

**Testimony of  
Commissioner Gregory P. Anderson  
New York City Department of Sanitation**

**Hearing before the New York City Council  
Committee on Sanitation & Solid Waste Management  
Monday, April 6, 2026 at 10:00 A.M.**

**Finalizing the City's Draft 2026-2036 Solid Waste Management Plan**

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Good morning, Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management. I am Gregory Anderson, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Sanitation, and I am joined by Jennifer McDonnell, Deputy Commissioner of Solid Waste Management and Katherine Kitchener, Executive Director of Resource Recovery. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in front of this committee today.

I can't tell you what a privilege it is to start my second tour with the Department of Sanitation, and to be before you as Commissioner of an agency that serves every New Yorker by collecting and processing 24 million pounds of waste each day.

As a young person coming to this Department at the start of my career, I thought I knew what that entailed. I thought I knew what it meant to pick up the trash, to sweep the streets, to fight snow – and, pursuant to the topic of today's hearing, I thought I knew what happened next.

But back then, I was like most New Yorkers; I had little idea just how much work, how much meticulous planning, how many late nights and early mornings go into every single part of this operation.

I quickly learned that "Strongest" is more than just a name, and that this Department includes many people whose strength goes beyond the physical. The people of DSNY are strongest in mind, in heart, and in care for their communities.

And the trash doesn't just disappear when they get it off the curb. Collection is only the beginning of a labyrinthine journey through transfer stations, through materials recovery facilities, on trains and barges, and on to final reuse, recycling, and disposal facilities.

I have often said that the parts of my career of which I am most proud are the times I've been able to stand shoulder to shoulder with Sanitation Workers, tradespeople, IT staff, and everyone else at this agency, but the fact is that we have so much more to do. New Yorkers depend on us, and they expect us to do more than just repeat what has worked "well enough" for decades. The City is changing, and we must change along with it, in both the parts of our work that they see and the parts that take place behind the scenes.

That is the goal of the solid waste management planning process, though 2026 is far different from 1992 and 2006.

### **Historical Context**

In the past, solid waste management planning in New York City has been an exercise in crisis response.

From the 1970s into the 1990s, Mayors and Sanitation Commissioners tried to rapidly adapt to changing regulatory landscapes and public perceptions around outdated waste management approaches, including ocean dumping, unregulated incineration, and barely regulated urban landfills. These conditions led to the 1992 Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP), which included the City's then-novel curbside recycling program, several new materials recovery facilities (never built), and the construction or retrofit of several "modern" waste-to-energy facilities (also never built) across the five boroughs. This plan served a single purpose: to extend the life of Fresh Kills landfill into future generations, a goal that was quickly changed.

The 1996 mandate to close the Fresh Kills landfill by the end of 2001 created another, more significant crisis, one that led to the 2006 SWMP. The Fresh Kills landfill was the last option for in-city disposal of the millions and millions of pounds of waste generated in homes, schools, businesses, and elsewhere daily, and its closure was catastrophic for other parts of the city. This waste had nowhere else to go. In just a decade, over a hundred transfer stations opened in a handful of marginalized and disadvantaged communities in the South Bronx, North Brooklyn, and Southeast Queens that together saw thousands of new daily truck trips and the health and safety challenges that come along with them. The closure of the Fresh Kills landfill, a well-intentioned endeavor, to be sure, created one of New York City's most significant environmental injustices of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

That 2006 SWMP was a groundbreaking attempt to correct this wrong and create a sustainable, reliable, and resilient residential waste management system in the post-Fresh Kills era. It called for the conversion of older, outdated marine transfer stations into modern facilities to containerize waste for long-haul transport by barge and rail. It called for several new enclosed rail-based transfer stations that would use the city's then-flagging freight rail network. It called for the construction of a state-of-the-art materials recovery facility (MRF) that would accept much of the city's recyclables by barge and export many sorted products by rail. These new facilities would stabilize a beleaguered recycling program, substantially reduce the number of trucks that travelled through overburdened neighborhoods, and create a reliable, though costly, forward-looking program for waste management.

Unlike the 1992 SWMP, the 2006 SWMP today has largely been implemented to plan. Its implementation required over \$1 billion in new capital investments and the siting of several very controversial new facilities. It took a decade and a half — three-quarters of the plan's planning horizon to realize. In my ten years with the Department previously, much of my time focused on

realizing the goals of the 2006 SWMP: building new, more modern facilities, despite intense opposition; reducing transfer station capacity in overburdened neighborhoods; and expanding recycling programs and driving diversion rates upward.

Today, our solid waste management system continues to face challenges, including rising costs, the existential threat of climate change, dwindling regional waste disposal capacity, and global forces that dictate trends in waste generation and markets for reclaimed materials. However, our waste management system today is sound. It is reliable. It is resilient. It is not perfect, but it is far more sustainable than those of the past.

We have one of the most inclusive curbside recycling programs in the country, and the Sunset Park MRF continues to innovate on sorting and reclamation technologies. We are among a handful of cities in the U.S. that can claim true circularity in our paper economy, as recyclable paper and cardboard is remanufactured into new cardboard on Staten Island. We have the largest mandatory curbside composting program in the nation, one with tremendous growth potential. We export the overwhelming majority of residential curbside trash collections not by truck but by rail or barge, the only major city in the country to do so. In sum, New York City has some of the most comprehensive and sustainable residential solid waste programming in the country. And we are implementing hard-fought comprehensive reform of our commercial waste industry, a process that will be completed next year.

That is the context in which we started four years ago to create the next iteration of New York City's Solid Waste Management Plan, SWMP26, the very plan that we are here to discuss today.

### **Regulatory Context**

State laws and regulations lay out a regulatory framework that governs the creation of a new SWMP. The document has been carefully tailored to these requirements and guidance from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC).

It has been close to 20 years since the City of New York last submitted a solid waste management plan. In that time, the waste stream and waste management industry have noticeably evolved, and the State has clarified and updated the requirements for solid waste management plans.

Before we discuss the details of the draft SWMP, I would like to emphasize two points: first, state DEC regulatory requirements have evolved significantly since 2006, notably requiring a 10-year planning period rather than a 20-year planning period, and secondly, that while the SWMP provides a framework for diversion and efficient waste management systems, the City can and must pursue specific programs that are not contemplated in this document. This is, by design, a beginning rather than an end. Our record here speaks for itself: neither universal curbside organics nor commercial waste reform 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.

### **Our Future: SWMP26**

DSNY's rich history of evolution, continuous improvement, and innovation lays the foundation for this next solid waste management plan that we are proud to put forth to guide future progress in waste reduction and 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.

This SWMP is built upon an extensive analysis of the current conditions, the first chapters documenting in detail who generates how much of what materials, where they go, and what the end-of-life options are for managing them. From that foundation, coupled with DEC's alternative analysis requirements, the SWMP identifies eight key program areas to achieve continued progress in waste reduction, increased recycling and a path towards zero waste. Of the progressive and ambitious commitments, organics diversion remains a top priority, most importantly continuing to increase participation and recovery rates across generators citywide. We will investigate how we can leverage new equipment to better separate contamination from collected organics, encourage the donation of edible food, and plan strategically for future processing capacity.

In addition to the full implementation of the Commercial Waste Zones Program by the end of next year, this SWMP dedicates an entire program to the reduction, diversion, and recovery of construction and demolition debris, a first for this waste stream. Most importantly, Waste Reduction is the leading program, the area with the most potential to truly reduce the amount of material discarded, and the associated costs and logistics of managing it. Finally, underpinning these future-focused goals is an unwavering commitment to the robust and resilient system in place today. The future DSNY envisions with this SWMP 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, this solid waste management plan is designed to facilitate the steady transformation of materials management citywide.

### **Public Engagement and Feedback**

We began formal outreach for this SWMP in 2024, starting with City agencies that, in partnership with DSNY, make up the planning unit responsible for implementing SWMP26. DSNY has conducted outreach with elected officials, including with current and former members of this Committee and Borough Presidents, and engaged with dozens of interested parties and

stakeholders, including the borough Solid Waste Advisory Boards (SWABs), the NYC Climate Leadership Group, the EJ Advisory Board, and the “Transform Don’t Trash NYC” Coalition, among many others. In response to requests from stakeholders and members of the Council, DSNY extended the public comment period to 105 days, 60 days beyond the 45-day review period required by DEC. The public comment period ended in January 2026.

Through the public comment process, DSNY received more than 800 individual comments in 62 submissions that cover around 300 topic areas. DSNY has made multiple updates to the draft plan based on these comments, additional input from collaborating agencies, and corrections and clarifications identified internally. Following these updates, DSNY submitted a revised draft to DEC for review last month, and DSNY is working with our agency partners to provide written responses to all comments received, which will be included as a further attachment to the plan later in April.

Looking ahead, we will make another round of edits to the draft Plan based on DEC feedback, which we expect to receive by July of this year. We plan to submit the final plan to DEC this fall before moving on to the real work — implementation.

