: So, we did meet with the  
23 SWAB Chairs as I mentioned and I do have their names  
24 here at least the ones who joined us in a meeting  
25 about the SWMP earlier this year.

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CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Okay, how many times did  
those meetings -

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Do you want me to read their  
names?

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Yeah, if you could read their  
names, that would be great.

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Okay, uhm, Mary Ellen  
Sullivan from the Brooklyn SWAB, Rhonda Keyser from  
the Brooklyn SWAB, Dior **St.** Hillaire from the Bronx  
SWAB, Caroline Busby from the Manhattan SWAB,  
Matthew Civello from the Manhattan SWAB and we also  
invited Richard Nunez Lawrence from the Queens SWAB  
and uhm, we did also meet with the Transform Don't  
Trash Coalition as mentioned.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Our apologies for the sirens  
outside everybody. There is a bill that would reduce  
the decibel levels on emergency vehicles. How many -  
how frequently, was it like a one time, one off  
meeting or multiple meetings.

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: There was one meeting for  
all the SWAB Chairs and then we did have a follow up  
meeting as well.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Okay. Alright, now pivoting  
to public comment and public engagement and the

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process behind that. There has been major concern about the amount of public engagement that DSNY has done for this draft.

After you know a letter from Comptroller's Office, as well as Borough President Reynoso in our office. I'm grateful that the public comment period was extended to January as you mentioned in your opening statement but have still only held only one public hearing, which is the minimum required by law. For a plan of this significance, we're digging down on why the outreach has been not as ideal as we would have liked and what communities have not gotten the outreach they deserve given the outsize impact Waste Management practices have on them and their neighbors.

How many public meetings has DSNY held on the 2026 SWMP where you have taken public comment?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: So, we held the public meeting on October 27<sup>th</sup> and also as I mentioned in my testimony, we did conduct extensive outreach holding 33 meetings with city agencies, Council Members and key stakeholder groups as part of getting that feedback. I also think it's important to note that DSNY approaches this planning exercise sort of as an

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ongoing part of our work and certainly we take all sorts of feedback that we receive by virtue of everything from 311 comments to testimony at other hearings as part of the information we compile when working on a plan of this size.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: there hasn't been a public meeting where everyone can come in and testify or speak to what they would like to see in the plan. This seems more of meetings at a micro level, individual level but not wide range.

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: We'd be certainly happy to work with Council to set up something such as that.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Yeah and would you recommend for - in your planning in the transition with Mayor elect Mamdani's team, is DSNY also bringing attention for the need to establish more public meetings so that members of the public can testify?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: That is something we can take under consideration and again, we'd be happy to work with the Council and Mamdani's team on whatever format they -

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: The Council and a lot of the stakeholders, we really appreciate public meetings. Uhm, you know especially when we want reach people



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and the impact in neighborhoods that this plan is  
going to impact.

To date, approximately how many individuals or  
entities have submitted a comment on DSNY's first  
draft of the 2026 SWMP?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Uhm, as of now, we have 18  
formal comments. However, I don't think that equates  
necessarily to individuals, some were made on behalf  
of organizations. I also think it's important to  
note that the comments are not necessarily - we're  
counting a comment as a submission and one submission  
may have multiple points raised or items that they're  
commenting on but we've received 18 discreet packages  
if you will.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Yeah, I think 18 is  
incredibly low and I think it speaks to the need for  
having more of these public meetings. I think that's  
a testament to the need for that work to continue.  
What is DSNY's process for reviewing and considering  
public comments on the 2026 SWMP draft?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Uh, we, our process is to  
compile them all. We will continue to do that until  
the public comment period closes in January. Then we  
will compile responses to each area individually.

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This is very similar to how the state responded to comments on the State Wide Solid Waste Management Plan. So, for example, if we receive multiple comments about one topic, we'll respond to the topic. We also plan to incorporate that as an additional appendix to the final draft plan, both the list of comments and responses and then finally, we will obviously utilize the feedback to amend the draft plan. So, we will make changes to the draft plan based on those comments.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: What is your process for incorporating public comment from today's hearing and future hearings to revise your current draft SWMP?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: So, basically, very similar to as I described, I would add that for program strategies or initiatives that we receive comments on that intersect with another stakeholder agency such as DEP, we will take any comments received back to them and ensure that they have the opportunity to you know amend their proposals or take those comments into consideration as well.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Got it, would today's comments from the public be incorporated in or at least inform the SWMP?

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JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Chair, as you mentioned, testimony received today does not sort of quality as a formal comment, so we would encourage anyone who is providing testimony today to also submit a written comment but certainly we have folks paying attention, taking notes, as part of this exercise.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Great, does DSNY plan to host any future public meetings regarding the 2026 SWMP? You're saying you're looking into that. It would be great for there to be a schedule of briefings and a public engagement for 2026, especially before we enter the next stage. As many as possible and I'm sure that the folks who are going to be testifying today are going to make suggestions on what's needed and we're looking forward to hearing that and we hope that there's a robust - a public schedule and so, we look forward to hearing from the members of the public on that.

We learned that the budget for DSNY to conduct education and outreach about the SWMP was cut significantly. Can you provide a number as to how much of those funds were cut? And can you also please describe the parties to which DSNY has done outreach with the present funding?

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JENNIFER MCDONNELL: The funding for outreach and education at DSNY is not dedicated to the Solid Waste Management Plan. Uhm, we specifically dedicated the funding for our consulting work to a lot of the technical information gathering data analysis. Our overall outreach and education covers our DSNY programming, including the Solid Waste Management Plan, so that's something that we've done internal outreach in order to ensure that staff at the department who are doing that type of outreach are up to speed on the details of the Solid Waste Management Plan, the public comment opportunities, etc.. And Josh, I don't know if you want to add anything there.

JOSH GOODMAN: Yeah, thank you very Mr. Chair. I'll just mention that when the initial sort of envisioning of SWMP 2026 took place about four years ago, at that time, it was not yet clear whether this SWMP was going to include new infrastructure projects. There was a discussion of extensive environmental reviews. The possibility that community specific outreach would be necessary. Once it became clear that this plan was not going to call for any new infrastructure, we were really able to right size the outreach plan. And I'll also just

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1 mention on that topic, we talked about the 18 public  
2 comments so far, as you know the comment periods have  
3 been extended significantly. There were, I believe,  
4 82 people in attendance at that hearing, so I don't  
5 want you to think there were just 18 people there.  
6 There were 82 people at the meeting and many did not  
7 feel the need to submit an individual comment or at  
8 least not yet.  
9

10 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: I mean 18 people in a city of  
11 nine million residents, it's still, it's nothing.

12 JOSH GOODMAN: We can head down any time and ask  
13 people on the street; do you have a comment on the  
14 Solid Waste Management Plan?

15 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: I mean, that's the thing, is  
16 that most people don't know what it is. That's  
17 actually the problem is that you can go up to anybody  
18 on the street and they don't know what the SWMP is,  
19 right? It's only us nerds that know about it, so I  
20 think we need to do a little more on that.

21 Uhm, other than the selection process for the  
22 vendor that you worked on with Engine Meter, was  
23 there any funding put towards community outreach on  
24 this?  
25

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JENNIFER MCDONNELL: No, no dedicated funding and in fact, the funding for the consulting work was actually you know internally self-funded by DSNY.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Yeah, okay. I'm going to ask a few questions then I'm going to let my colleagues ask questions. Will the departments timetable allow sufficient time for the Council to fully engage in discussions with DSNY before the final draft plan is submitted to DEC?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Yes, thank you for asking that question. I hope that many of you continue on this Committee so that we can pick up very early next year and continue our discussions about this plan so that we can meet our timeline.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Has DSNY reviewed the document titled, A People SWMP, published by the Transformed Owned Trash Coalition?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Yes, we have.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: If so, which of the recommendations does DSNY hope to incorporate in its next draft of the 2026 SWMP prior to submitting the draft for state review?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: We were very grateful and pleasantly uhm, maybe not surprised but we were glad

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to see a lot that was in the peoples SWMP was also included in our draft. We align on many of the program areas and objectives including commercial waste zones, support for EPR around packaging, expanding textiles and electronics and of course, food and organics recovery. So, some good alignment there.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Aside from the alignment, what are some things that were included in the Transformed Owned Trash's plan that was not included in the original draft by DSNY?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: We did review it and found a couple points that maybe weren't as aligned. One, we've already spoken about today and that is commercial use of the city's infrastructure for solid waste transfer, which we are continuing to include in the next Solid Waste Management Plan, as well as a more accelerated role out of the Commercial Waste Zone Program than we've committed to.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: People's SWMP recommends that the city extend e-waste recycling programs such as E-Cycle NYC and Textile Waste Recycling Program such as Refashion NYC to all residential buildings with ten or more units. Has DSNY considered this and if so,

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what obstacles have previously prevented the city from implementing this type of expansion and how can the city navigate around those?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: This is certainly something we considered. We alluded to it in the plan, uhm, it's difficult to commit to sort of full citywide expansion of those programs because we are a massive entity and over the time that we've been working on these programs, we've been working to grow the industry alongside with us, so that we are able to service more and more buildings and more and more residents and Director Kitchener may want add something there.

KATE KITCHENER: Yeah, I was just going to add that those programs are already available to all buildings over ten units, so it's really just it's a voluntary program, so we really just need all of your help getting the word out to let you know building owners know that they can join.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Are there any challenges to mandating this citywide?

JOSH GOODMAN: I'll just say that uh you know we'd have to study capacity. If it's something that you know it's obviously above all of our pay grade as



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a policy decision. If it's something that the Council is interested in pursuing, we'd be happy to look at the feasibility from a capacity standpoint.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: I think it is well within your pay grade my friend.

JOSH GOODMAN: To say whether it's right or not to do it, that's all you. That's all you Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Uhm, alright, I'm going to let my colleagues ask questions and we have a lot of questions to get through. The topic areas are going to be Waste Export, Waste Incineration, Commercial Waste, Constructions and Demolition, Recycling Metal, Glass, Plastic, and Paper. Uhm, Co-Digestion, Organic Waste. So, we're going to get through a lot but I'm going to have my colleagues; if they want to ask some questions under that topic area, you can go, feel free as well. So, I'm going to first start with - oh, and I'd also like to recognize we've been joined by Council Members Ung and Banks, and to start with questions I'll start with Carr.

COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: Thank you Chair. Good to see you all. Thank you for being here to testify about this. I want to start a little bit with process that the Chair was asking about earlier. I

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second all of his comments from earlier in the hearing and I think that at a minimum you know, public hearings would have to take place physically in each borough in order for this to be a really thorough public review process and I agree that 18 number is well, well below what I think it should be even given that there was one public hearing so far. And I want to ask, so you indicated the public comment has been extended to January 16<sup>th</sup> but you're also looking ideally or I think in view of the state law, to submit something to DEC by the end of that same month. So, you know about two weeks later.

So, is there really sufficient time to grapple with all of the comments engaged with the Council, and then submit something in that period and have a meaningful review of what the public says?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: It is quite an aggressive timeline. We acknowledge that. We are also in discussions internally about the best way to meet that deadline with all those competing priorities and demands. One thing I will say is that we have a working relationship with DEC and we are the largest planning unit in the state and our plan is very lengthy, I think as others may have noted. So,

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approaching DEC with a draft, perhaps an advance or final version might allow a parallel pathway in order to meet our timelines, so those are the types of things we're considering.

COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: Understood, thank you. So, in terms of uhm, you know the prior SWMP, the 2006 SWMP, folks at that time are grappling with the legacy of Fresh Kills Landfill, the environmental justice aspect, the borough equity aspect, and one of the things that was produced by that SWMP was the notion that each borough takes care of its own trash. Is that something that is being preserved in the current draft or would be - or if not incorporated into a modified draft next year?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Yes, that is included. We are proposing no changes to the trash, the municipal solid waste borough by borough plan of both transfer capacity and eventual export out of the city.

COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: Okay, that's great to hear. Uhm, in that vein right, currently Staten Island is taking a significant share of the organics collection and that was not as you said, an anticipated part of the 2006 SWMP but I'm assuming that you're tackling it very much so in the current draft.

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What are the plans for distributing the organics collection by borough in the way that you do for solid waste? Sure, as part of DSNY's preparation for the citywide program, we did another competitive procurement. This time it was a bid for transfer and processing capacity for organics. We issued that in 2023 and we awarded eight contracts in 2024.

As of now, only five of those eight facilities have been activated due to DEC permitting. So, our plan is much similar to the MSW plan to have a diverse network of transfer stations around the city to allow for each borough, each operating area to have a dedicated space for organics transfer. It may not be where all the processing takes place but that's the same for municipal solid waste. We use transfer to move to larger processing infrastructure. And so, we're continuing that model with organics. It's not quite there yet as we are waiting for some permitting but certainly taking the same distributive and resilient approach for that waste stream.

COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: Sure, so I want to return to one of my favorite topics, which is electronics recycling. As you know, Staten Island had a curbside program and that program was ended a couple years ago

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and I want to know what the - you know what is the  
SWMP envision for electronic waste pickup? Is it  
going to continue to be e-cycle for larger,  
multifamily dwellings and everyone else has to do  
drop-offs or is there a contemplation of making what  
was the pilot for Staten Island citywide?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Uhm, we are certainly  
contemplating alternatives to the programs that exist  
today that you describe, either the large building or  
the drop off model. We're considering pickups at  
smaller buildings similar to the curbside program,  
maybe not exactly the same. Obviously a single  
family service is a very high level of service and  
very high cost. So, we're balancing that desire with  
funding through programs such as EPR, which does  
exist for some electronics, but not all and it starts  
to get pretty complicated about what is covered and  
what has funding.

So, that's something we're going to continue to  
navigate under the new plan and that's why this  
framework is the approach that we've taken because it  
allows us to look at different options and perhaps  
implement more than one, depending on over time what

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makes the most sense and it may not be the same, you  
know in every single instance.

COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: Okay, thank you. Thank you  
Chair.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Wow, perfect timing. Council  
Member Nurse has questions.

COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Okay, I'll try to be  
short. Thank you Chair. I just have three or four  
questions. Uhm, I wanted to know how we are doing on  
the goal of not sending waste to incinerators by  
2030. I see from the report, the 2032 contract in  
2032, the Jersey Contract expires to the incinerator.  
So, what's DSNY's plan and are we on track to meet  
that goal?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Certainly, we are tracking  
the expiration of that contract as well as many  
others that - and within this planning period because  
most of them are 20 year contracts and once we  
implemented the 2006 SWMP, we're going to be coming  
up on most of them, either at the end of this next  
planning period or in the beginning of the next, so  
that's what we lay out as our commitment in this  
space is understanding what are our options when  
those contracts come up? What is the best thing that

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we can do both from a value, environmental, you know  
all the considerations perspectives.

COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: I don't have much time, so  
I'm just mostly concerned about where are we at in  
terms of being on track to not send waste to the  
incinerators or at least to the one jersey one.

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: We are on track to  
reevaluate that contract when it expires in 2032.

COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: And I see it says no  
option for renewal.

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Correct, so we will have to  
do a competitive procurement or a negotiated  
acquisition, something that would fall under the PPB  
rules.

COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: And in your uhm,  
procurement option, would an incinerator be included  
in that?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Formal treatment is as the  
state guides us actually higher up on the waste  
management hierarchy then disposal.

COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Right, I understand that  
but we have a city law that we passed in 2023 that  
says by 2030, the goal is not to send incinerators,  
so the idea that we would put out a procurement bid

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for an incinerator and I understand you're calling it thermal you know but it's incineration. Why would we include that if we have this law in the books?

JOSH GOODMAN: Council Member, I appreciate your point very much and very quickly, we just have to be careful from the Administration side not to prejudice those procurements. So, I'll just put it another way, we're very aware of the city law and can't make a specific statement about what will or will not be included in those procurements because we don't want to open ourselves up to litigation but very aware of the city's commitment.

COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Right, I mean you could open yourself up to litigation by violating the law.

JOSH GOODMAN: Noted.

COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Right, okay. Uhm, great, so I see in the testimony you say that in 2027 you anticipate full implementation of the CWZ and I'm just wondering why at the end of 2026, is not a goal for you all and when in 2027 do you fully anticipate those zones being -

JOSH GOODMAN: It's like January 3<sup>rd</sup>. Like, it is end of 2026, it's just the holiday time.



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COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Thank you. Uhm, thank  
you. Uhm and then uh you know for a while, I've been  
trying to pass legislation to make available the DSNY  
Marine Transfer Stations where there is capacity for  
commercial tipping and we, you know you all  
essentially refused to do the environmental review  
for us to vote on the legislation for over a year and  
we know that opening up these stations for capacity  
is part of reducing vehicle miles, creating  
opportunities for trucks to tip their payload, uhm  
and I just don't - and also to address the  
environmental justice of trash coming to a certain  
subset of neighborhoods that are mostly communities  
of color. So, I just don't understand why you can't  
commit to do the environmental review in order for us  
to pass the legislation. It feels like a deep  
disrespect of the legislative powers that are given  
to us through the City Charter.

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: DSNY can certainly do an  
environmental review on this. However, we cannot do  
one until we know the very specific details about  
which trucks, how often would be interested in  
utilizing the facility. That is the essence -

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COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: I just disagree. I mean,  
we -

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: I've done a number of  
environmental reviews and for the Staten Island  
Compost Facility included and we have hourly truck  
data that we are required to analyze by type of  
truck.

COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: And you all have not - and  
my understanding is, can you confirm or tell me that  
you don't have this? Have you ever asked any of the  
commercial corridors if they would make use of any of  
those?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: We have and we have that  
interest from the procurement process. Until they  
roll out the zones in the areas that would utilize  
the transfer stations, we will not have robust enough  
data to pass muster from a seeker perspective on an  
environmental review.

COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Okay, you know what  
capacity is available at those MTS's, right?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: We do.

COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Right, and so, you can say  
x-amount of tonnage usually equates to x-amount of  
trucks, right?

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JENNIFER MCDONNELL: It also depends on the routing and where are the trucks coming and going from, what intersections are they using? It's very specific detailed -

COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: So, the environmental review would be specific to truck traffic around the station?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Okay, so it still to me - it doesn't - to me I'm not understanding the routes piece.

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: I'd be happy to sit down and go through with that in more detail.

COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Well, we did try for a year to sit down with you all. So, I guess what I'm asking on record now is, can you commit to doing it in 2026 when the zones are stood up?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Yes, we can.

COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thank you Council Member.  
Council Member Banks.

JOSH GOODMAN: Just to clarify, it would be in '27, the very beginning of '27.

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COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Okay, January 3<sup>rd</sup>, thank  
you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Thank you Mr. Chair. I  
know that the SWMP 26 emphasizes improving public  
education and outreach. However, one of my local  
community boards, Community Board 5 Subcommittee has  
struggled to get the DSNY to even come to a meeting.  
Uhm, when we request - I just want to know what's the  
delay and get into the Subcommittee for Community  
Board 5 so that they can get any concerns or their  
questions answered?

JOSH GOODMAN: Council Member, with respect, it's  
not correct. We will have - we have met with -

COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: You said it's not correct?  
Are you going to correct it?

JOSH GOODMAN: I don't know who they communicated  
with. If it was someone on my team, I will take care  
of it. We make ourselves incredibly available to  
every Community Board. I'd love to just know  
specifically who you're hearing from and who you  
spoke to.

I also just need to correct -

COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: The Chair of the  
Subcommittee.

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JOSH GOODMAN: And which Subcommittee?

COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Yeah, the Chair of the  
Sanitation Subcommittee.

JOSH GOODMAN: The Sanitation Subcommittee of  
3345. Okay, [INAUDIBLE 00:58:06].

COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Yeah, thank you. How will  
the DSNY ensure that Community Boards and  
neighborhood groups receive timely and consistent  
engagement? Particularly when residents want clarity  
about new programs, like the Empire Bins,  
Containerization Initiatives?

JOSH GOODMAN: Our team is at community board  
meetings virtually every night, which is why I'm  
surprised to hear that one Community Board has been  
having trouble reaching us.

COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Community Board 5.

JOSH GOODMAN: But to your question about how we  
will engage in continued outreach. This is an  
ongoing effort on truly a daily basis. There are  
people from DSNY at Community Boards every evening.

COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Well, there's a new year  
coming, new Administration, there's definitely  
opportunity to correct that. Uhm, when it comes to  
the updated waste infrastructure and what it really

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means, SWMP 26 talks about an updated waste infrastructure as a major long term goal. What specific upgrades should communities expect in the upcoming years with new transfer stations, improved local waste facilities, better containerization systems or modern equipment and how will these upgrades directly improve day to day sanitation services for the residents?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Thank you for that question Council Member. We are as discussed, not proposing any new infrastructure.

COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Okay.

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: We may apply new technologies at existing infrastructures. Our industry, like many others, is exploring AI in a variety of applications. I had the pleasure this fall of visiting the South Brooklyn Marine Terminal, the material recovery facility and they're using robots to try to pick out recyclables. So, we'll see applications such as that, I think, continue to come into play in our solid waste system but not any new facilities proposed as of now.

COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Okay and when it comes to illegal dumping and the long term plan and hot spot

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strategies, illegal dumping is an ongoing and chronic issue in the 42<sup>nd</sup> Council district and across the city, it effects cleanliness, public health, and small businesses and overall quality of life. Does the SWMP26 include a long term plan to address illegal dumping, including expanded enforcement, surveillance, clean up, crews, community partnerships or dedicated hot spots?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: So, illegal dumping falls out of scope of the Solid Waste Management Plan. We are focused on what happens to material generally after it's been collected but Deputy Commissioner Goodman can speak to our programming.

JOSH GOODMAN: Council Member, while it is outside the scope of the SWMP, it is a major issue for us. We have deployed in that work of over 300 cameras citywide, many funded by members of this Council and we just announced a new way for New Yorkers to - you know it's a \$4,000 fine.

COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Right.

JOSH GOODMAN: New Yorkers to be eligible for a \$2,000 bounty if they submit video of illegal dumping in their communities. You can send that video to [illegaldumpingtips@dsny.nyc.gov](mailto:illegaldumpingtips@dsny.nyc.gov).

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COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Okay and the last thing, I just want to show a picture of a problematic area in my district where there's constant illegal dumping along Van Sinderen between Dumont and I was driving by there just a couple of days ago and this has been a constant. We've had a constant dumping of illegal garbage there, so we want to work with you to address this issue. We've worked with you in the past to have crews go out there and clean but we want to see how we can uhm, you know have a better approach or strategy.

JOSH GOODMAN: We've got to do more. That's somebody's neighborhood, right?

COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Alright and I'll get this information to you.

JOSH GOODMAN: Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Thank you.

JOSH GOODMAN: Mr. Chair, I apologize, I have to request the opportunity to correct something we said to Council Member Nurse. I was thrown off by the dates being at the end of the year. Two zones coming online at a time, it's '26 and '27 completing like January 3, 2028. So, I apologize, I was thrown off and if you'd like to ask follow up questions if the



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Chair will allow it, that's my fault. It's a two  
year rollout '26 and '27 for commercial waste zones.  
End of '27, not beginning of '27.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Okay, let's pivot to the next  
set of questions. Waste export. DSNY exports a lot  
of waste, approximately 10,670 tons of DSNY managed  
waste are exported from the city daily and if 85  
percent is transported through long distance rail to  
landfills upstate in Connecticut, Georgia, Kentucky,  
New Jersey, Ohio, etc., New York, Virginia, and North  
Carolina's landfills will reach capacity by 2050.