The work of implementing this plan will double down on the collaborative approach DSNY has taken in creating it. The 124 initiatives identified in the draft SWMP require the creation of at least six standalone stakeholder committees or working groups that will persist well beyond the approval of the final SWMP. Moreover, I personally commit to an inclusive, responsive, and adaptive approach to the implementation of this plan, and my door is open to any and all parties with interest, ideas, and criticisms related to planning for waste management in New York City.

#### Introduction 355

Turning to Intro. 355 sponsored by Council Member Nurse, which would expand composting by requiring DSNY to adopt a rule to require City agencies to source separate organic waste produced through meal service or institutional feeding. DSNY strongly supports this bill and continuing to increase the amount of organics separation happening throughout the city.

Thank you for your interest in the Solid Waste Management Plan. I am thrilled to be back in front of a much-changed Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management, and I look forward to answering your questions.

**Testimony of Dennis Schock**

**President, Uniformed Sanitationmen's Association,  
Local 831**

**New York City Council Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management  
Oversight – City 2025-2026 Solid Waste Management Plan**

**Council Member Justin Sanchez  
Chair  
April 6, 2026**

Good afternoon, Chair Sanchez and to the other members of the Committee and thank you for the opportunity to address you today.

My name is Dennis Schock and I am the President of the Uniformed Sanitationmen's Association, Local 831, and I look forward to working with you all.

I am here today to ask the City Council for its help addressing deeply rooted and chronic problems with critically needed renovations and maintenance to our garages, repairs to hundreds of aging trucks and other equipment, and cuts to essential training programs.

As this committee knows, our members work very hard. But our mission of collecting, recycling, disposing of waste, cleaning city streets and vacant lots, and clearing snow and ice is seriously compromised without proper attention and funding being paid to the resources we need to do that work.

The New York City Department of Sanitation (DSNY) operates one of the largest municipal fleets in the country, responsible for collecting 24 million pounds of waste daily and maintaining street cleanliness citywide.

Many of our garages and facilities are in urgent need of repair, renovations, and some are unsafe and close to being condemned. Indeed, I had our business agents put together a list of nearly 20 garages, across all 5 boroughs, in need of major repair and renovation.

Garages and Facilities in Need of Repair/Renovation or Should be Condemned

- Staten Island Garage 01, 539 Jersey Street
- Brooklyn South Garage 13, 2012 Neptune Avenue
- Brooklyn North Garage 09, 690 New York Avenue
- Manhattan Garage 03, Pier 36 South Street
- Manhattan Garage 06, Pier 36
- Manhattan Garage 08, 4036 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue

- Bronx Garage 09 and 10, 850 Zerega Avenue
- Bronx Garage 11, 800 Zerega Avenue
- Bronx Garage 07, 2383 Blackrock Avenue
- Bronx Garage 08, 800 East 176<sup>th</sup> Street
- Queens West Garage 01, 34-28 21<sup>st</sup> Street
- Queens West Garage 06, 58-73 53<sup>rd</sup> Avenue
- Queens East Garage 11, 75-05 Winchester Avenue
- Queens East Garage 13A, 153-67 146<sup>th</sup> Avenue

In addition, DSNY's current fleet performance demonstrates critical failure rates across multiple essential vehicle types, significantly impacting daily operations, worker efficiency, and public sanitation conditions.

### NYC Sanitation Fleet Failure Report & Operational Impact

Our out-of-service numbers shows that nearly 1 in 3 trucks are unavailable in key categories – this is well below operational expectations and indicative of systemic maintenance and repair delays. Specifically:

- 28.4 percent of collection rear loaders out of service
- 30.6 percent of dual bin collection trucks out of service
- 28.4 percent of street sweepers out of service
- 22.5 percent of roll-on roll-off trucks out of service

The result is routes are overloaded and collections are delayed, and sanitation workers, who are forced to double or triple work output, experience an increased risk of injury and fatigue.

When older trucks are pushed harder and longer, breakdowns occur more frequently. Delays in repairs lead to work inefficiencies and increased costs, not to mention worse service output. In short, nearly one-third of critical vehicles are down, and core services are severely compromised.

### NYC Sanitation Fleet Aging Report – Over 8 Years Old

We rely heavily upon a large fleet of collection vehicles to maintain daily operations across the city. Industry standards and city guidance dictate that collection trucks have an optimal service life of approximately 8 years, after which maintenance costs and breakdown rates increase significantly. Operating these vehicles beyond this lifecycle leads to reduced liability, increased downtime and declining service efficiency.

A significant portion – 1 out of 3 rear loaders and over 4 out of 10 split body trucks have surpassed the recommended 8-year replacement cycle. Specifically:

- 29.1 percent of rear loader trucks are aged out
- 41 percent of split-body trucks are aged out

This also directly impacts collection delays, worker productivity, snow removal, and operational delays. Since a substantial portion of NYC's sanitation fleet is operating beyond its lifespan, we are finding increased breakdowns, lower fleet availability, and higher repair costs.

To maintain operational effectiveness and public service standards, the department needs to accelerate fleet replacement cycles, increase capital investment in new vehicles and equipment. Failure to do so will continue to degrade service performance, increase costs and strain our workforce.

#### Widespread Failure of Bayne Tippers and Unacceptable Repair Delays

There is also widespread failure and repair delays to our fleet of Bayne tippers. Bayne tippers are the hydraulic cart lifters, which automatically lift cans and dump them into the trucks. Currently, 30 percent of these units are non-operational. This level of equipment failure is unacceptable and reflects a breakdown in both maintenance oversight and response time.

These numbers do not address the malfunctioning units that, despite mechanical defects, are forced into service thereby forcing sanitation workers to manually lift heavy loads and risking preventable injuries to our workforce.

#### Snow Removal

DSNY relies on a highly specialized fleet of snow fighting equipment to maintain safe and passable roadways during winter storms. The operations are critical as DSNY is responsible for clearing approximately 19,000 lane-miles of city streets and ensuring mobility for emergency services, public transportation and daily commerce.

This task would be extremely difficult under ideal conditions with all snow fighting equipment functioning at maximum capacity. But we are not, and much of our equipment is down or out of service. Specifically:

- 7.1 percent of salt spreaders are out of service
- 19.3 percent of haulsters are out of service
- 40.7 percent of front-end loaders are out of service
- 5.5 percent of flow and dump units are out of service

All of this equipment is crucial to snow fighting. Salt spreaders are the first line of defense in any snow operation, deployed at the initial sign of frozen precipitation to prevent ice from bonding to street surfaces.

Haulsters are essential for servicing narrow residential streets and hard-to-reach areas where larger plow trucks cannot operate. With over 19 percent of them down, it limits our ability to maintain secondary and tertiary routes, delaying full citywide snow removal.

Front-end loaders play a critical post-storm role by removing accumulated snow and loading into melters or transport units and supporting salting operations. With over 40 percent of these units out of service the Department faces significant delays in snow removal, pile reduction and overall storm recovery operations.

Flow and dump units are responsible for hauling snow and supporting large-scale removal operations. While the percentage of the down is small, any reduction impact the efficiency of our clearing work.

DSNY's snow response depends on a coordinated approach of salting, plowing and hauling, but the current level of equipment downtime presents several operational risks:

- reduced coverage of residential and narrow streets due to haulster shortages;
- severe backlog of snow removal operations caused by the high number of front-end loaders out of service;
- extended recovery periods following major storms, impacting traffic flow and emergency response.

The current number of inoperable snow vehicles significantly weakens DSNY's ability to execute timely and effective snow operations. Given the scale and complexity of NYC's snow response, maintaining a fully operational fleet is critical. Immediate attention must be paid to fleet maintenance, repair timelines, and replacement planning is essential to ensure the City remains fully prepared for winter weather events.

Thank you again for the opportunity to address this committee today.

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Dennis Schock  
President  
Uniformed Sanitationmen's Association, Local 831

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to turn in this testimonial. My name is Bonacio Crespi, I worked in the sanitation industry for 27years and now I'm working as the Secretary Treasurer for Local 813 Teamsters. I am actively working to reform the commercial waste industry through safer standards and implementation of the Commercial Waste Zones(CWZ). The union advocates for the better wages, safety equipment and reasonable hours in a dangerous industry.

**Safety and Accountability:** Local 813 works with environmental allies in the "Transform Don't Trash" NYC coalition to ensure the new zone system holds employers accountable for safety and labor violations. As well, the union has also successfully fought against unfair labor practices, forcing companies to bargain with them and protecting workers from retaliation.

In the context of the New York City waste industry, "sham unions" refer to employer-friendly organizations that are installed by carting companies to prevent workers from joining a more robust union. Local 813 has been the leading advocate for legislation to expose and eliminate these groups, arguing that they undermine workers rights and maintain low labor standards.

Needless to say, it has been a long road but we still have more to do. My thoughts from the start have always been standardizing the industry and bringing a better life to my union brothers while making safe for all New Yorkers.