Seven of the city's nine municipal waste export  
contracts will expire before 2036. What is the city  
doing today to reduce waste export?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: The entire 2026 SWMP is  
focused on reducing waste export. We are excited  
about the eight program areas. Each diving into  
specific waste streams, specific approaches, that  
will help us reduce waste, reduce reliance on export  
and all the associated concerns we've been speaking  
about today. It's important to acknowledge that we  
must take action in all of those program areas. So,  
the SWMP really only achieves the goals if we work on

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organics, on construction waste, on commercial waste  
altogether.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: How many of these contracts  
does DSNY expect to renew and how many will require a  
new procurement process with outside vendors?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: That will depend on the  
specifics of each contract, which we will evaluate in  
enough time, sufficient time in order to take an  
appropriate procurement action. So, for example, if  
there is a renewal, we would evaluate whether it's in  
the city's best interest to exercise that. If it's  
in the mutual interest of both parties, we would have  
to consider that negotiation if any. So, it really  
depends on every contract, but that is the majority  
of the work that the Borough of Solid Waste  
Management oversees. So, we have an entire team  
focused on tracking those dates and making sure that  
we're ready.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: What factors do you  
contemplate in determining whether or not to renew?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: We would consider pricing.  
You know what does the contract say about pricing  
going forward. We would take a look into the market.  
As I mentioned, we have some attachments to a Solid

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Waste Management Plan. One of them is about local capacity so we'll continue to use that as a resources as we have to make these decisions. And we will also continue to collaborate with our peers. One of the things I enjoy most about my job is speaking with our colleagues who are also managing solid waste for the region in large cities and understanding how they're approaching some of our shared challenges.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: What has the city's relations been like with other US States that are waste export destinations? Have these states or their localities ever expressed intentions to stop accepting New York City's waste?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: In the time that I've been with DSNY, we have not had a specific example around this. I have experienced it in my career.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: You have?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Not at DSNY but I have been working in Solid Waste for about 20 years and this is our challenge. As you mentioned, there may be aren't as many people interested in solid waste as we would all like but the communities who do host some of this infrastructure are certainly some of the primary stakeholders we need to consider when making these

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decisions and that is something that we will address  
as we move into the future of the plan and  
implementation.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Have advocacy groups acting  
on behalf of residents of US States that are waste  
export destinations attempted to communicate with New  
York City about the impact that our waste has on  
their communities? If so, what have those  
communications been and what has been the city's  
response?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: As part of the current  
public comment period for the SWMP, we have received  
comments from our neighbors around our solid waste  
programming and so, we are going to address those  
comments as described earlier as part of our process.  
We will document what the specific concerns are and  
formulate a response as part of the finalization of  
our plan.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Going back to waste  
incineration. Some waste is also exported for  
incineration at We World Essex in Essex New Jersey.  
However, reduced capacity there will limit the city's  
future options for waste incineration. DSNY has a 20

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year contract with We World Essex to incinerate up to  
985,000 tons of waste annually.

The contract expires in 2032, with no renewal  
option under the draft 2026 plan. DSNY would  
continue monitoring thermal treatment technologies.  
The city's contract with We World Essex incineration  
facility in New Jersey, which receives 12 percent of  
our waste will end in 2032 with no renewal option.  
Where would DSNY redirect this waste to when the  
contract expires?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: This is something we spoke  
about with Council Member Nurse. I'd also hope that  
we make progress towards our 2026 SWMP goals by the  
time we reach 2032, so that the need for disposal  
capacity is not the same as it is today and that  
we've reduced our reliance on any type of end of life  
management for waste that could be diverted. So,  
that's the first priority.

I think the next priority is continuing to  
monitor developments and alternatives. Right now,  
the primary alternatives for solid waste management  
besides recycling and recovery are landfilling and  
traditional composition. That may change by the time  
we are in a position to enter into new contracts and

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that is part of our work is knowing what those  
alternatives are and going through the due diligence  
of making the right choice for the city.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: I'd like to recognize Council  
Member Vernikov for joining us. The Draft SWMP  
mentions "DSNY will prioritize planning for changes  
to We World Essex incineration capacity." Does this  
mean that DSNY is planning for reductions from  
current levels in the quantity of waste sent there  
for incineration?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: That is essentially the  
discussion we just had. The more that we can reduce,  
the less we will need that capacity or any capacity,  
so-

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Is it planning for  
reductions?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Certainly, if we don't need  
as much capacity when that time comes, we wouldn't  
need to enter into an agreement for that higher level  
of tonnage.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thanks. Since the time of  
the 2006 SWMP, has the city considered constructing  
an incinerator in New York City? Just for the  
record.

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JENNIFER MCDONNELL: No.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Okay. Does DSNY have a long term plan to reduce its reliance on waste incineration facilities? If so, will this plan be included in the revised SWMP draft?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Since we use a mix of incineration and landfilling to manage the solid waste at the end of its life, any reductions we have will thereby reduce incineration, so yes.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Regarding commercial waste, concerns have been expressed about the city's lack of data regarding miles currently traveled by commercial waste vehicles, prior to implementation of commercial waste zones leading to difficulty calculating the reductions and vehicles most traveled due to commercial waste zones? Has DSNY considered asking awardees in zones which have not yet been implemented to report their current vehicles miles traveled?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: So, when we initiated the commercial waste zone program, we did complete one of the those lovely environmental reviews and it gave us a baseline picture of truck activity to estimate the reductions we could expect from the program. We don't have the authority to collect the MT Vehicle

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1 mile travel data until a zone has been fully  
2 implemented, sort of the similar challenge we were  
3 talking about earlier. So, we are really focused on  
4 building a system that is efficient and offers us  
5 more transparent data into what's happening and  
6 making sure that the Carters are operating within the  
7 new zone structure and the rules and regulations that  
8 apply. So, we will see more data as the program is  
9 rolled out.  
10

11 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Have you tried asking them  
12 for that information even though you're saying you're  
13 not legally required to do so.

14 JENNIFER MCDONNELL: We can certainly ask for it  
15 as part of the programming, the issue is more that  
16 the whole program isn't rolled out at this time.

17 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Got it, I mean having that  
18 information will still be very helpful so maybe we  
19 should gather our brains around that to figure out  
20 how we can collect that information because it would  
21 be helpful in real time now.

22 Alright, pivoting now to constructions and  
23 demolition waste. Construction and demolition debris  
24 and fill must be disposed of separately from other  
25 waste streams and account for nearly 50 percent of



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New York City's waste. In 2022, the private sector produced approximately \$5.3 million tons of C&D waste.

If the SWMP is implemented, C&D diversion rates could increase from 50 percent to 60 percent. The city's commercial waste zones program does not cover construction of demolition waste. Although nearly 50 percent of the city's waste stream comes from the C&D Carters. C&D referring to construction demolition for everyone. What can the city do to advance some of the promises of commercial waste zones, such as reduced emissions and incentives for lowering waste production to the C&D waste sector?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Chair, you make an excellent point about C&D waste being such a large percentage of the waste stream and I think it's - uhm, one of the things I love about this Solid Waste Management Plan is it's really the first time that we're standing up. C&D is an area to focus on. In our work, developing the programming under this umbrella, we learned a lot more about this industry in New York City. Looking at the State SWMP, you quoted that about 50 percent of that material is recycled citywide, which is better than other material

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streams. So, we're not starting maybe at the same place with other waste streams but there is certainly room for improvement and I think from the city's perspective, our wheel leverage is in our specifications around how construction happens, whether it's a city project or other entities. The Port Authority has actually led in this way and we are looking to them for some of their success stories on these material streams specifically.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: The SWMP mentions the city's Asphalt Millings Bank and Recycle Concrete Aggregate Bank. What happens to the materials from these facilities that are not used?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: So, the New York City Department of Transportation operates these facilities and they are primarily related to their ongoing work maintaining city infrastructure, sidewalks, roads. For the material that they can't use it is actually made available for free to those who would want to use it and we encourage folks who may have a use for it to take advantage of that program.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: What measures - is it only DOT that -

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JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Operates those facilities.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Yeah.

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Okay. What measures does -

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: That's the only city agency that operates them. There may be commercial entities that operate similar facilities but they're not within the jurisdiction of the city.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thanks for clarifying. What measures does DSNY take to ensure that communities that neighbor these concrete and asphalt recycling facilities are not adversely effected by dust, noise, or other nuisance from the facility?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: What's really unique about transfer stations in New York City is they're dually permitted by both the state and DSNY. So, there are many opportunities to ensure that these facilities are operating you know as required under regulations and certainly as a policy maker, uh there's opportunities to change or address those regulations if they don't - are deemed to be insufficient.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Is there anything that you think is currently deemed insufficient that we should be working on?

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JENNIFER MCDONNELL: No, I think the rules have been developed over time. Certainly, it's difficult to site facilities such as this in an urban environment and I think that is going to be a continuous challenge for us as we increase resource recovery but that's the nature of living in an urban dense metropolis.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: I haven't heard the word metropolis since college. It's derived from the word police, by the way, which means affairs of the city. It was one of the first things I've learned in uhm, in high school that I think inspiring for public service. So, anyway, that word sticks out.

In the SWMP, the DSNY states it will achieve 30 percent diversion by 2036, a huge jump from the current roughly 19 percent diversion rate that has held steady for decades. We welcome this ambitious goal. Which categories are voiced? And which specific programs will enable DSNY to achieve this doubling in a diversion rate over ten years? Specifically, what outreach and education programs enforcement, additional legislation and budgetary dollars will be needed to achieve this goal?

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JENNIFER MCDONNELL: That question has a lot of  
parts.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Yeah, sorry about that.

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Thank you. Thank you Chair.  
I'll start by talking about the specific waste  
streams that DSNY I believes has the most promise to  
really advance us to the goal and then I'll ask  
Commissioner Goodman to speak about to speak about  
some of the outreach and education related to that.

Certainly, organics we've talked a lot about  
today and we know it's about 30 percent of the  
residential waste stream. Uhm, and we have a huge  
opportunity to ramp up that program over the next ten  
years and that can really lead the way on achieving  
that goal. When you look to our other waste streams  
that are relatively large portions of the pie, paper  
and metal, glass and plastic follow. Our capture  
rate on paper is pretty good. We could do a little  
bit better on paper. Metal, glass and plastic, we  
have more opportunity, so those could be areas that  
we focus on and then some of our special waste  
streams that we also talked about today, textiles has  
been growing as a portion of the waste stream, so  
it's really important that we continue to develop

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that program as we see more and more of that in the residential discards. But do you want to speak about education?

JOSH GOODMAN: Yeah, thank you very much Council Member. You're right that this is a really tremendous change and it requires substantial participation increases. I believe we're going to speak more about this later but the uhm combination of traditional outreach and education, with outreach in the form of enforcement is really something that's a relatively new innovation and something that the - for the city to be more comfortable using house to house enforcement as a piece of outreach and education to get people comfortable with this. Although as you know, we always do extensive warning periods, extensive public meetings and in fact, sorry I didn't catch Council Member Banks, but just to get it on the record, I have some updates to one of his questions. We did visit that community board in May of this year and we're happy to go back so you know the outreach will continue to meet all of these goals.

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CHAIRPERSON ABREU: You have any specific  
examples of what that outreach and education program  
is going look like?

JOSH GOODMAN: Absolutely, I mean we've talked,  
for example, about textile programs right and the  
fact that the e-cycle program is already available  
and the e-cycle and refashion programs are already  
available to all buildings with ten or more units.  
We are planning to do substantial, direct door to  
door outreach about these programs to help foster  
participation as part of Local Law 88 of '23. Uhm,  
and that would be one example of something that's  
coming up in the year ahead.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Will DSNY leverage, reuse,  
repair and stop in SWMP events achieve these goals?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Absolutely, yes.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: What are some miles- thank  
you for that Commissioner. What are some milestones  
that DSNY must reach in order to reach the 30 percent  
diversion rate by 2036?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: With the citywide organics  
program collection rolled out around the city, we've  
sort of hit a major milestone there. Uhm, we will  
need to continue the outreach and education that we

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spoke about as well as our community recycling events that are part of the plan. Essentially pursuing all of the 126 strategies that we've outlined are part of the way that we're going to get there, so it's not just one thing.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Does DSNY plan on going back to a fining structure for composting?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: I would say that enforcement never stopped as part of the organics program and we've been continuing to do boots on the ground, door knocking outreach to residents in support of getting higher participation rates, everyone familiar with the program. So, that remains part of our approach.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: I thought the fining did stop?

JOSH GOODMAN: No Mr. Chair. Fines were refocused on the sort of worst repeat offenders, large buildings that had received multiple warnings. They did continue all through the spring, summer, and fall while moving into a more direct outreach and education phase for smaller buildings, first time offenders, that kind of thing.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Do you have a number on like how many fines were issued or -



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JOSH GOODMAN: Uhm, it's in the dozens. Uhm but  
can also add that as part of this process, we knocked  
just shy of 800,000 doors, 797,191, held 83 info  
sessions, a total of 1,400 in person events that  
included organics outreach.