We have gotten laws passed but they need to be enforced and we need to see more follow through from those who have the ability and power to make it happen.

Bonacio Crespi  
Secretary Treasurer



April 6, 2026

Testimony of Ryan Dougherty, Lead Budget and Policy Analyst  
On behalf of New York City Independent Budget Office  
To the New York City Council Committee on  
Sanitation and Solid Waste Management

Good morning, Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management. I am Ryan Dougherty, Lead Budget and Policy Analyst at the New York City Independent Budget Office. I'm joined today by Brian Cain, Assistant Director of Housing, Environment, and Infrastructure, and Elliot Jackson-Ontkush, Assistant Data Manager. As you know, IBO is an independent, non-mayoral City agency that conducts fiscal and policy research. I appreciate the opportunity to discuss the City's curbside organics collection program today.

Last Friday, IBO published a report titled [\*Curbside Composting: Current Trends in New York City's Organics Collection\*](#). My testimony will highlight key takeaways from this research as it relates to today's discussion on DSNY's draft Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP).

As already discussed today, organic waste includes food scraps, yard waste, and other compostable materials. Organics represent roughly 36% of the City's residential waste stream. Yet in 2025, organics collections amounted to just 2.4% of residential waste collected. IBO's analysis found that the City's mandatory composting program, launched in October 2024, produced early progress. But the most meaningful gains were driven by fine-based enforcement. In April 2025, when fine-based enforcement began, weekly organics collection tonnage nearly tripled over the four-week period (see Figure 4). That sharp response suggests that fine-based enforcement is an effective tool to increase compliance. When enforcement was effectively paused later that month, momentum stalled for the rest of the year.

From May through December 2025, the final months of the Adams administration, weekly organics tonnage declined by 43%. Interestingly, collections did not immediately revert down to pre-enforcement levels. This suggests that many residents continued composting once the habit was established. Overall, organics collections increased from 1.4% of

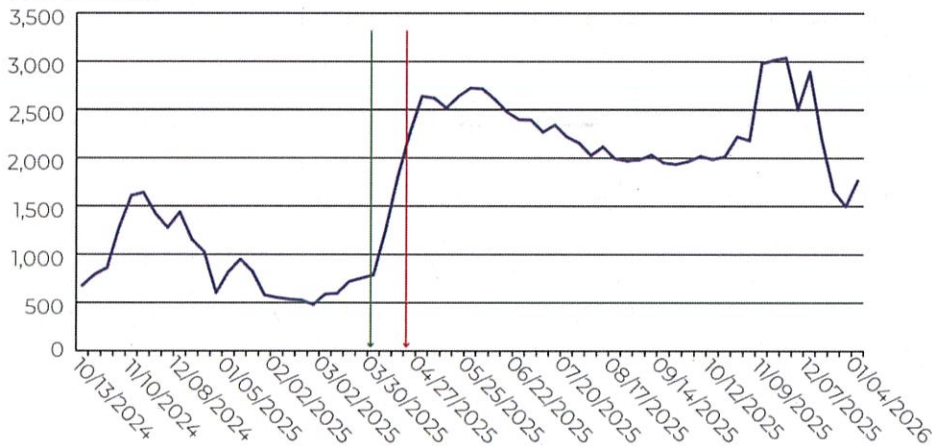
residential waste in 2024, to 2.4% in 2025 (a 68% increase). However, the gradual downward trajectory after the pause demonstrates that enforcement was effective at encouraging compliance, and without it, progress plateaued and then declined.

**FIGURE 4**

**Weekly Organic Waste Collected**

→ Fines Started, April 1, 2025      → Fines Effectively Paused, April 18, 2025

Tons Collected



SOURCE: IBO analysis of DSNY Curbside Organics Tonnage data

New York City Independent Budget Office

Under the Mamdani administration, some fines were issued from January through March 2026, but it's been roughly 3% of the level seen at this time last year. As IBO highlighted in our testimony on the Preliminary Budget, the organics processing budget is underfunded. It decreases after fiscal year 2026 from \$24 million to a baseline of \$19 million, despite DSNY expecting program growth over time. Further, there has not been a major mayoral announcement to resume full enforcement and encourage compliance under the new administration.

### Cost of Organics Collection and Processing

Organic waste collection has historically been more expensive per ton than trash or recycling collections—largely driven by the high cost of staffing trucks relative to the tonnage collected on a route. Trucks collecting organics compared with recycling or trash have similar staffing and fuel costs but collect fewer tons along their routes. This undercuts collection efficiency.



IBO's mission is to enhance understanding of New York City's budget, public policy, and economy through independent analysis.

A past IBO report found that in 2019, the average cost of organics collection was \$602 per ton. By comparison, the cost of trash collection was \$86 per ton, and \$167 per ton for recycling. Diverting organic matter from trash streams can reduce costs by increasing the efficiency of organics truck collections while reducing the volume of trash to be collected.

## **Organics in the Zero-Waste Report and Draft SWMP**

DSNY's 2026 Zero-Waste report includes organics projections through 2036. The agency expects a linear increase of collections, roughly following the rate of annual gains from 2023 through 2025. By 2036, this would increase the current diversion rate of 2.4% up to 11.5% for organics, or about one-third of residential organic waste. DSNY's model used information on New York City's recycling program and curbside organics programs in places like Cambridge, MA and the State of Vermont to inform its ten-year projections. These other programs had little to no enforcement in their early years. This suggests DSNY's model similarly assumes little to no enforcement for New York City's curbside organics program.

IBO's findings suggest that collections could exceed DSNY's projections if full enforcement is resumed to help build up initial sorting habits. This would help reach the economies of scale IBO estimates organics collections would need to reach cost parity with recycling. Similarly, while the Draft SWMP mentions enforcement as a concept, it does not expressly indicate whether DSNY will resume full organics enforcement going forward.

## **Alternative Approach: San Francisco**

IBO's report also provided a description of San Francisco's system. They have the longest running and most successful curbside organics system in the country. San Francisco does not use fine-based enforcement. Instead, when first launched in 2009, San Francisco properties paid for their trash pickup, but not their recycling or organics. This made it cheaper for properties to divert recycling and organics out of trash bins. While different, San Francisco's system and New York City's fine-based enforcement both created a financial incentive to divert organics, with measurable results.

## **Conclusion**



IBO's testimony here today is intended to provide further information to the City Council and the public. IBO does not make policy recommendations and does not take a position on the appropriate level of enforcement. Ultimately, the goal is to build up a culture of sorting organics, recyclable materials, and waste properly. In line with DSNY's projections to increase organics diversion rates, the evidence from last year strongly suggests that fine-based enforcement is an effective way to encourage compliance. The trajectory of the City's organics diversion rate will be heavily shaped by the decisions made in the months ahead around outreach, education, and enforcement.

We hope this analysis is useful to the Committee. IBO is happy to answer any questions. Thank you.



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IBO's mission is to enhance understanding of New York City's budget, public policy, and economy through independent analysis.



# Curbside Composting: Current Trends in New York City's Organics Collection

Hello Council Member,

In addition to testimony, the Independent Budget Office is providing this summary of findings from IBO's recent report "Curbside Composting: Current Trends in New York City's Organics Collection."

The QR code on the right provides a link to the full report.



## Summary

The Department of Sanitation (DSNY) aims to divert material that can be composted, recycled, or repurposed from being thrown out as trash. Organic waste—food scraps, yard waste, and other compostable materials—make up roughly 36% of the City's residential waste stream, yet organics collections were 2.4% of residential waste collected in 2025. (All years refer to calendar years unless otherwise noted.) Diverting organic material creates compost or renewable natural gas, reduces greenhouse gas emissions, and lowers waste sent to landfills.

From the 1990s through 2012, the City supported some organics programs, primarily including drop off sites and school composting. In 2013, DSNY started voluntary curbside organics collection, but the program faced budget cuts and frequent delays in expansion and service. In 2023, the City Council passed a local law requiring mandatory citywide organics collection by October 2024. The Adams administration rolled out citywide curbside pickup on time, with fine-based enforcement starting in April 2025. However, less than three weeks later, the Adams administration paused most enforcement through the end of 2025, ostensibly to allow DSNY additional time to conduct outreach and education.

The Mamdani administration resumed some level of fines in 2026, but it remains well below initial full enforcement levels. Between January and February 2026, DSNY issued fines for organic separation at just 3% of the level seen in April 2025. While DSNY projects annual increases in organics collections over the next ten years, the organics processing budget decreases after fiscal year 2026 from \$24 million to a baseline of \$19 million. Further,

FIGURE 1

Timeline of Major Changes to New York City Curbside Organics Collections



SOURCE: IBO analysis of New York City Council local laws and DSNY data

New York City Independent Budget Office

there has not been a major mayoral announcement to resume full enforcement and encourage compliance under the new administration.