So, enforcement has continued against the worst  
offenders while doing substantial work to take at  
people who just need to learn a little bit more, the  
access to the information that they need.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: What reporting and granular  
open data will the DSNY commit to provide, so that  
the public and the Council can see progress in  
community groups, can assist in this ambitious goal  
of 30 percent diversion?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: In addition to the data on  
open data that we provide for tonnage collected by  
material stream in each sanitation collection  
district, which by the way I think is pretty amazing  
data. Uhm, we produce these reports as mentioned  
earlier, the biennial reports to DEC. The 2023 and  
2024 report that was just posted to our website is  
253 pages of information about our programming. So,  
we feel proud of the amount of information we share

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about the work that we're doing. That's where I  
would start.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: The Department has changed  
the public facing open data set, DSNY monthly tours  
data in July of 2025 to report a combined residential  
collection plus institution of collection tonnage for  
refuse, MGP paper. Will the Department disaggregate  
this data as has been requested by a variety of  
groups including the SWABS?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: We acknowledge that  
question. It has been submitted to our planning  
group and to the Department. We have taken the  
initiative to understand the heart of the question.  
At the same time, although the SWMP doesn't  
contemplate collection logistics, it's certainly  
something the Department is continuously evaluating  
and looking for efficiencies in.

Based on our investigations, it appears that our  
collection operations have changed such that the data  
sets we previously reported are no longer collected.  
So, it's not necessarily the decision not to share  
data, it's a decision based on our change in  
operations but the exact same data sets are no longer  
available but we are going to respond in writing to

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this question since it has come up a couple times as  
you noted.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Is there an operational  
challenge to disaggregating the data you already  
have?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: It's more about the way the  
trucks are running and what routes are being combined  
and what material types are being combined on one  
truck.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Alright, are there materials  
that are presently designated recyclable materials  
that the city has trouble with repurposing or  
selling? If so, which materials?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Our contracts that require  
the eventual recycling of material collected, put the  
onus on that market access and marketing of materials  
on the vendor. So, it's not directly DSNY's  
jurisdiction, however, we work closely with Sims  
Municipal Recycling that handles the bulk of material  
and certainly they share with us challenges around  
film. You know we collect a lot of our materials in  
plastic bags and that can be a more difficult  
material to find and users for.

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CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Any other materials that come  
to mind like that?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: That's the primary one.  
Some of the different plastic polymers, uhm are less  
reliable to market then say milk jugs and water  
bottles, which have a pretty steady demand.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thank you. What efforts will  
the Department take to assess and measure if  
containerization is negatively impacting diversion in  
their full recycling or organic participation rates?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: In order to effectively  
monitor the impact of containerization on diversions,  
we must rely on the Waste Characterization Study.  
The last one was from 2023 and we have another one  
that we're gearing up for. Thanks to the Council  
bill this year. Yes, yeah, 2024. So, we will use  
that information to - and we may even be able to  
study the areas where containerization is being  
piloted and lay on some specific sorts to better  
answer that question. Certainly now, we can use  
citywide averages to see how that is performing in  
those districts but it would obviously be even more  
informative if we had very specific data to those  
areas.

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CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Is DSNY considering a  
commercial waste recycling enforcement program?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: We have a commercial  
recycling enforcement program already but I'll let  
Deputy Commissioner speak more about that.

JOSH GOODMAN: Thank you very much. We do  
enforce commercial waste recycling now. One of the  
great features of the Commercial Waste Zone program  
though is that for the first time ever it will cost a  
business less to dispose of their recyclables than it  
does to dispose of their trash. It won't just be the  
stick anymore; there will be a carrot as well that  
they will save meaningful amounts of money by  
properly recycling.

With that that, we do right summonses for failure  
to properly sort commercial recyclables and it's a  
good opportunity to mention as we've done at eight or  
ten hearings or so, that the city's law about  
commercial organics enforcement is woefully out of  
date. Local Law 146 of 2013 is a relic of another  
time that is completely out of step with the  
successful residential organics program. So, we  
would once again plead with the Council, please give  
us the ability to enforce more commercial recycling.

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JENNIFER MCDONNELL: And as it relates to that piece of legislation, we would also emphasize the importance of prioritizing donation of edible food from commercial establishments as a preferred end of life management to recycling that as compost or digesting it.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: The SWMP highlights community led reuse and recycling events. What are some current examples of these events that New York City residents can make use of and where do they take place?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: We have a program of community events, one in each district. Kate, would you like to share more about those?

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Each Council District?

KATE KITCHENER: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Community district?

KATE KITCHENER: So, in compliance with Local Law 88 of 2023, we offer 59 community recycling events, one in each district. We had a couple of events just this past weekend. One at College of Staten Island, one at Park Slope. We have a number of events coming up in January. You can go to our website at [nyc.gov/recyclingevents](https://nyc.gov/recyclingevents) to see the full list.

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JENNIFER MCDONNELL: And that's another data set in our biennial reports where we share where each of those events happened.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thank you Commissioner.

Pilot programs for repair and reuse events - oh I think I already asked that question. My apologies.

In the absence of state level extended producer responsibility, has the city explored a mattress reuse or mattress donation program? What are some obstacles presented by this type of programming and what are some of the ways the city can address these concerns?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: DSNY has worked with NYCHA on a program that they initiated for a mattress recycling pilot. Logistically, the program has been very successful and we've discussed both with NYCHA and the company that's providing the service of recycling about how we can look to expand that program. Certainly, a program such as statewide EPR would really help that move forward because the cost of managing the mattresses outside of the regular solid waste system are exponentially higher.

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So, we need to justify an alternative approach to this material and certainly having funding from an external source would help.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: And my apologies if this was already covered by the 2026 draft plan but does the Department, is the Department willing to expand its mattress reuse or mattress donation program as part of the next plan?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Certainly, we would like to expand it. We'd have to receive funding or otherwise find alternative vendors who have a lower cost option for recycling these outside of the solid waste system.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: For purposes of enforcement, how does DSNY determine whether a business is required to recycle its textile waste? What does this enforcement look like?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: This is something that we've identified as an area we would like to dig into further as part of the next SWMP, and it's one of our specific commitments under the commercial program. Understanding what percentage of a waste stream, again is a waste characterization study, and what's challenging is the time period over which you sample



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and analyze that data. Certainly, you can't do it on a real time, all the time basis and a waste stream from an industry may fluctuate over time, so we've identified this as an area where we can improve our methodology and therefore the diversion of textiles from the commercial sector.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: What obstacles has the city experienced when advocating in Albany for broader, extended producer responsibility of batteries?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Certainly, rechargeable batteries and lithium ion batteries in particular have become a real challenge for our industry and it permeates every waste stream because we find these batteries in so many products, even greeting cards. So, we've been uh hit by that challenge of just there in every waste stream, so how do we come up with a system and a program that addresses their pervasiveness throughout our solid waste system?

We have a number of options available to residents for the safe takeback and the statewide program does cover some but not all rechargeable batteries. In fact, there is a bill that was sent to the governor today for her signature to expand that

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legislation to include e-bike batteries, which are  
not currently covered in the EPR program.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Did she sign it? We don't  
know.

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Not as far as we know.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Maybe as long as I run for  
governor next. I'm kidding. Uhm, Garver Recycling  
program; what is the current practice for recycling  
carpets?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Oh carpet, yes. This is  
another EPR extended producer responsibility program  
that was passed at the state level. So, this is  
rolling out around the state as we speak. DSNY is  
engaged in the implementation as a major stakeholder  
and we're - Kate Kitchener here is representing us  
and helping to develop what we call a convenient  
standard for the city. So, how do we make a program  
that's accessible and convenient for all New Yorkers?  
In this case, statewide to help recover carpet.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: What are the safety  
precautions in place to contain any harmful material  
that may be generated during the carpet recycling  
process?

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JENNIFER MCDONNELL: We may need to get back to  
you on that.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: I'm not sure I know the  
answer to that.

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: This is a new program for  
the state. As far as I understand, most of the  
recycling may not be happening in state. The  
aggregation, right, the collection aggregation will  
be happening as part of the EPR program. I don't  
believe the EPR directs the recycling to happen in  
state. So, it could be in another jurisdiction and  
we would need to understand where that is and gain  
more information to adequately answer that question.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thank you. Has the city  
identified potential sites for a public venue  
container reuse program?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: We have not identified  
specific sites but we have identified that that's  
something that we'd like to try and we've included it  
in the next SWMP.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: That's great. Alright, now  
moving on to organic waste. I told you we have a lot  
of questions. The SWMP highlights plans to  
collaborate with community organizations to operate a

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composting facility on DSNY property in Gowanus. Can you please give us some additional details about this plan?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: This is a facility that was constructed by virtue of some other city uhm projects. Uhm, we had a salt pile, DEP was doing some stormwater infrastructure, so we were able to also develop a small - a mid-sized compost facility on this site in Gowanus in Brooklyn and we'll be working with Big Reuse to start operations on this facility hopefully next year to compost right there.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: That's great and what is the expected capacity for this facility?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: 200 tons per year. I believe it will be a registered facility with the Department of Environmental Conservation, not a permitted facility.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: And you said it will be operational by next year?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: We hope. We have to - they have to finalize the registration. We have to finalize some agreements between the city and the operating partner.

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CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Has the city identified other sites for this similar type of collaboration?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: We have not identified specific sites, although again, in the Solid Waste Management Plan, we've made a commitment to convene a group of stakeholders on this to look at organics processing capacity overall, not just composting.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: We'd love to see more of this. What percentage of source separator organics collected by DSNY must be landfilled due to contamination?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: That really depends on the time of year and the area where the material is being collected. Right now, is our high leaf season, so our contamination rate goes down is the percentage of overall collections. On average, over the year, across all of our contracts and locations, it's on par with other urban programs, around 20, 25 percent.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thanks for answering that question. What engagement is DSNY doing or planning to do to bridge the gap between tenants in multifamily buildings and building owners regarding residential organic waste recycling?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Josh will -

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JOSH GOODMAN: Yeah, thank you Mr. Chair. We've done really substantial outreach around this program including uh when it first started rolling out in Queens at the end of 2022 and continuing really up to the present. We're in the next couple weeks going to hit 800,000 doors knocked. We've held 83 info sessions on this. We gave away 190,000 free brown bins. We've issued over 40,000 warnings and also, you know created the uh first ever 311 service request for tenants whose buildings are not providing access to compost as required by law. So, you can call us, you can let us know, hey I live in an apartment. I want to compost; they're not letting me. DSNY enforcement agents will come by and pay special attention to that building.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Are you seeing that compliance is higher in buildings with tenants versus -

JOSH GOODMAN: You know interestingly the highest performing districts do have a large number of single family homes. Actually, Staten Island does incredibly well on a per capita basis but we're seeing growing compliance in participation in multi-

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family buildings. In particular in Manhattan and  
Northern Brooklyn.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: I'm sure the advocates will  
have their piece to share on that very shortly. I'm  
looking forward to hearing from them on what we  
believe the city needs to do with that.

When will DSNY restart residential enforcement of  
source separator organics? I know you mentioned  
earlier that -

JOSH GOODMAN: It never fully stopped.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: But how do we get to the full  
implement - is there an intention to implement  
against everyone?

JOSH GOODMAN: There is. Uhm, as you know  
recycling has been mandatory for about 20, 25 years  
in the city and there was a similar learning period.  
In fact, I think that the organics enforcement period  
has been handled much better than recycling  
enforcement was in the late 90's when the program  
stopped entirely. It came back, went, left and all  
this stuff. I also would note ahead of talking about  
enforcement that we just hit three weeks in a row of  
record breaking tonnage, right? What we're doing now  
is working. Looking forward to hearing more

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certainly from the Council and the advocates about what to do to improve those numbers. But three weeks in a row of the highest participation ever in this program. With that said, we have uh expressed previously that the legal requirement to source separate compost to a material is likely to go back into effect citywide at the start of the new year.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: How much - I'm going now to co-digestion of organic waste at waste water resource recovery facilities. How much money has DSNY and DEP spent to date on building or expanding co-digestion sites outside of New Town Creek?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: I think it's important to talk through the steps required for co-digestion to begin to answer that question. So, unlike a compost facility where it's typical that the actions to complete the beneficial use are contained in one site. With co-digestion, the material may need to make multiple stops to be able to be prepared for co-digestion.

So, for example, in the program we are running now with DEP, the material goes to the Varick Avenue Transfer Station that's owned and operated by Waste Management. That's where it is made into a slurry we



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call it, smoothy maybe if you will. It's a pumpable form of the organics that are then delivered to New Town Creek and inserted into the digestors at the Waste Water Resource Recovery Facility.

In order to do that, there needs to be infrastructure on site at the Waste Water facility as well as infrastructure to utilize the biogas that is produced. So, the investments made to enable the current program were largely made by the private sector and by DEP. So, questions about expanding the program would likely go to DEP.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: So, you don't have any insights on how much money has been spent?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: I do not.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Okay, I would like to say we've been joined by future Council Member Justin Sanchez from the Bronx. He is in the back. I'm excited for his involvement on sanitation issues in the next term. He cares deeply about the issue.

And what further spending is planned over the next five to ten years? Is that also a question for DEP?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: It is, yes.

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CHAIRPERSON ABREU: The SWMP mentions the city's earlier assessment of a waste water resource recovery facility on Rikers Island. What is the expected timeline for the establishment of this facility?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Certainly, that timeline is dependent on the closure of Rikers Island, which is something that will be addressed by the next Administration.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Approximately, how many tons of organic waste could this facility process each day?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: The proposed facility at Rikers Island has not been developed to that level of specificity. At this time, I believe it's a concept of how the island could be repurposed as a new benefit of infrastructure to the city.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Is it the Departments hope that this facility is followed through on?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Certainly, the opportunity to find space for new infrastructure is a unique opportunity. So, I think the Department would welcome any opportunity to consider underutilized space in the city for resource recovery infrastructure.

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CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Now, I'm moving on to transfer stations. The Transformed Owned Trash Coalition published a report, which stated that approximately 75 percent of privately managed waste is still trucked in and out of just five of the city's 59 community districts. What programs or facilities will the Administration focus on to more fairly distribute the burden felt by these five community districts to other areas around the city?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: So, these areas were addressed in Local Law 152 of 2018, also known as the Waste Equity Law, which reduced the permitted capacity at transfer stations in these districts. Uh, and these reductions have been fully implemented uhm for example, the permitted capacity in Brooklyn Community District 1 was reduced by 50 percent, in Queens Community District 12 in Bronx Community Districts, 1 and 2 by 33 percent. And we really are looking at the commercial waste zone program implementation as a way to reduce the commercial waste truck traffic by an estimated additional 50 percent citywide, we fully implanted. We've talked a lot about that program today.

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CHAIRPERSON ABREU: As part of the 2006 SWMP, the city prepared an environmental assessment to allow commercial waste to be tipped at DSNY Marine Transfer Stations. However, DSNY has maintained that too much time has passed to rely on that environmental assessment for present considerations of this type of policy. Does DSNY plan to start accepting commercial waste at marine and rail based transfer stations overnight to reduce diesel truck traffic in overburdened communities?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: We've spoken about this opportunity a couple of times today. The only thing I'd add to what DSNY has previously shared, is a little more information about the pricing and this is one of the key elements we will need to poke at as we understand the viability of this opportunity. Right now, we believe that private sector tipping fees as we call them at transfer stations are say \$100, maybe \$120 a ton whereas to deliver waste to the marine transfer stations would cost \$200 or more dollars a ton. So, the question is going to be, will there be private entities willing, able, interested in paying a tip fee at that level for the use of the transfer stations?

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CHAIRPERSON ABREU: And I think you already answered no to this before but just for the record again, does DSNY have any sites in mind for the construction of new marine transfer stations?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: No, we do not.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Is there an alternate plan to barge recyclable waste from Manhattan since Gansevoort was not used as planned?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: There is not an alternate plan. Although we do consider to export all of the paper from Manhattan through the West 59<sup>th</sup> Street Marine Transfer Station.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: The SWMP states that the city will consider siting renewable energy facilities at Fresh Kills and Edgemere Landfills. Can you elaborate more on those, on what those sites might look like and when they might take form.

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: The first example of this is the solar feasibility study that is underway right now on the Edgemere Landfill, which is you know the Rockaways in Queens that we are conducting in coordination with DCAS and NYPA to see what the viability is of installing solar panels on that facility. From there, we will look at opportunities

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at Fresh Kills in the context of the larger long term plans to make that - repurpose that facility to benefit New Yorkers.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: My last set of questions are on education and outreach. So, I'm assuming this if for you Commissioner Goodman. Uhm, the SWMP highlights ongoing efforts and upcoming plans to leverage enforcement as a form of education and outreach. Can you provide information about the past successes or failures of similar efforts?

JOSH GOODMAN: Absolutely, thank you Mr. Chair. Certainly, we think that the use of enforcement as an education tool around organics has been very successful. We're hitting breaking tonnages, seeing massive participation, because we're partnering traditional outreach programs and education programs with enforcement where uh people are really held accountable for failure to participate in necessary zero waste programs.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Can you speak to the successes or failures?

JOSH GOODMAN: Well, I think it is very successful and that it's you know led to these record breaking tonnages.

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CHAIRPERSON ABREU: What about the failures?

JOSH GOODMAN: Failures, I mean, you know failures of enforcement, I don't know that there have been any obviously. We think that uhm, you need to use every tool at your disposal to get the word out there and know that you know this is a law and order focused Council that's been very interested in providing us with the tools that we need to - the SWMP does not focus on collection operations but to get the bags off the street, to continue to support diversion and also, to sort of bold this into design best practices. You know we removed a lot of the barriers to entry when it comes to organic separation in this version of the program and when you talked about diversion related to the Empire bins earlier, right, the bins are sized based on trash set out. So, repeated overflowing is something that would trigger an enforcement investigation and potential action beyond that.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: The SWMP mentions ongoing efforts to conduct neighborhood walkthroughs with community partners and elected officials to observe area conditions and applied targeted outreach. How

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many of these neighborhood walkthroughs has DSNY  
conducted to date?

JOSH GOODMAN: Yeah, appreciate that. I know  
this is uh - I believe it's an issue of 124 of 126,  
so back at the back of the SWMP. SWMP is a  
commitment about what we will do over the next ten  
year period, however, we do conduct walkthroughs more  
than one per week on average at the request of  
Council Members, community groups, and community  
boards as well as individual residents. They're  
happening on a near constant basis at community  
request. We don't pick the neighborhoods. You  
request that we come in.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: So, it's on a request basis,  
not on a proactive basis?

JOSH GOODMAN: We will go out and do walk  
throughs if we think that there's something that we  
need to see but generally speaking, the instigation  
for a walkthrough is that someone says like, you know  
Council Member Banks said I have this site that has a  
lot of illegal dumping, right? So, one of the things  
we would do about that report is arrange a  
walkthrough.



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CHAIRPERSON ABREU: I'll say that anytime  
requested a tour, I mean, you all have done that but  
the question is, if it's proactive versus you know in  
reaction to the requests, so.

JOSH GOODMAN: And I guess I'll just clarify -

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: I'd like to see a more  
proactive side to things.

JOSH GOODMAN: I think that's very reasonable.  
We, when we talk about a walkthrough, we're generally  
talking about something done by our civilian policy  
staff or engagement staff. We also - we wouldn't  
think of it as a walkthrough but I think this gets at  
what you're asking. Our sanitation supervisors,  
which there are hundreds working a day, have an  
assigned area where they're supposed to observe and  
report conditions.

So, we wouldn't - when we wrote Initiative 124  
about walkthroughs, we weren't thinking about that  
but I do think that gets at what you're asking about  
and certainly we can talk about ways to tie those  
together more closely.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: For the record, can you speak  
to which neighborhoods were visited and how these

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neighborhoods were chosen, and also which  
neighborhoods are being prioritized in the future?

JOSH GOODMAN: Well, on just general all topics,  
we conduct neighborhood walkthroughs absolutely  
everywhere. I mean I've been on them with dozens of  
Council Members in just the last year or so and uh, I  
don't think that there's neighborhood prioritization  
at all. It's a tactic we use citywide.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Are there any upcoming  
walkthroughs that we should be aware of?

JOSH GOODMAN: I could take a look at my calendar  
and see what we got coming up this week. Uh, we have  
I mean I see one in Brooklyn CB13. I see one in  
Brooklyn CB2. I see one uh at PS7 on 120<sup>th</sup> Street.  
So, they continue in an ongoing way wherever  
necessary.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Okay, I would like to see  
more of a proactive engagement then like just -  
because you know a lot of times elected officials and  
community groups, they can be very, very busy. It  
doesn't mean that they should be you know not being -  
it still means that they should still be getting  
those walkthroughs regardless, so. As long as

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there's a systematic approach to this, I think that  
that would be very helpful.

In terms of legislation enforcement, in the draft  
plan there is the following statement in Attachment B  
regarding the impact of legislative solutions on  
waste reductions and diversion. In Attachment A  
Local Laws relevant to waste management, New York  
City's Department of Sanitation capacity to enforce  
those laws is limited. Will the Department consider  
expanding on this by providing analysis specifically  
to the degree it can and cannot enforce each of the  
legislative solutions listed in Attachment A and why?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Certainly, we took an  
inclusive approach to the legislation listed in that  
attachment and some of it is actually not at our  
jurisdiction, meaning it could be state legislation  
that we're referencing such as the plastic bag bin,  
some of the EPR programs that we've talked about.  
So, in those cases, we are not the enforcement  
action. At the same time, for those that are under  
our jurisdiction, certainly there are some that are  
more difficult for us to enforce such as the Skip  
That Stuff Bill that the Council has passed. Where

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it relies on reporting by folks whose stuff wasn't  
skipped to let us know so we can investigate.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: And will the Department  
consider this is an area requiring attention before  
submitting the draft to DEC?

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: No, I think it's reasonable  
and understanding that each of us has our own  
jurisdiction and limited resources to conduct  
enforcement.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Alright, this panel is hereby  
excused. Thank you very much.

JENNIFER MCDONNELL: Thank you Chair. Thank you  
Council.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: We're going to be taking a  
two minute break as I have to run to the restroom.  
[BREAK 01:52:09-01:54:16]. I now open the hearing  
for public testimony. I remind members of the public  
that this is a government proceeding and that decorum  
shall be observed at all times. As such, members of  
the public shall remain silent at all times.

The witness table is reserved for people who wish  
to testify. No video recording or photography is  
allowed from the witness table. Further, members of  
the public may not present audio or video recordings

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of testimony but may submit transcripts of such  
recording to the Sergeant at Arms for inclusion in  
the hearing record.

If you wish to speak at today's hearing, please  
fill out an acceptance card with the Sergeant at Arms  
and wait to be recognized. When recognized, you will  
have two minutes to speak on today's hearing topic.  
Engagement for the city's 2026 Solid Waste Management  
plan. If you have a written statement or additional  
written testimony you wish to submit for the record,  
please provide a copy of that testimony to the  
Sergeant at Arms.

You may also email written testimony to  
[testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov) within 72 hours of this  
hearing. Audio and video recordings will not be  
accepted.

I will now call the first panel, Celeste Perez,  
Justin Wood, Eric Goldstein, and Rhonda Keyser. You  
may begin.

CELESTE PEREZ: Okay, is it working? Okay, yeah,  
okay. Uhm, good morning. My name is Celeste Perez.  
I'm with the New York City Environmental Justice  
Alliance. Uhm, we also go by NYCEJA. NYCEJA is a  
citywide membership network linking grassroots

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organizations from low income neighborhoods and communities of color in the struggle for environmental justice. NYCEJA is also a founding member of the Transformed Owned Trash Coalition, a long standing coalition of environmental justice, labor and climate organizations working to transform our city's sprawling Solid Waste Management System.

In New York City, while the total amount of waste handled at private transfer stations has decreased since Local Law 152, the current solid waste management system is still an ongoing environmental injustice, in which five community districts handle nearly 24 waste facilities, while there are 45 community districts that have no waste facilities at all. These communities have historically had the highest rates of asthma, such as North Brooklyn, the South Bronx, which is where I'm from and also suffer from asthma and the Southeast Queens according to the city's compliance, City Comptrollers Audit report on Fair Share Compliance.

The Solid Waste Management plan for 2026 should commit the city to move forward with the unfulfilled strategy of the last SWMP of using municipal marine transfer stations to accept commercial waste, which

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environmental justice communities have long advocated for. DSNY reports have estimated that fully implementing the Marine Transfer Stations would decrease truck traffic associated with commercial waste collection by 50 percent citywide as measured in vehicle miles traveled, reducing both the number of trips and the length of collection routes or commercial waste.

An Environmental impact statement for the 2006 SWMP was conducted to evaluate plans to accept 3,772 tons of commercial waste collected by private haulers at four distinguished marine transfer stations during overnight hours.

However, the Permit and Tonnage Data Release has shown that several marine transfer stations still handle way less than their permits allow ultimately delaying the relief to environmental justice communities. Thank you.