Although still very low overall, organics collection levels in 2025 improved on past performance. In 2025, organics collections increased to 2.4% of residential waste, compared to 1.4% in 2024 (a 68% increase). Weekly tonnage rose sharply when enforcement began, nearly tripling in April 2025 alone. This momentum stalled when fine enforcement effectively paused—apart from the seasonal boost of fall yard waste, weekly organics collections declined 43% between the enforcement pause and the end of 2025. **IBO’s analysis shows that fine-based enforcement (or at least some form of financial incentive) is effective at encouraging compliance, and weakening these incentives leads to gradual declines in compliance.** The future of the curbside organics program will depend on how the Mamdani administration approaches outreach, education, and enforcement.

Prepared By:  
**Ryan Dougherty**



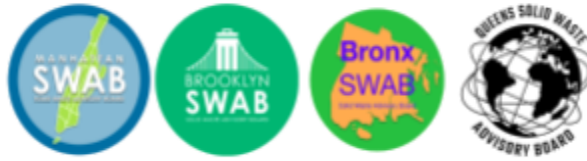
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## All SWAB Testimony

### Draft Testimony – April 6, 2026 Hearing on SWMP'26

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The SWABs support the diversion targets set in the Draft 2026 Solid Waste Management Plan- 30.5% for DSNY-managed waste and 54.1% for commercial waste.

On January 16, we submitted comments identifying six areas in the Draft Plan that we believe require remediation to increase the likelihood that these targets will be met.

Those six areas are:

- The need for increased and well-defined public engagement;
- The requirement that open datasets be clearly defined and consistently maintained;
- Alignment with the CLCPA, the Climate Action Council's Scoping Plan, and Local Laws 152, 86, and 87;
- Provision for a clear organizational and structural commitment within the Department of Sanitation to support recycling and sustainability;
- Recognition of emerging regulatory and legislative frameworks in New York State and beyond that call into question the feasibility of beneficial use of biosolids;
- And the need to move the Plan's language toward clear, stated program commitments rather than language that is merely exploratory.

We have submitted those comments as our written testimony for this hearing.

There is not only a social and environmental benefit to diverting material from the residential waste stream, but also a fiscal one. While diversion will neither eliminate nor significantly reduce costs, since funding follows the material and diversion programs require investment in collection and processing, every dollar spent diverting material away from landfill or incineration has the potential to retain economic activity, create jobs, expand the tax base, and increase public investment within the City.

If we consider the fiscal spending on recycling and composting also as a form of local fiscal stimulus, with an associated multiplier effect, we begin to see a more equitable distribution of both the burdens and the benefits of shifting what is now a nearly \$600 million sanitation export budget into recycling and composting within the five boroughs.



**STATEMENT OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL  
BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL  
COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT**

**The Magnificent Seven Strategies That Must Be Enhanced  
In New York City's Draft Solid Waste Management Plan**

April 6, 2026  
Eric A. Goldstein

The Natural Resources Defense Council (“NRDC”) is a non-profit legal and scientific organization active on a wide range of public health, natural resource protection, and quality-of-life issues across the globe, around the nation, and here in New York where NRDC has had its principal offices since our founding in 1970. Revolutionizing waste practices has been a major focus of NRDC’s New York team for decades. Our longstanding objective has been to transform waste policy from primary reliance on landfilling and incineration to making waste prevention, composting, recycling and equity the cornerstones of a more sustainable 21<sup>st</sup> century waste program in the nation’s largest city.

NRDC is also part of the Transform Don’t Trash coalition of organizations that recently released A Peoples’ Solid Waste Management Plan with recommendations for measures that should be included in New York’s final Solid Waste Management Plan. We incorporate that document by reference. <https://www.nylpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/A-Peoples-SWMP-Report.pdf>

New York City’s Draft Solid Waste Management Plan has much to say for itself. It presents a comprehensive picture of how 13 million tons a year of waste generated in New York is disposed of. For people seeking to understand the solid waste scene in New York, there is probably no better introductory source of information. The Draft Plan also aims to move the city in a sensible path -- “prioritizing the reduction of waste,” as then-Acting Commissioner Lojan wrote in his introductory letter. And the Draft Plan correctly identifies the major areas in need of new initiatives over the next decade and sets achievable goals for 2036 waste diversion -- 30.5% for DSNY managed waste and 54.7% for commercially generated waste. We recognize the hard work that DSNY staff, including Jennifer McDonnell and Kate Kitchner, have devoted to this effort.

But in its current form, the Draft fails to achieve its full potential. It does not describe initiatives with sufficient detail or commitment needed to jolt such programs to the next level. It does not incorporate needed deadlines and timetables against which progress can be measured. And, as presently drafted, it would allow future officials to evade responsibility if progress in achieving the plan’s objectives creeps along at a snail’s pace, despite city and state laws to the contrary.

In this statement, NRDC sets forth seven major areas we hope the City Council will work with the Department to strengthen in the Draft before plan submission to New York State DEC.

**NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL**

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**I. Enhance and Expand Commitments to Rescue Edible Food and Compost Organic Waste -- The Cornerstones of a Sustainable, Economic, and Neighborhood-Friendly Waste Policy**

Organics -- food scraps, yard waste, and food-soiled paper -- make up the single largest portion of the city's residential and commercial waste streams. But for years, the city has not been thinking smartly when it comes to the organics challenge. First, edible food from our restaurants and commercial kitchens should not be discarded but re-directed to food rescue organizations and food banks. Ongoing efforts in this area are admirable. But significant opportunities remain to expand such efforts and assist the approximately 1.4 million food-insecure city residents.

Following food rescue, composting of the remaining organics in the city's waste stream must become the Sanitation Department's disposal centerpiece for achieving a sustainable, affordable, neighborhood-friendly waste policy in New York. As the Draft Plan notes, the overwhelming bulk of these putrescible materials are being sent -- at great expense -- to out-of-city landfills and incinerators. But when organics are buried at landfills, they break down and generate methane, a very potent global warming gas. And when organics are sent to incinerators, their high moisture content interferes with the burning process, generating dioxins and other harmful pollutants, exacerbating localized air pollution. Making matters worse, these incinerators and landfills are often located in Black and brown communities that already receive more than their fair share of environmental burdens.

A significant portion of the organics that are currently being separately placed out for collection by city residents are being sent to the city's Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant to be co-digested with sewage sludge. While this process may be preferable to landfilling or incineration because some methane is captured and reused, it is far from ideal. There are fugitive methane leaks from this process, the remaining slurry (called "digestate") contains PFAS and other harmful substances and cannot be safely used as an agricultural soil enhancement, and the whole process requires the support of fossil-fuel pipes and infrastructure at a time when city and state laws rightly require moving away from oil and gas.

On the other hand, there is an ideal disposal route for organic materials -- turn those discards into finished compost that can be applied as a natural fertilizer, soil stabilizer, and supplement that helps crops, street trees, and house plants grow and remain healthy. (To be sure, composting strategies should always come into play after intensive efforts to reduce the amount of food waste generated in the first place. Composting undertaken at the local level - - Community Composting -- offers additional benefits to the city and its residents. Not only do decentralized small- and mid-scale composting facilities mean less waste-related traffic and transportation-related pollution, but they are operations that bring people together, introduce kids to nature, and help revitalize city neighborhoods. Finally, as the experience in Seattle demonstrates, when composting reaches critical mass, it can save taxpayers funds -- especially when compared to the roughly \$500 million annual cost of exporting our trash to out-of-city incinerators and landfills.

The Draft SWMP gets it half right on the composting issue -- the document favorably mentions increasing the quality and quantity of organics diverted, boosting the recovery rate of

DSNY-managed organics, increasing composting and wood reuse, and promoting food donation and rescue. However, in a major step in the wrong direction, the Draft also embraces the goal of expanding co-digestion of organics and sewage sludge at wastewater treatment plants and somehow beneficially reusing the contaminated digestate “biosolids” left over from the co-digestion process. (Draft SWMP at 132.)

The Draft SWMP’s organics sections need major revision. The document’s current embrace of co-digestion at sewage plants and failure to include comprehensive, Marshall Plan-level commitments to expansion of food rescue and composting is perhaps the Draft SWMP’s single greatest shortcoming

NRDC recommends, the following enhancements to the SWMP organics section: Add commitments to:

- 1) Launch a major new initiative, in cooperation with restaurants and commercial kitchens and food rescue organizations, to expand hunger relief services for food-insecure New Yorkers (See recommendation 1 in Section IV, below);
- 2) Significantly expand in-city composting processing capacity;
- 3) Analyze available sites for actual composting operations (Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso’s recent study is a good place to begin);
- 4) Support passage of Councilmember Sandy’s Nurse’s legislation to boost composting processing in every borough;
- 5) Undertake a rebuilding and expansion of the Rikers Island composting facility so that it can handle a significant portion of Manhattan’s collected organics;
- 6) Prioritize composting within the Department’s organizational structure by appointing a separate Deputy Commissioner for Waste Prevention, Composting and Sustainability;
- 7) Partner with and support funding for community composting groups to spearhead composting educational efforts -- including both on-site activities at compost processing facilities for residents and school children, as well as training programs for superintendents and building managers; and
- 8) Support passage of legislation to make organics collection for composting mandatory for commercial waste, as part of the Commercial Waste Zone Program, and build in incentives for the use of micro-haulers to sustainably dispose of commercial organics while providing green jobs to city residents.