JUSTIN WOOD: Good morning Chair Abreu. Thank you Committee Council and Members of the Committee. We want to thank you not only for holding this hearing but for all the work you've done to advance waste reduction and equity and climate justice over the last four years. It's been a pleasure.

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My name is Justin Wood. I'm the Director of Policy at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest, also a member of the Transformed Don't Trash New York City Coalition. We'll be submitting detailed comments prior to the January deadline on the 2026 SWMP. So, just wanted to highlight a few themes that will inform our comments.

Similar to Celeste's comment, we'd really like to see this SWMP fulfill the unfulfilled promises of the current SWMP in terms of waste equity. The Environmental Impact Study for accepting commercial waste at marine facilities was already completed 20 years ago. It's on the record. Uhm, we'd also suggest that a further study is legally necessary that it be completed as commercial waste zones are rolled out and note that there are two zones that either contain or are adjacent to marine transfer facilities, rolling out over the next two months. So, we think there's a real opportunity to make these improvements and pilot this program as this critical program is rolling out.

Similar to members of the Council, we'd like to see a faster timeline for commercial waste zone rollout. We heard today it won't be completed until



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2028. We think this is a critical foundation for waste reduction, safety, worker justice. It's a highly successful program and its huge potential, so we'd like to see this timeline accelerated now that DSNY has it down and is rolling these zones out one by one.

Another thing we'd like to stress is the need in the SWMP for long term and stable funding sources for all of the waste reduction, recycling, composting programs, that we support in the proposed SWMP and you know too often over the last 20 years, we've seen the huge damage that sort of year by year budget cuts and increases and fluctuations do to public behavior and New Yorkers learn behaviors around recycling.

So, we'd like to see uh, the next, the incoming Mamdani Administration, the City Council, the entire city's state legislative delegation and DSNY really aggressively advocate for funding sources from the state, especially as the federal government has completely advocated its responsibility to fund renewable energy and infrastructure. There's a huge opportunity for Governor Hochul and the state to step in with funding streams like the long overdue Cap and Invest program that was mentioned today. Like

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extended producer responsibility programs and in the immediate future, the Sustainable Futures Fund that legislators are talking about.

So, we'll detail all this and more and thank you very much for the opportunity to testify today.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thank you. Sergeants, can you add - can we get three minutes instead? And if anybody wants to add anything else, you may add another minute.

ERIC GOLDSTEIN: Good afternoon Chair Abreu, unheralded Council Staff. Eric Goldstein from the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Transformed Owned Trash Coalition. We appreciate your leadership in calling this important hearing. We're going to summarize our written testimony. There's much that is welcome in this Draft Solid Waste Management Plan. It contains a wealth of data and information presented in one place and giving a comprehensive picture of the city's waste handling system. It embraces the states waste management hierarchy, which places waste prevention at the top and it includes more than a handful of ideas, which if fully implemented could make New York City's waste disposal system more sustainable.

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So, we acknowledge the good work that Jenn McDonnell and Kate Kitchener and the DSNY staff have done on this but in the first Council session focusing on the Draft SWMP, NRDC offers three preliminary thoughts on how the city can obtain maximum benefit from this once in a decade opportunity to make New York Solid Waste Policy more sustainable, more cost effective and more supportive of the residents and neighborhoods throughout all five boroughs. First, it makes sense to ensure a broad and fair and far reaching process for participation, review, and submission of this draft plan to the DEC as required by state law.

We want to emphasize the importance of providing the public and the members of the Council with sufficient opportunity to comment on the draft and have their ideas incorporated into the final plan. Such an approach is mandated by state law, which requires that local SWABS shall, "address to the maximum extent practicable, the comments and views expressed by concerned governmental, environmental, commercial and industrial interests and the public on waste prevention, recycling, reuse, and disposal alternatives.

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We think it will be impossible to submit a final plan by the end of January to the state and we don't believe that that's required by law.

Second, we're concerned that the draft plan in its current form, while comprehensive in the subjects it includes has a commitment problem. It mentions many of the appropriate issue areas but fails to provide the necessary departmental commitments to make change happen. Too often, the action items that are set forth in the draft schedule use words like, study, explore, collaborate, or consider. This is not the fault of DSNY staff necessarily that prepared the draft but presumably by decisions made by administration officials to prepare a plan that keeps in too many instances the Department options wide open. But the purpose of a SWMP is to drive policy forward and provide definitive action items that will achieve the goals of the state's hierarchy, the mandates of the city's zero waste law and other mandatory, statutory and sensible objectives that have been set forth by the City Council over the years.

Third, a word about the role the Council should play to ensure that the final draft SWMP achieves its

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1 full potential. To accomplish that objectives, we  
2 hope the Council will hold a substantive hearing on  
3 the details of the DSNY Draft in early 2006. After  
4 the 2026, after the members of the public and the  
5 Council staff have had sufficient staff time to  
6 review the draft. We believe that such a Council  
7 hearing will illicit valuable suggestions for  
8 sharpening and tightening the final product.

9  
10 We hope that the Council will then be given  
11 sufficient time to review these comments and  
12 incorporate the best of them as amendments to the  
13 final plan. That's exactly what the process that was  
14 followed in 2006. We hope that there are elements of  
15 the 2006 plan that still need to be enforced but we  
16 know the Council has this authority and we believe it  
17 should use it. I can't let the earlier composting  
18 testimony stand without saying three quick things.  
19 There are three major problems with what we've heard  
20 today. One, a weakened and odd approach to  
21 enforcement. Two, the fade to advance sufficient in  
22 city composting capacity. And three, a wrong headed  
23 and deceptive practice of organic code digestion with  
24 sewage slush. We'll talk about those more in our  
25 written comments.

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And finally, we hope that you Council Member Abreu, will continue as Chair to play a vital role in the development of the final SWMP but regardless of whether you do or not, we want to thank you for your leadership on SWMP, on community composting, commercial waste zones, litter clean up, waste equity and containerization. You've done a great job and we hope it continues. Thank you for your attention.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: You're too kind Eric. We don't know what the future holds but certainly, I've had an incredible time working with all of you and we've done some good things and whether it's me or someone else, we'll see. We want to keep on the important work that you guys are carrying out. Rhonda.

RHONDA KEYSER: Uhm, hello Chair Abreu. Thank you so much for this opportunity to testify today. Uhm, I, of course you know I'm Rhonda Keyser and I'm here today speaking on behalf of cafeteria culture as program and policy director and just to remind everybody, we are an environmental education organization and our students become climate leaders in their own school cafeterias by taking action there and they've sparked systemwide change that scales

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quickly across New York City, the largest school district in the country and to other districts, uhm school districts. So, we help to catalyze - we helped in the past to catalyze the elimination of Styrofoam trays in schools and also we started monthly plastic free lunch day, which because of their students work around plastic free lunch day, school lunch service on regular days have reduced from 5.7 pieces per student to 1.8 pieces per student in just two years of plastic free lunch day, so it's really changing procurement and it's changing daily practices.

So, that's the kind of scaling that we like to do and now we're scaling, piloting systemic food waste reduction. We've uhm, in five pilots, we've reduced overall food waste by 50 percent but increased student consumption by 15 to 46 percent. Uhm, just by allowing students to choose what they want to eat within the USDA guidelines. These numbers show that it's not about scarcity or austerity, it's about agency. Uhm, and uhm so as we looked at food waste, our students mapped the journey of trash and also the journey of the brown bin that was going to co-digestion. And after considering the truck traffic

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and other environmental harms for each of these waste streams, our students wanted to disrupt these systems and so they now, our community composting one day a week in their cafeterias by taking their food scraps to compost powers polo grounds site and it's about 50 to 100 pounds a week. So, we're measuring that now.

We walk that over Tamere(SP?) is here, our new environmental justice fellow, thanks to NYSERDA and uh he walks it over and our students participate in breaking down the food scraps in different phases of the process. And we're noticing a reduction in contamination of organic stream on other days in the cafeteria as students have gained more agency in their food scraps processing.

So, we hope to continue piloting local composting for schools in other parts of the city to once again scale this waste reduction and the harms of processing organic waste and we urge the Council to pass, Councilwoman Nurse's Intro. 696. That prioritizes composting over co-digestion and we hope that DSNY will consider community composting as a viable option and not just a little boutique community effort but an actual way to process food waste.



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CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Well, thank you all for your testimony. It is my hope and expectation that there will be more public hearings like this so that we can keep you know raising the alarm on this issue. And to Eric's point to, right the non-committal language that we're seeing, you know may versus do, may versus shall. As an attorney, I'll tell you those are big differences and may as permissive and shallow requires right? So, we need more shallow language for the things that we do need and so, appreciate this panel for testifying. Whatever those gaps are that we want to see you know filled in this plan does make it a big priority; I keep making it a big priority. When you submit your testimony, please let us know. We're going to read it. We believe very much in the Transformed Owned Trash Coalition, so thank you very much.

On the next panel, we have Gustavo, Dr. Samantha McBride, Lacey Tauber, and Justin Green. Dr. McBride, I saw you nodding your head or in disappointment the whole time. Looking forward to hearing about it?

Alright, we'll start off on this side.

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GUSTAVO ALCOCER: Thank you so much. Good afternoon and I just before I wanted to start by saying thank you for the questions that you've been asking because I think that it's been reflecting a lot of what I am here to also highlight, so I wanted to just show appreciation for that first.

Good afternoon. My name is Gustavo Alcocer and I am here on behalf of the Ironbound Community Corporation. This is a community based nonprofit, based in Newark New Jersey with more than 50 years of environmental justice leadership.

Ironbound Community Corporation strongly urges the Solid Waste Management Plan to commit the New York City Department of Sanitation to true waste diversion. New Yorkers need and deserve a waste system that prioritizes recycling, composting, organics, separation and waste prevention.

At the same time, DSNY must move away from contracting within cinerators outside New York City especially We World in Newark Ironbound Community. Export New York City trash to environmental justice neighborhoods is not a solution, it's an injustice.

I'm going to talk briefly about the Ironbound, which is already one of the most over polluted

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communities in New Jersey. Every day, our residents  
breathe the air shaped by the communitive impacts of  
the east coast largest waste water treatment plant,  
hazardous waste facilities, heavy industry, airports,  
port operations, diesel truck traffic, and more than  
100 bound field sites. And at the center of this  
pollution, burden sits at We World Essex, New  
Jersey's largest garbage incinerator [INAUDIBLE  
02:13:37] peoples homes.

This specific incinerator is one of the highest  
of mid air of toxic pollutants in the entire state  
and has logged over 800 air permit violations since  
2005, including burning and authorized medical waste  
that send pink and purple smoke into our  
neighborhood.

When this incinerator burns trash and this  
include Manhattan's trash, toxic chemicals like  
dioxins are released into the air our families  
breathe. Manhattan sends 100 percent of its refuse to  
incineration and 66 percent of that goes through We  
World Essex. This displacement of bad managed waste  
to the incinerator located in the Ironbound must  
stop. That is environmental injustice and  
environmental waysism. DSNY's current contract

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guarantees more than half a million tons of waste a year to this facility through 2032. That number must go down not up and the city must plan to phase out and end, not renew this contract in 2033. We demand a clear plan to do this and for it to be communicated to effected communities.

New York City has an enormous potential for waste diversion, the recycling captured rate is under 20 percent. Curbside composting participation remains low, even though it is already collected on the cycling base. Enforcement of existing law is minimum. These mean more waste and being burned in the air Ironbound. Waste that could be composted, recycled, or prevented entirely. ICCR just ask DSNY to follow the leadership of the transformed owned trash in New York City coalition and adopt the people SWMP, including stronger investments, widespread education, better enforcement, expanded diversion programs, and a clear commitment to phasing down incineration and landfilling.

And when I say clear commitment, the Ironbound demands the DSNY to show us their plan to do this. The SWMP 2026 is an opportunity for the DSNY to do better. To reduce waste that it's sourced to rely

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less incineration. To rely less on incineration and  
to ensure that no community on either side of the  
Hudson River is forced to sacrifice itself for New  
York City's waste system. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thank you. Dr. Samantha  
McBride.

DR. SAMANTHA MCBRIDE: Samantha McBride from  
Baruch College. The Draft SWMP succeeds as a system  
description and it is to the credit of Deputy  
Commissioner McDonnell and Director Kitchener that it  
outlines what our waste management system looks like  
probably better than any plan before it. But the  
plan does not address at all how diversion is going  
to be improved specifically in the area of recycling  
and even more important in organics.