## **II. Ensure City Waste Policies Advance Environmental Justice**

The disproportionate adverse impacts of waste disposal on Black and brown communities have been profound over the decades. Many trace the beginnings of the environmental justice movement to the 1980s protests in Warren County, North Carolina against the siting of a toxic waste landfill in a low-income, mostly Black community. Here in New York, the air and noise pollution and quality-of-life problems triggered by the location of land-based waste transfer stations primarily in the South Bronx, North Brooklyn, and

Southeast Queens are by now well-known. Less visible to New Yorkers, but no less problematic, have been the pollution impacts from out-of-city landfills and incinerators, which have also often dumped into already overburdened Black and brown neighborhoods.

The Draft SWMP recognizes the reality of the environmental justice problems posed by waste handling in New York. It favorably references the city's environmental justice interagency working group, the planning of the Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice, and the 2018 Waste Equity law, among other things. But in critical areas, the Draft SWMP does not go far enough in redressing long-running environmental injustices in the city's waste disposal programs.

NRDC recommends the following changes to the Draft SWMP so that the document tackles some of the most suborn and persistent waste-related environmental justice issues facing city residents and their neighbors. Add commitments to:

- 1) Phase -down the shipment of waste to the problem-plagued ReWorld Essex County incinerator in Newark, NJ and pledge not to renew that contract when it expires in 2032;
- 2) Launch a major new composting, recycling, waste-collection program at NYCHA properties, including funding for a significant expansion of the non-profit group Compost Power to facilitate compost collection and processing at additional NYCHA locations;
- 3) Advance the strategy originally set forth in the city's 2006 Solid Waste Management Plan to utilize excess capacity at the city's modernized Marine Transfer Stations to accept commercial waste and include a timetable for development of a detailed program for phasing in this strategy over the next three years; and
- 4) Step-up implementation and enforcement of the Commercial Waste Zone program and ensure that carters in all zones are complying with worker protection and fair labor practices.

### **III. Adopt Strategies that Recognize the Health and Environmental Dangers of Petroleum-Based Plastics**

The oil and gas industry is determined to continue extracting fossil-fuels and marketing these climate-destroying products regardless of the consequences to our weather, our coastlines, property values, and public health. With the use of fossil-fuel to power motor vehicles expected to decline over the next decade, the industry is now viewing plastics as a major area for continued growth and profits. Worldwide the production of plastic is projected to triple by 2060 if current trends continue. And even today, while scientists continue to study the health and ecological consequences of the dispersion of plastics to every corner of the earth, microplastics are being found in our blood, lungs, brains and reproductive organs.

The Draft SWMP acknowledges the problems of plastic waste. It notes, for example, that recycling and reuse of plastics is "more challenging" than recycling of metals, glass, paper

or cardboard. (Draft SWMP at 150.) But it does not, in its current form, include strategies designed to secure the dramatic reductions in use of plastics, especially single-use plastics.

NRDC recommends, among other things, that the Draft SWMP be revised to include the following measures that are needed to cut back on the growing problem of throw-away plastics in our waste stream. Add commitments to:

- 1) Publicly endorse and work to enact the Glick-Harckham Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act pending in the New York State Legislature, which would cut plastic packaging waste and generate tens of millions of dollars a year for New York City recycling programs;
- 2) Delete support for, or “exploration” of, so-called Thermal Treatment Technologies, however qualified, (Draft SWMP at 154.) since these technologies are unproven at commercial scale and are generators of significant amounts of toxic air and water pollution;
- 3) Introduce City Council legislation to provide collections of textiles for recycling to all city residents –either via expansion of the current RefashionNYC bin program for all multi-story residential buildings, or through the addition of periodic curbside textile collection days;
- 4) Develop a schedule for phasing plastic bags out of the process for collecting residential and commercial organics; and
- 5) Advance proposals for city and state legislation to prohibit single use plastic packaging in the sale of fresh, unprocessed fruits and vegetables, with limited exceptions where necessary to control for spoilage.

#### **IV. Advance Bold and Innovative Waste Prevention Programs**

Waste prevention is at the top of the state’s solid waste management hierarchy. It is preferred above even recycling and composting, and far ahead of incineration and landfilling. This makes perfect sense. Preventing waste avoids the pollution associated with the extraction, production, and transportation of the materials used in manufacturing and distributing consumer and industrial goods. And the more waste New York City can prevent, the more we will save in the costs of trash handling, which now include nearly \$500 million annually just for waste export.

The Draft SWMP says the right things about the importance of waste prevention. It calls waste reduction, diversion and recirculation of materials “effective long-term approaches to minimizing the burden of waste on communities within and beyond the city.” (Draft SWMP at 32.) And it discusses several sensible food rescue and durable goods repair and reuse strategies for possible future action. Again, however, the Draft plan is not sufficiently ambitious in committing the city to actually implement such measures on dates certain.

NRDC recommends that the Draft SWMP be revised to convert its general language supporting waste prevention into concrete measures that can be implemented in the years ahead. Add commitments to:

- 1) Support legislation creating a major interagency initiative to capture edible food from every restaurant and commercial kitchen and divert that food to non-profit organizations serving food-insecure New Yorkers. (The goal of this program should be that NO edible food prepared in a city restaurant or professional kitchen becomes waste when so many New Yorkers could benefit if these commodities are redirected to food pantries and food banks instead of the city's waste stream.); and
- 2) Establish a goal of opening 25 Reuse and Repair Centers (five in every borough) over the next ten years, where New Yorkers could without charge drop off and pick-up durable goods for reuse; borrow occasionally needed items such as power tools, pressure washers, camping equipment; and bring in products and equipment for low-cost repair services.

#### **V. Design and Initiate Public Education Programs at a Scale to Meet the Challenge**

Even companies with the most widely recognized products advertise. They understand that they must communicate with the public on an ongoing basis to secure and retain customers. Apple's estimated U.S. marketing budget, for example, is around \$1.2 billion a year. To convince New Yorkers to sort their organics for composting or their metals, glass and plastics for recycling requires that DSNY initiate and continuously re-engage with the public. New Yorkers need to know and be reminded of how to compost and recycle and why it is important to do so.

And since people receive information differently, there is no one-size fits all mechanism to inform New Yorkers about recycling, composting, and waste prevention. Unfortunately, without a major breakthrough on public education and engagement, it is doubtful that the Department, despite its best efforts, will be able to bring about any significant change in waste handling and disposal practices of the more than 8 million city residents.

The Draft SWMP, to its credit, describes several education and outreach initiatives that, if fully implemented, could increase public awareness. (Draft SWMP at 198.) But their timing is vague, their funding commitments uncertain, and their overall description is so general that compliance with these strategies could be demonstrated however lackluster the Department's future performance might be.

NRDC recommends that the Draft SWMP be recrafted so that its education and outreach programs can trigger a dramatic increase in public awareness and understanding of its programs, requirements, and objectives. Add commitments to:

- 1) Incorporate yearly benchmarks for what will be achieved under each of the Department's proposed education and training initiatives;
- 2) Issue an RFP for a consultant to redesign and cost-out a top-level, multi-media waste

prevention, composting and recycling education and outreach program, including brochures and mailings, social media ads and influencers, celebrity endorsers, subway and bus advertising, in-person visits to multi-story buildings; and sensible, ongoing enforcement; and

- 3) Make strengthening the DSNY public outreach and education program a major priority of the Department, with progress to be reported on and measured in the Mayor's Management Reports.

## **VI. End the Discrimination to NYCHA Residents in Waste-Handling Programs**

The New York City Housing Authority provides housing to over 500,000 people in more than 335 developments. About 1 out of every 16 New York City residents live in NYCHA housing. Unfortunately, NYCHA properties have long suffered extensive challenges, largely as result of federal funding cutbacks decades ago. Among the problems faced by NYCHA residents are widespread shortcomings in basic sanitation services. These include lack of adequate refuse collection, vermin, and inconvenient or unavailable recycling and composting services. Making matters worse, NYCHA must pay the Department for basic sanitation services. The Draft SWMP treats these and other sanitation problems in cursory fashion. (Draft SWMP at 148.)

NRDC recommends that the Draft SWMP be revised to incorporate more ambitious measures that will address pressing sanitation problems at the nation's biggest public house complex. Add commitments to:

- 1) Endorse legislation introduced by Councilmember Alexa Aviles that would prohibit the Sanitation Department from charging NYCHA for sanitation services, and provide NYCHA residents the same sanitation collection services offered to all other city households;
- 2) Lead a one-year interagency study identifying broad-based measures needed to address long-running sanitation challenges at NYCHA properties, including identification of what can be done to eliminate rodent and vermin problems in NYCHA buildings and on NYCHA campuses;
- 3) Support the non-profit group Compost Power in an expanded program to offer organics processing at 25 of the largest NYCHA developments over the next ten years, helping to provide green jobs at Compost Power for NYCHA youth, and offering free finished compost to NYCHA gardeners and residents.

## **VII. Insert Action-Forcing Timetables, Intermediate Deadlines & Reporting Requirements**

“What gets measured gets done,” wrote Osborne and Gaebler in the management classic, Reinventing Government (1992). And government plans like the SWMP require timetables, deadlines, performance indicators, and mechanisms to track progress and provide for mid-course corrections if they are to fulfill their purpose. But the SWMP too often falls short in this

area. Its favorite verbs are words like “consider,” “explore,” “monitor” or “study.” Too often it fails the goal of becoming an action-forcing document.

NRDC recommends that the Draft SWMP undergo an extensive final edit before submission to the State Department of Environmental Conservation for the purpose of turning the document into more of an actual implementation plan.

\* \* \* \*

Thank you for the opportunity for comment on the Draft SWMP and for your attention. We look forward to working with you, Chair Sanchez and your Council colleagues, as well as with our new DSNY Commissioner Greg Anderson in the weeks ahead to assure that the final SWMP submission is a document that takes advantage of this once-in-a-decade opportunity to lead transformation change in city waste policy. The goal of achieving a more sustainable, affordable, and neighborhood-friendly waste program remains within reach.



**SWIM Coalition**  
Stormwater Infrastructure Matters

**April 6, 2026**

**Testimony of Michelle A. Luebke**

**On behalf of Stormwater Infrastructure Matters (SWIM) Coalition**

**Before the New York City Council Committee for Environmental Protection and Waterfronts**

**on Intro 730-A, regarding testing for harmful substances.**

Thank you for the opportunity to deliver public testimony on Intro 730-A and thank you to Chair Gennaro and the Committee for your work to protect our vulnerable waterways surrounding the city.

Stormwater Infrastructure Matters (SWIM) Coalition is a group of 70 organizations dedicated to ensuring swimmable and fishable waters around New York City through sustainable stormwater management practices that restore ecological systems, create local economic opportunities, and equitably distribute the benefits of green infrastructure.

Having read and discussed the intent of Intro 730-A, SWIM encourages the Committee to focus on combined sewer overflows (CSOs) and their impact on water quality, rather than harmful algal blooms (HABs) and petroleum, which are important but not the highest priority for recreational water users. Petroleum, trash, heavy metals, PFAS, and sanitary sewage are present in CSOs, which compromise the ability of New Yorkers to use our waterways as recreational and economic resources. In terms of detection and measurement, HABs occur mostly in stagnant areas that can vary from year-to-year, petroleum is a nonpoint source pollutant, but CSOs are point sources and thus have discrete locations that are easy to routinely monitor to protect human and ecosystem health.

While we encourage the Committee to direct the NYC Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to regularly test and inform the public of CSOs, we urge allocating additional budgetary resources to the DEP for these efforts. We also recommend that any water quality testing occur at or near water access points for primary or secondary recreation, with locations selected through community engagement processes and not based only on officially sanctioned water access sites. These samples should be collected near-shore (i.e., less than 15' from the water's edge), not mid-channel, as currently done in the Harbor Survey, for the most accurate measurements of contact risk to the public.

The DEP currently uses modeling to determine the likelihood of water quality violation due to a CSO event, rather than directly monitoring the outfalls to measure the frequency and volumetric discharge of each event. The SWIM Coalition has long-advocated for sensors or other types of technology to monitor CSOs in real time on select outfalls that could adversely affect existing uses of nearby waters by people. Such monitoring combined with water quality testing will provide greater protection for New Yorkers who recreate in these waters.

SWIM thanks the Chair and the committee for taking up the important topic of water quality monitoring. We hope the bill can be revised to reflect the current needs of New Yorkers who are using our waterways as recreational and economic resources.

Michelle A. Luebke | Program Manager

[advocacy@swimmablenyc.org](mailto:advocacy@swimmablenyc.org)

On behalf of the SWIM Coalition Steering Committee:

Mike Dulong – Riverkeeper

Dara Illowsky – Save the Sound

Leonel Lima Ponce – Pratt Institute

Christian Murphy – Bronx River Alliance

Holly Porter Morgan – Lehman College

Em Ruby – Riverkeeper

Shino Tanikawa – NYC Soil & Water Conservation District



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April 6, 2026

*Board of  
Directors*

## **Testimony for Oversight Hearing, Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management**

### **Oversight hearing to finalize the City's Draft 2026-2036 Solid Waste Management Plan**

Stuart Appelbaum  
*President,*  
Retail Wholesale Department Store Union

My name is Jenille Scott, and I am the Climate Director of ALIGN: The Alliance for a Greater New York. We bring together labor, climate, and community for a more just and sustainable New York. I am writing as one of the leading organizations of the Transform Don't Trash Coalition which has been working to transform New York City's solid waste sector and create better conditions for our state's workers for over 10 years. Thank you to the Sanitation Committee Chair, Council Member Sanchez for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Henry Garrido  
*Executive Director,*  
AFSCME District Council 37

We appreciate the opportunity to testify today on the Department of Sanitation's draft Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP) for 2026 - 2036. This plan will shape the future of waste in our city for decades. It is therefore essential that this plan meets the urgency of our climate crisis, addresses long-standing environmental injustices, and centers the workers who keep New York running.

Lucia Gomez,  
*Political Director,*  
NYC Central Labor Council

Bernadette Kelly,  
Consortium for Worker Education

At present, however, the SWMP falls short of that standard. First, **the plan is too vague to serve as a meaningful roadmap**. While the SWMP outlines high-level goals, it lacks the specificity necessary to ensure accountability. Critical components such as timelines, measurable benchmarks, and enforcement mechanisms are either underdeveloped or absent. Without clear targets and implementation strategies, it is impossible to assess how the City will actually achieve waste reduction, increase diversion rates, or transition to a more sustainable system.

Eunice Ko  
*Deputy Director,*  
NYC Environmental Justice Alliance

This lack of clarity raises concerns about whether the plan can deliver on its stated commitments whether old or new, particularly for communities that have historically borne the brunt of the City's waste system. A long-term waste plan must be more than aspirational. New Yorkers need clarity about how the Department of Sanitation (DSNY) intends to achieve its goals, what resources and capital projects are required, and what interim metrics will be used to track progress. Without specificity, the plan risks perpetuating the status quo rather than driving change.

Olivia Leirer  
*Co-Director,*  
New York Communities for Change

Juanita O. Lewis  
*Executive Director*  
Community Voices Heard

The Transform Don't Trash coalition has put forward a detailed analysis of the previous SWMP and comprehensive recommendations in the form of [A People's SWMP](#) report. The report outlines 30 concrete, community-driven recommendations to guide the City's next Solid Waste Management Plan, grounded in environmental justice, public health, and good jobs. Its recommendations include:

Jose Lopez



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*Co-Executive  
Director, Make  
the Road NY*

- **Reducing truck traffic and advancing waste equity** by shifting waste export away from truck-based transfer stations and toward marine and rail infrastructure, including expanded use of marine transfer stations for commercial waste and stronger utilization of underused rail facilities
- **Full and accountable implementation of Commercial Waste Zones (CWZs)**, including firm timelines, strong enforcement, and clear labor, safety, and environmental standards for private haulers
- **Meeting zero waste and diversion goals that are in line with the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA)** with enforceable requirements for recycling and organics diversion in the commercial sector
- A major **expansion of composting and organics infrastructure**, prioritizing borough-based and community-scale composting, maximizing composting outcomes, and investing in education and participation
- **Waste reduction and reuse policies**, including cutting single-use plastics, expanding textile and e-waste recycling, and supporting repair, reuse, and food donation systems
- **Phasing out reliance on incineration**, reducing the City's dependence on out-of-state waste-to-energy facilities
- **Sustainable funding and long-term investment**, including identifying new revenue streams and securing state support for waste reduction and diversion programs
- **Environmental justice accountability**, including tracking and reducing vehicle miles traveled, addressing the concentration of waste infrastructure, and ensuring compliance with climate and equity mandates
- **Investments in public infrastructure and climate alignment**, including evaluating waste sites for renewable energy and transitioning sanitation fleets to zero-emissions vehicles
- **Equitable service provision**, particularly improving recycling and composting access for NYCHA residents and other underserved communities

Most importantly, *A People's SWMP* reflects the lived experience and expertise of the communities and workers most impacted by New York City's waste system, and offers the level of specificity, accountability, and ambition that is currently missing from the City's plan.