Residing a litany of numbers of doors knocked,  
mailers sent or meetings held is a 30 year old  
talking point of the Department of Sanitation. What  
is needed is an actual plan, a plan that looks at the  
number of field outreach staff that are needed. The  
specific plans to go into specific community  
districts and neighborhoods and conduct building  
level outreach that is going to address the  
challenges of multiunit buildings. To have metrics

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that can be tracked over time in terms of funding, as you were talking about, as well as staffing capacity. What I have heard today is more of the same. More of ad hoc, vague, kind of statements about outreach and education.

The stakes could not be higher. Specifically for organics and recycling. We are sending 1.8 million tons of otherwise valuable material to landfilling or disposal. We're paying to do that. We're paying to trash materials that we are also paying a lot of money to collect and process.

The low hanging fruit in New York City is recycling and organics and in no way are organics participation rates currently breaking records or soaring and as soon as the reduced utility dataset for this month is complete, I will be able to evaluate these claims of weekly record breaking and put them in accurate context.

This kind of braggadocio in place of actual planning and statistics tracking is not helping anyone and you do have the capacity within sanitation already. You have highly skilled analytic staff, as well as Director Kitchener and Deputy Commissioner McDonnell are people that actually care about

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sustainability. They care about communities. They care about social justice. They are operating I think, they haven't said anything to me, within constraints from others in the department that are preventing real progressive ideas from actually being implemented. I'll stop there.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: If you would like to add on another 30 second you can.

DR. SAMANTHA MCBRIDE: Uhm, well just one factoid. Uhm, last year, we sent 275,000 tons of paper, one of the highest valued commodities to landfills or incinerators. Despite having long term contracts and weekly collection routes and that paper by the departments own numbers, valued over \$3 million in market value. Now that's, I know that that's chump change for the Department of Sanitation, but that amount of chump change was cut for community composting. And that's just one example of how fiscally wasteful, under participation in recycling and organics is in addition to not being sustainable and leading to the problems that my colleague has talked about among others.

LACEY TAUBER: Alright hi, my name is Lacey Tauber, I'm the Legislative Director for Brooklyn

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Borough President Antonio Reynoso, former Chair of this Committee and I think the best use of time for me right now is just to go through; I've submitted like as a draft of what we want to submit to Sanitation but you know we want to hear more from folks. And I want to thank the Council and the SWABS for stepping up where sanitation has failed to make this space for us to hear each other's comments and you know talk this through because yeah, we echo your calls for way more engagement but in the meantime, just want to kind of run through our outline and what we're including. And invite folks to reach out if there's things that you think we missed.

The first two things are waste equity and commercial waste zones. These are legacy programs for the borough president and he's obviously extremely invested in their continued success. But as was pointed out, you know in terms of waste equity, we really need to be sending the commercial waste to the Marine Transfer Stations. We have some concerns about the waste equity impacts of sending a lot of our organics to be processed at New Town Creek in terms of the amount of trucks it's putting on the road in Community District 1 in Brooklyn. We have a



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number of other concerns about that that we outlined in the report earlier this year making the case for passing Intro. 696 that we will share as an addendum to our comments and uh in terms of commercial waste zones, really wanting to see it rolled out more quickly as has been mentioned many times today.

And also encouraging the new administration to look at their - the way that the waiting happened in the choices that they made and make sure that you know the folks are good actors and they're being held accountable through this process.

The last part is really all about waste diversion and really trying to get to the goal of zero waste to landfills by 2030 that was outlined by the previous administration enforcement of the Corp act, containerization that incorporates both organics and recycling. NYCHA, bringing meaningful opportunities for organics diversion to NYCHA, uhm, reduction of plastics. Building what they've done in cafeteria culture, C&D waste, actually put in an idea in here I got from you Justin about possibly requiring zero waste plans for building. Uhm and then uh finally of course supporting community compost. So, that's all I've got in here for now. If there's other stuff

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that you all want to see, please reach out and we'll  
continue talking. Thanks so much.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thank you Lacey. Justin.

JUSTIN GREEN: Thanks for having me Chair Abreu.  
Things have been great working with you and City  
Council. You guys have really you know made so much  
progress and helped push DSNY on sustainability  
issues over the last over a year, so really  
appreciate working with you.

I wanted to second so much of what's been said by  
the advocates. Ban on incineration, extending the  
input on the Solid Waste Management plan, pushing the  
Solid Waste Management plan to actually commit to the  
highest sustainability practices, more EPR, which you  
brought up in your questions and C&D waste. Like a  
focus on C&D waste.

Uhm, the topic I want to talk about and we'll put  
more in in our testimony but is particularly what we  
are doing with the organic waste that we're  
collecting, the curbside composting.

As you know, most of it is going to co-digestion,  
which is problematic. There are a lot of concerns  
with the biosolid application - land application of  
biosolids from the co-digestion and if we're not land

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applying it, the climate accounting sort of tips back  
towards composting. You know and so this is what I  
think part of the climate accounting uhm, efforts is  
to push the co-digestion over composting by doing  
land application but land application has a number of  
concerns. [INAUDIBLE 02:24:49], high microplastics,  
high in hundreds of other chemicals have been poured  
down drains around the city and flush into the sewer.  
So, we want to ideally continue what New York City  
has been a leader on which is local composting, Fresh  
Kills, DSNY is doing an amazing job at Fresh Kills  
with composting in Staten Island. All the community  
composting groups that have been out there modeling  
hyperlocal community based composting. Our sites  
that we're about to open in Gowanus, which you asked  
about. Uhm, midscale site, we're opening up a site  
in Central Park. We'd like to have you come out and  
look at for helping the park compost their  
landscaping waste and so kind of using that approach.  
I know the SWABS been working on and you guys have  
been working on a plan for local composting in which  
we would really like to see the Solid Waste  
Management plan focus on that.

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Certainly, over incineration but co-digestion is not the best use of our food scraps and something we should really look at. So, appreciate that thank you.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: How's the planning going for the Gowanus site?

JUSTIN GREEN: So, it's been a - it's a complicated construction project, so it's taking a while for it to happen, some tariff interference to maybe on steel but we're almost ready to open up again, which is exciting.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Looking forward to that.

JUSTIN GREEN: Yeah, we'll have you out too.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thank you.

JUSTIN GREEN: Great and Central Park; I want to get you out to see that.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: I would love to visit Central Park; the Central Park work too. You got it. Thank you guys. Next panel, Matthew, Danielle, Mary Ellen, and Susan.

MATTHEW CIVELLO: This is on right? Yeah, okay. I'm Matthew Civello, Chair of the Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board and I'd like to thank you Chair

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Abreu for holding this meeting today and giving this opportunity to speak.

Uhm, now that the SWABS have time to review the Draft 2006 Solid Waste Management plan, we believe that the gaps we have identified cannot be adequately addressed by the middle of January of 2026.

DANIELLE: After reviewing past and current SWMPS, waste characterization studies, and decades of related laws and plans, our preliminary assessment is that the draft lacks the continuity and historical context needed to demonstrate alignment with City Council laws or with prior efforts to increase capture and diversion.

MARY ELLEN SULLIVAN: Hello, I'm Mary Ellen Sullivan and despite nearly 35 years of work, the city has not meaningfully improved recycling outcomes. Research shows that roughly two-thirds of New York City's waste stream is recyclable or compostable through curbside programs that already exist citywide. Yet today, we're capturing only about half of potential recyclables and just seven percent of organics.

As a result, more than 1.6 million tons of valuable material are still sent each year to

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landfill and incinerators despite weekly collection,  
processing contracts, and decades stated policy  
commitments.

At the same time, most of the strategies proposed  
to reach the SWMP's 30.5 percent diversion rate by  
2036, such as textiles, reuse and repair programs,  
organic pilots and community composting are not new.  
Many date back to the 1980's and 1990's and only a  
small number of these laws enacted to support  
diversion have shown measurable results.

DSNY itself acknowledges its limited capacity to  
enforce many of these requirements.

DIOR ST. HILLAIRE: Good morning Chair. My name  
is Dior St. Hillaire and I Chair the Bronx Solid  
Waste Advisory Board. So, our review also makes it  
clear that DSNY is not structured to drive  
sustainability. It strengths by an operations  
collection rooting personal management and  
enforcement, which are critical for implementation  
but not for a system transformation.

I just want to make it very clear that a lot of  
times as you've seen Justin kind of came into the  
room, the Bronx is also left out of the conversation

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when we're talking about these diversion numbers and  
when we're talking about equity.

So, I think it's important that when we're  
talking about a plan, we're actually we have to  
remind them to include the environmental justice at  
the end of the slide when they gave it to us. It is  
important to understand that we have to be working  
directly with the organizations that are affected by  
these issues. There in the clear plan that says  
that, so I just want to emphasize that as we are  
including spaces for our constituents to weigh in on  
this plan, that we actually weigh that contribution  
and know that we have to support a lot of the folks  
that are affected by it.

SUSAN LATHAM: And hi, Susan Latham. I'm the  
Chair of the Queens Solid Waste Advisory Board. As  
part of our review, the SWABS hosted public sessions  
and hearings to hear directly from communities  
disproportionately affected by New York City's waste  
exports. We heard compelling testimony about the  
economic, environmental and health impacts borne by  
communities referred to in the draft simply as  
accessible capacity.

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New Yorkers deserve a plan that makes clear that most trash is unnecessary, that practical alternatives exist, and that real progress is achievable. For these reasons, the SWABS recommend that at least six additional months are needed to adequately assess and respond to this plan.

We thank you for the opportunity to testify and look forward to providing further public comment in 2026.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thank you. We will next have Audrey Jenkins to testify.

AUDREY JENKINS: Good morning. Thank you for having me this morning. My name is Audrey Jenkins; I'm a doctoral candidate at the new school. We're a research public empowerment, an urban social ecological policy, and I'm currently focused on organics management in New York City.

I'm testifying today to highlight how valuable the Solid Waste Management plan is for addressing inequities that are growing in our city.

Although I'm not here representing my employer, I'm currently a research associate at the Center for New York City Affairs, where our most recent economic and fiscal findings highlight that New York City



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metro area has been most racially inequitable economy  
among the top metro city areas in the country.

We have the largest gap between White and Black  
unemployment for example with Black workers  
experiencing 8.6 unemployment rate as of this current  
quarter.

That rate has increased dramatically along with  
other cities. We've seen a dramatic increase over  
the past year with federal defunding and economic  
uncertainties. Designing a waste system that centers  
equity is critical. This matters both for the  
distribution of waste impacts and recycling  
opportunities but is also important in the  
distribution of investments.

The Institute for Local Self-Reliance has found  
that per 10,000 tons of organic materials, community  
composting generates 6.2 jobs compared to only one or  
two jobs in industrial or organic processing. We  
know from decades of practice here in New York City  
that these community composting jobs are quality and  
impactful jobs. Community composters are community  
builders, so they are never just collecting and  
processing and distributing organics, they are also  
teachers, social connectors, innovators,

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environmental stewards, often also directly involved  
in urban agriculture and local food system  
sovereignty and resilience and highly effective  
promoters of organic waste separation and  
participation.

Additionally, community composting provides a  
rich set of professional, technical and social skills  
building that are particularly accessible to youth  
workers as they start to enter our workforce. A  
population that is facing the highest rate of  
unemployment currently at 11.4 percent.

Hyper local and publicly funded community  
composting in short is an incredibly simple way to  
help address multiple complex city problems from  
social isolation to environmental stewardship, while  
also offering an opportunity to invest directly in  
our neighborhoods in the form of livable jobs.

The Solid Waste Management Plan currently  
highlights the layered economic potentials for  
textile and other resource recovery streams but the  
same should be included for organics. But more  
critically, the Management Plan should center  
economic equity.

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Uhm, the plan currently highlights inequities and waste and pollution exposure and the importance of meeting the requirements of the waste equity law. The plan should ensure that neighborhoods with particularly high volatility and sensitivity to political and economic conditions, historically Black and Latinx communities in New York are able to retain resources like organic materials in their neighborhoods and receive investments for managing those resources, for the many economic, social, and ecological benefits that they offer.

The city administration currently spends \$215 million on exporting of units and \$21 million on organic separation and processing. The City Council, thankfully, has currently invested a little over \$6.25 million for community composting.