**The City Council has a major role to play and in approving the final SWMP plan before it is submitted to the state DEC so we urge the Council to require greater specificity**



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**and accountability in the SWMP, incorporate the recommendations of A People's SWMP into the City's official plan, center environmental justice with enforceable commitments to reduce burdens on over-impacted communities, and strengthen labor standards across the waste system.**

New York City has an opportunity to build a waste system that is both sustainable and just. This will require moving beyond broad aspirations and committing to concrete, enforceable action. These achievements are within reach, so long as they are reflected in the Department of Sanitation's final SWMP plan.

Our coalition looks forward to working with the Council, the Department of Sanitation, and all stakeholders to realize that vision.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jenille Scott

Climate Director



Reimagining school cafeterias as climate action hubs where students drive equitable zero-waste solutions: reducing food waste, supporting local composting, and eliminating plastics through science, civic engagement, media, and the arts!

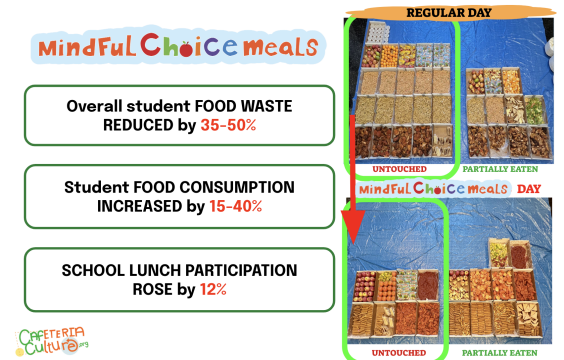
**Testimony of Rhonda Keyser, Cafeteria Culture to**  
New York City Council Sanitation Committee  
Hearing for the City’s Draft 2026 Solid Waste Management Plan  
250 Broadway - 8th Floor - Hearing Room 3  
April 6th, 2026

Good morning. My name is Rhonda Keyser, and I am the Program and Policy Director at Cafeteria Culture. We are an environmental education nonprofit that works with New York City public school students to reduce food waste and build hyper-local, community-based composting systems that process organics in the neighborhoods where they’re generated.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on DSNY’s Draft 10-Year Solid Waste Management Plan, specifically the Organics Diversion and Recovery Program.

We strongly support the City’s commitment to expanding organics diversion. However, we urge DSNY and the City to prioritize funding and expansion of local community composting, rather than relying heavily on codigestion and other centralized processing approaches.

Our students are teaming up with Compost Power to show that local composting on a larger scale is possible in an urban environment. We are now piloting systemic food-waste reduction measures at the source, combined with local community composting. In five pilots so far, our students have reduced overall cafeteria food waste by up to 50%, while increasing student consumption by 15-46% – simply by allowing students to choose what they want to eat within USDA guidelines.



These results show that food waste reduction is not about austerity or scarcity. It’s about student agency. When students are informed and trusted to make decisions, they waste less and eat more.

Our students also mapped the journey of their trash and their organics placed into the brown bin – learning that most food scraps are trucked long distances for codigestion. After considering truck traffic, emissions, and other environmental harms, our students told us they wanted to disrupt these harmful systems.

So they did.

These students at PS/MS 46 in Harlem now lead a weekly Community Compost Day, diverting 50-70 pounds of cafeteria food scraps in a single day, all of which are processed locally at Compost Power’s

site at Polo Grounds, a NYCHA property. Our staff walks the food scraps to the site, where Compost Power employs local residents to process them.

Students regularly visit the site to help process their own food scraps – transforming what would otherwise be a waste burden into a local resource that supports healthy soil, food production, and community jobs.

Since the start of October 2025, with our newly-hired Compost Coordinator, over 1,200 pounds of cafeteria food scraps have been processed locally. That material did not travel long distances, was not co-digested to become toxic biosolids, and did not require complex infrastructure. It stayed in the community to be processed and used.

Just as importantly, this work has become a powerful education opportunity. Students are not only sorting food scraps correctly, they are learning why it matters. They are bringing that knowledge home and educating their families, turning daily cafeteria routines into climate action and community engagement.



The draft SWMP is committing to long-term expansion of codigestion and biosolids infrastructure through 2036. Codigestion may play a role in managing our wastewater, but it does not deliver the same climate benefits, environmental justice, education, or community benefits as local composting. Community composting reduces truck traffic, builds public participation, produces compost that is actually used in the city, and creates opportunities for local stewardship – especially in schools and NYCHA communities.

Our recommendation is clear:

- Increase dedicated funding for community composting,
- Expand neighborhood-scale composting sites and increase the processing capacity of existing sites,
- Align school organics collection with local processing, and
- Treat codigestion as supplemental, not central, to the City’s organics strategy.

If New York City wants organics diversion to succeed long-term, community composting must be a core investment, not a supplemental program.

## FY27 City Council Support Needed to Seize Citywide Expansion of Mindful Choice Meals Initiative to Reduce Cafeteria Food Waste

Cafeteria Culture is deeply grateful to the New York City Council for the \$500,000 investment in FY25 and FY26 that funded us to develop and pilot Mindful Choice Meals (MCM), a simple but powerful cafeteria practice that significantly reduces cafeteria food waste while increasing student participation in school meals. **This work has now reached a critical moment for citywide impact.**

### A MAJOR OPPORTUNITY FOR NYC

At the request of the NYCPS Chancellor to reduce school food waste, the Office of Food and Nutrition Services (OFNS) has asked Cafeteria Culture to support a rollout of our proven Mindful Meals initiative (MCM) in one school in each of NYC's 32 school districts. **In pilots across 5 NYC Public Schools in the 2024-25 school year, MCM has reduced school food waste by 35-50%, increased school food consumption by 15-40%, and school lunch participation has risen by 12%.** MCM connects everyday lunch decisions to nutrition, climate awareness, and local composting – all while giving students a meaningful voice in how their cafeteria operates.

NYC Public Schools spends \$200–\$250 million annually on school meals, making it the second-largest institutional food provider in the United States after the U.S. military. **Reducing cafeteria food waste represents a major opportunity for both fiscal savings and climate impact.**

### PROJECT GOALS - within 3 years, Cafeteria Culture will:

1. Support OFNS as they operationalize MCM across NYC Public Schools to reduce cafeteria food waste by 15-30%, increase student school food consumption by 10-15%, increase school lunch participation by 12% citywide.
2. Support OFNS to adjust procurement practices to save food cost by 10-15%.

Following our successfully-scaled waste reduction programs Styrofoam Out of Schools and Plastic Free Lunch Day, Cafeteria Culture has a clear strategy to execute this system wide change.

### FY27 CITY COUNCIL SUPPORT FOR MCM EXPANSION

Cafeteria Culture has submitted a **\$750,000 FY27 City Council funding request** to support the next phase of Project MCM. However, the recent decision by the OFNS to rapidly scale MCM across all 32 school districts occurred **after our official proposal was submitted**, and the current request does not fully reflect the resources needed to support this citywide expansion opportunity. **Receiving the full \$750,000 is critical** to seize this moment of alignment with the new NYC Public Schools leadership and ensure the program can move from district pilots to citywide implementation, dramatically reducing cafeteria food waste and our climate footprint, while saving millions in school food costs and giving students a meaningful voice.

**Contact: Atsuko Quirk, Executive Director, atsuko@cafeteriaculture.org**





*Reimagining school cafeterias as climate action hubs where students drive equitable zero-waste solutions: reducing food waste, supporting local composting, and eliminating plastics through science, civic engagement, media, and the arts!*

**Testimony of Jaimere Rush, Cafeteria Culture to  
New York City Council Preliminary Budget Hearing  
Sanitation and Solid Waste Management  
250 Broadway - 8th Floor - Hearing Room 2  
March 16, 2026**

Good morning Chair Sanchez and the Sanitation Committee. I am Jaimere Rush. Thank you for this opportunity to speak today. I am here as a direct result of quality environmental education funding.

I was trained by Green City Force, an Environmental Education organization where I learned about agriculture, infrastructure, and composting.

Now I work with Cafeteria Culture as their Compost Coordinator. This is a position created to pilot the possibility of replicating the practices of processing food scraps in nearby community composting sites in New York City public schools.

Our work is powered through New York City Council's Discretionary Funding.

I work in Cafeteria Culture's partner schools to collect food scraps in their cafeterias and compost it locally. To date, I have collected more than 1,200 pounds of school food scraps. That amount is heavier than a fully grown kodiak bear. At one partner school, we process all of the food scraps we collect through a local composting site that is operated by our partner organization, Compost Power.

In the cafeteria, I'm able to interact with all students in the school. I teach them what I learned in my environmental education: that local composting keeps the resources in the community and reduces truck traffic.



Middle schoolers typically walk up to me and introduce themselves and have regular conversations with me – I'm sure my age and who I am makes me seem approachable to them.

And engaging with me – these students who are often hard to reach suddenly are exposed to composting, agriculture, and environmental equity.