What is needed is a serious increase in community based organics management. Because funding has not been intentionally allocated for equity in the most economically impacted communities. The Solid Waste Management Plan is an opportunity to take a strong stance in favor of making organics and other waste stream investments equitable by maximizing the use of these raw materials for local community use including

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ensuring that land access for processing and good jobs are distributed explicitly in terms of economic equity. And with an intentional effort to promote the multi-impact outcomes of community based management. Thank you so much.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thank you so much for your testimony. Alright, I believe we have some folks online ready to testify. Okay, give us one second, we're moving on to Zoom testimony shortly.

Mary Arnold, are you ready to testify? Are you ready to begin?

MARY ARNOLD: Yes, I am sir.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Alright, please proceed.

MARY ARNOLD: Thank you. Thank you Chair Abreu for this opportunity to testify. I'm a Co-Founder and Board member of Civic United for Railroad Environmental Solutions, which was founded in Queens in 2009 to advocate for modernization of freight rail in the MTA's right of way. [INAUDIBLE 02:37:39] of DSNY Bureau of Long Term Exports set up the city's waste by rail contracts. This new industry has grown exponentially and attracted to international investors, notably McQuerry(SP?).

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Today's city and private haulers waste by rail tonnage comprises more than one-third of all rail freight traffic on Long Island. The 2026 Draft SWMP in this morning's testimony brag about DSNY's waste by rail export or the actual impacts on residents as a result of using rail.

First of all, changing export transport modes from truck to rail doesn't do anything to reduce the tonnage or toxicity of waste exported or adverse impacts on residents in communities where waste is hauled, processed, incinerated and landfilled. As noted by speakers today, the 2026 Draft SWMP's vague language does not set forth plans to mitigate these problems.

Second, while waste by rail does eliminate trucks that export waste from the city, waste is always brought to waste by rail transfer station by trucks. So, in every place where there is a waste by rail transfer station or diesel trucks coming and going. Also, noisy, high polluting 1970's locomotives are used to haul waste by rail.

In addition, even when rail is used, the last mile also can be by truck, such as the We World incinerator in Chester Pennsylvania. Other

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communities burdens include rail cars hauling cans of  
municipal solid waste that can stink up neighborhoods  
and attract vectors. Waste characterization study  
show that one third of this could be eliminated.  
It's organics. Rail cars without solid covers on top  
and with drains on the bottoms to the rail cars are  
used to haul crushed construction demolition debris  
that New York State assumes contains toxics, such as  
asbestos, pesticides, volatile and semi-volatile  
organic compounds and heavy metals. There is no  
reason why the public should continue to be harmed by  
these uncovered rail cars.

Since the New York State Law went into effect in  
January 2024, that requires solid covers on rail cars  
of C&D. However, the industry has decided to fight  
about state law mandating covers in federal court.  
The southern district of New York and Judge Ronnie  
Abram says that the trial will take place in 2026.

The plan needs to be rewritten to include  
specific plans and a timetable for increasing the  
capture and diversion of organics as well as specific  
plans to accurately track C&D and recycle it. For  
example, by diverting gypsum wallboard construction  
debris from waste by rail to landfill.

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Thank you so much again. There's just - this is a huge plan and there just hasn't been enough time or engagement allowed. We just are so grateful to the City Council and please continue this dialogue in the coming months. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thank you for your testimony. We're now moving on to Anna Sacks.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

ANNA SACKS: Hi everyone. Thank you for having me. I would like to echo that I think we need more time for this, specifically to get more people commenting, more people aware that this is even happening. This is going to last for a long time and so, I think it deserves a lot of attention from the public and a lot of public input.

Regarding the waste prevention and reuse program, I feel like they get lost within DSNY. It's not core to their mission and it feels like there's not enough people devoted to these issues about prevention and reuse, which is the top of the hierarchy. They don't have enough resources, not enough money and also, it doesn't feel like they have enough agency to make the changes that they know are necessary to actually take a meaningful bite out of the waste, our waste issues.

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And then finally, they're subject to budget cuts a lot. Again, because I feel like this is not core to DSNY's mission. So, I would like to propose that the waste prevention and reuse gets carved out from DSNY. DSNY just focuses on operations and it comes its own office or department of circularity. So, that it would be people devoted, people with agency, people with budget, and not subject to future budget cuts.

So, this could work across schools, corporations, residents, and within the government and it would also shift the language from may or study to actually doing the things that are necessary. So, really I would like to see its own office, its own department and not within DSNY. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thank you Anna. Clare Mifflin, you're up next.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

CLARE MIFLIN: Hi, thank you Council Member and for everything you've done as Chair.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Nice to see you Clare, thank you.

CLARE MIFLIN: I just want to point out that building an infrastructure and the collections



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methods are critical for diversion and you need to incentivize the right set up in buildings, like currently, it's difficult for your underpaid porter to do the right thing. He has to start - he or she has to store trash just a couple of days but recycling an organic waste all week and in a large building, storing that organic waste all week is really tough.

There's no financial incentive for building owners. It's not like Local Law 97 and trash only containerization just continues that disincentivization. Many residents in small buildings, they don't have access to recycling organic bins, maybe there's a trash bin on the sidewalk. So, you could fix that through shared on street containers for trash recycling and organics and getting bins off the sidewalks.

I really think what needs to be done is kind of piloting solutions that really work for buildings in a neighborhood and like Samantha said, go in with a lot of engagement, pilot better, incentives, and infrastructure and see if you can get like way above the 50 percent capture rates. Can you get - how high

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can you get? And then roll it out further. I think  
there needs to be this kind of systemwide approach.

I also would like to see financial support for  
parks and NYCHA who have a lot of yard waste to work  
with community composters to compost onsite and then  
use it to improve stormwater management and talk with  
DEP about how it can be part of stormwater goals.

I'd like to see baselined and increased support  
for community composting within DSNY's budget, even  
though it's great you've been doing it, it shouldn't  
be something that has to be rethought every year.

I'd like to see for food scraps, then target  
large generators first like, when McDonalds or Hunts  
Point Produce Market don't separate food scraps,  
should we be fining a little mom and pop for not  
doing it? Let's make the big generators do it first.

Commercial waste zoning has reverse incentives.  
From the whole point of view, they're going to charge  
less for compostables but it costs them more, so they  
don't help the businesses separate. That needs to be  
fixed, and also the businesses have to have a  
container. They often have it inside, so they have a  
trash bin on the street. They don't want to have an  
organics bin as well.

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1                   So, that disincentivizes them. So, commercial  
2 waste zone is not surprising that it didn't increase  
3 the diversion rates in Queens because that's  
4 disincentivizing, happening. I think waste  
5 prevention and reuse is great but there needs to be a  
6 lot of collaboration. What if libraries could share  
7 way more than books? Collaboration with DOE.  
8 There's got to be a lot of collaboration with other  
9 entities in the city. Uhm, C&D waste as well, I  
10 think you know they need to have more certified C&D  
11 facilities and a requirement for them to be used for  
12 city projects.  
13

14           Those are facilities that actually -

15           SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you. Time expired.

16           CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Clare, you can finish. You  
17 can add if you need to Clare.

18           CLARE MIFLIN: That's all and then the data, I  
19 fully support Samantha's. We need data. We need to  
20 have proper evaluation of the pilots, like the  
21 containerization pilot beyond reduced 311 rat data.  
22 I haven't heard any real evaluation. If we're going  
23 to do pilots, let's evaluate them fully. Thank you.

24           CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thank you Clare, you raised  
25 great ideas. Next, we have Christopher Leon Johnson.

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Yeah, yeah hello. My name is Christopher Leon Johnson. Thank you Shaun for having this hearing. Like bro, like don't worry about anything man, like you're going to be still the Chair and the Committee next year and you're voting for Julie Menin to be Speaker. Like, she's not removing you as Chair, so there's nothing to worry about you being removed as Chair for the next term.

But I want to make this clear that the City Council needs to make it where that uh - I know that the City Council allocated \$5 million into the BID's for the containerization program because uhm, I think they were scared about a lawsuit or them losing votes but I hope in 2026 or the FY27 budget that there's people and going on where that the City Council allocates more money and millions of dollars into the containerization program. Because like I said many times and I'll say it till I die, that the containerization program is an unfair program and why that you had to have like one - you have to buy one container. I think that the city - I know you can't change what's going on with the containerization where you - but the BID's, the BID's need a lot of

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help but I hope that very soon, the people that make  
low income get the same amount of help too when it  
comes to the program and uh with the City Council. I  
think the City Council needs to make it where that if  
a person makes a certain amount of money per year,  
they will get a free bin with the help of the City  
Council. They get vouchers and stuff like that  
through the City Council. And uh, so, that's all I  
got to say. I got to go to events; I got to go to  
train but thank you Shaun. You did a great job as  
the Chair for the past four years and I think you'll  
be able to keep your term; you'll get another term.  
So, take care brother, enjoy.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thank you Mr. Leon Johnson.  
I know you're sometimes a lot busier than all of us.  
You're always everywhere. Take care.

CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Thank you. Thank you  
brother. Thank you, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: You got it. So, now we're  
going to just wait for the kids to testify. They're  
ready, alright. These are the students of Cafeteria  
Culture?

STUDENTS: Yes.

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CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Okay, look at this. Well,  
I'm excited for you guys. Let's see, how many do we  
have? We have one, two, three, four, five, six,  
seven, eight, nine, ten. Give them 30 minutes sir.  
Uhm, you may start whenever you're ready okay. We're  
all hearing you and paying attention.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You guys may begin.

PSMS46 HARLEM 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADERS: Good morning. Thank  
you Chair Abreu and the Sanitation Committee for  
giving us this chance to speak today. We are 5<sup>th</sup>  
graders from PSMS46 in Harlem.

The ten year Solid Waste Management Plan is very  
important to us, because in ten years we'll be  
adults. We'll be responsible for the problems that  
are being created now. We live in an Environmental  
Justice Zone in Harlem with a lot of truck traffic.  
Garbage trucks come through our neighborhood on their  
way to incinerators and landfills.

Cafeteria Culture taught us that there is no  
"away" for our trash. We learned that when our trash  
leaves our homes or our school, it goes to a nearby  
waste transfer station, then to Staten Island, then  
to Newark, New Jersey, and then finally, it goes on a  
train to Niagara or Delaware to be burned in an

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incinerator. The leftover ashes go to a final  
landfill somewhere else. All of that transportation  
creates pollution and the incinerators create  
pollution, and the landfills make greenhouse gases.

This hurts the planet and the people who live  
nearby. One in four kids has asthma in Newark or New  
Jersey because of the incinerator there. Kids just  
like us get asthma for life because of something out  
of their control. This cannot go for another ten  
years. We have to disrupt this harmful system.

The other option we have is the brown bin, which  
is better than trash bins, but there are still are  
many trucks taking the food waste to a lot of places.  
And we don't even have brown bins at NYCHA houses.  
With Cafeteria Culture and Compost Power we take our  
food waste out of this system and we compost it  
locally at NYCHA Polo Grounds. It's less than one  
block away and...NO TRUCKS!

Compost Power at Polo Grounds makes compost out  
of our food scraps. And they hire our neighbors to  
work there and we think everybody should be able to  
compost their food scraps in their communities too.  
The Solid Waste Management Plan needs to include  
local composting across New York City to make healthy

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soil, to grow food, and cut down on all pollution for  
all communities. Thank you for listening.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Wow, let's give them a round  
of applause.

[APPLAUSE]

Well listen, you guys should be very, very proud  
of yourselves. You - are you ready to take my job?  
You ready to be the next Council Member?

PSMS46 HARLEM 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADERS: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: I think you guys are ready  
and look, this is why we invest in Cafeteria Culture.  
I remember when we're fighting to expand the  
composting initiative, you know Eric Goldstein and  
Anna Sacks approached us and said, "you know what  
Cafeteria Culture. Let's put them as part of the  
initiative." And we spent \$500,000 in making sure  
that we're educating our young people and boy, I  
think you know more about composting than I do at  
this point.

And so, this is an example of why it's so  
important that the city needs to keep investing in  
our kids and I'm very proud of you all. I hope to  
meet you all one day. I would love to visit your  
class and so, we'll set that up with Rhonda, okay?



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Thank you everybody. Now, go back to class okay.

Take care.

PSMS46 HARLEM 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADERS: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thank you. Bye, bye. This  
is by far my favorite hearing I've ever had just  
seeing those kids. They really made me melt, thank  
you. And with that, we have adjourned today's  
hearing. Thank you all so much for coming.

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 7, 2026