Through my pilot position as Compost Coordinator, I am able to bridge school cafeteria food scrap collection with local solutions that directly benefit the community.

With further funding, we will begin to scale these local composting pilots in the next year.



**Testimony of Megan Ortiz, Cafeteria Culture to**  
New York City Council Preliminary Budget Hearing  
Sanitation and Solid Waste Management  
250 Broadway - 8th Floor - Hearing Room 2  
March 16, 2026

Good afternoon Chair Sanchez and the Sanitation Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to speak. I am Megan Ortiz and I work with Cafeteria Culture as a member of the teaching staff as well as mentor and support our Compost Coordinator with his work in Cafeteria food scrap collection. I started as a Cafeteria Culture student in 2020 when I was a junior in high school, and I became fully employed by them after working a waste audit in 2024. In complete honesty, I have always found it incredibly difficult to speak in front of groups of people to the point where I even deemed it an impossibility for myself. Me standing before you today is a testament to the work and teaching of Cafeteria Culture; they push you to always challenge yourself and show you that anything is possible.



Cafeteria Culture makes it a point that every student we work with, has the opportunity to engage with the content in a way that is comprehensible to them. That no student is left behind or feels as though their voice isn't heard. I remember meeting one of our current 8th grade students, just a year ago, when she was a 7th grader who was shy and refused to make eye contact; now confidently running up to people in order to interview them for a community survey.

It is with the experience I have gained from Cafeteria Culture, now as a teacher, that shows me how it is incredibly important to meet students where they are, and that is a skill I hope to continue honoring in our work. Being consistent figures who are able to inspire students to see themselves as active members of a community rather than a nuisance or passive recipients of the current conditions. It is because of the work Cafeteria Culture does that our children believe they are able to make a change

[info@cafeteriaculture.org](mailto:info@cafeteriaculture.org)  CafCu Media  @cafeteriacu  @CafCu  CafeteriaCulture  @cafeteriacu

Our work is powered through New York City Council Discretionary Funding and through your greater investments in Cafeteria Culture we hope to empower more students.

I dream of a day where our work can reach children in all 5 boroughs, inspiring the hope and the confidence that I have achieved through Cafeteria Culture. Thank you!

March 16, 2026

**Testimony of PS 15 Brooklyn 5th graders to  
New York City Council Preliminary Budget Hearing  
Sanitation and Solid Waste Management  
250 Broadway - 8th Floor - Hearing Room 2  
March 16, 2026**

Good morning! Thank you, Chair Sanchez and the Sanitation Committee for allowing us to speak today. We are 4th graders from PS15 in Red Hook, Brooklyn. We live in an Environmental Justice Zone in Red Hook, Brooklyn with a lot of truck traffic. Cafeteria Culture taught us that there is no “away” for our trash. We learned that

when our trash leaves our homes or our school, first it goes to the Hamilton Avenue waste transfer station nearby. Then it goes by truck to a barge at the Marine Terminal in Elizabeth, New Jersey. Then it gets trucked to a landfill all the way in Virginia!

All of that transportation creates pollution. And the landfills make greenhouse gases. Kids just like us who live around landfills get asthma for life because of garbage that’s not even theirs! How can the City’s Zero Waste plan be real if we keep hurting other communities? We all need to work together to stop this waste before it starts. That’s what we’re doing in our cafeteria – stopping waste before it starts.

We started the Mindful Choice Meals program in our school two years ago. This year we reduced our cafeteria food waste at the source by almost 45%. Cafeteria Culture is doing Mindful Choice Meals in a lot of other schools now. We want ALL schools to have this program. It’s a no-brainer!

And, we’re taking our food waste out of this system to compost it locally at Red Hook Farm. And it’s walking distance from our school! So, there are no trucks needed. Red Hook Farm makes compost out of our food scraps and we visit them on field trips every year.



We hope other schools can reduce their cafeteria food waste too! Compost school food scraps locally makes less food waste in all schools in New York City! So we can stop hurting kids like us who live near landfills in faraway places. We hope the City keeps supporting Environmental Education and local composting!



**Testimony of Rebeca Sabnam, Cafeteria Culture to  
New York City Council Preliminary Budget Hearing  
Sanitation and Solid Waste Management  
250 Broadway - 8th Floor - Hearing Room 2  
March 16, 2026**

Good afternoon Chair Sanchez and the Sanitation Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to speak. My name is Rebeca Sabnam.

The first time I ever testified in City Hall was in sixth grade. Cafeteria Culture had taught us about the detrimental effects of the styrofoam trays we used in schools then. I was intensely shy as a kid, but they taught me to believe that it was my right to be heard. I joined my first rally to translate my education into action. That rally gave me enough courage to walk my 11-year-old self all the way down to City all from the Lower East Side to testify for the removal of styrofoam in public schools.



Now I'm here, testifying again over a decade later, after attending Columbia University with a Major in Sustainable Development and a Minor in Public Health. When I entered my freshman year at Columbia, the foundational environmental education I had through CafCu provided an understanding of how interconnected the climate crisis is to every aspect of our lives. This allowed me to keep up with students who were much more privileged in resources than me.

As I've continued on my environmental studies path, this Pablo Freire quote has kept me grounded: "When education is not liberating, the dream of the oppressed is to become the oppressor." Comprehensive environmental education teaches kids in underserved communities that through advocacy work, we can improve both our own lives and the lives of others – our successes are not mutually exclusive and we don't have to adhere to systems that oppress us. The advocacy skills I learned in between the lines of CafCu lesson plans built confidence in me and my peers who were often overlooked, showing us that another world is possible for us to co-create.

I am here in front of you now as a Cafeteria Culture teacher in an afterschool class at the Lower East Side Girls Club. I have the honor of mentoring just like me. Reinvesting in my community, I can help these young students dream bigger than our circumstances and come up with innovative solutions to issues that burden our shared community.

I wouldn't have the opportunities I did, gotten into the college I did, or become the person I am proud of today if it wasn't for the transformative environmental education I received in public schools through Cafeteria Culture – all powered through New York City Council Discretionary Funding.



Thank you for your time!

## NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL HEARING - COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT - 4/6/26

[testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov)

### Testimony

Erica Burman, Chester Residents Concerned for Quality Living  
[erica@chesterpaej.org](mailto:erica@chesterpaej.org)

Thank you for allowing impacted communities to testify. My name is Erica Burman and I'm the administrator with Chester Residents Concerned for Quality Living (CRCQL - "circle"). CRCQL is a community-led, non-profit organization focused on clean air, community health and environmental justice in Chester City, south of Philadelphia, in Delaware County, Pennsylvania.

Chester has become the dumping ground for the region, and is home to the largest trash incinerator in the United States, which burns around 3,500 tons of trash per day. This 33-year old incinerator is the largest in the United States and has the least amount of pollution controls. Approximately 25% of the trash burned is from New York City. In 2023, NYC sent 195,419 tons of trash to be burned in Chester. Over 147,394 tons of trash came from Queens.

CRCQL is gravely disappointed by the DSNY's plan to continue things as is for the next 10 years with continuing the use of incineration as a disposal method. Right now NYC is complicit in contributing to the environmental racism occurring in the City of Chester.

The incinerator has wreaked havoc on the health and wellbeing of residents in Chester City and the region, leading to childhood asthma rates 5x the national average and cancer rates far beyond the national average.

According to the [Peoples Cancer Incidence Screening Tool](#) - as example, laryngeal cancer is 67% higher than the national average and 39% higher than the state average with other similar numbers for cancer.

We also know that incineration is by far the worst way to manage waste. When trash is burned 70% becomes air pollution and 30% is toxic ash. Toxic ash from Reworld is hauled to Delaware County's landfill and contributes to 55% of the total waste sent to the landfill, roughly 11% from NYC.

By way of comparison to landfilling, a life cycle analysis in the [Zero Waste Plan plan](#) report published by Delaware County, PA confirms that:

- Reworld Delaware Valley's human health and environmental costs total \$337/ton burned, compared to \$144/ton for directly using Rolling Hills Landfill.
- Reworld's human health costs are 23 times higher than those of Rolling Hills Landfill.

CRCQL is currently working with the City of Philadelphia and Delaware County to phase out the incinerator, and we are asking NYC to STOP sending their trash to be burned in Chester ASAP!

NYC Department of Sanitation's must continue to divert waste from incineration through landfilling, organics recycling, and Zero Waste practices. The excessive waste of the big apple is suffocating our citizens. Thank you.



I am testifying for Civics United for Railroad Environmental Solutions, which formed in Queens in 2009, to address quality of life problems from antiquated freight locomotives and waste-export-by-rail. The Department of Sanitation of New York kind of brags that 85% of waste exported from New York City is hauled at some point by freight rail. And their draft Solid Waste Management Plan supports that business-as-usual export-to-disposal. However, DSNY disclosed in its budget hearing testimony on 3-16-26 that its export budget is increasing by \$100M, to \$600M, and that was before the energy cost impacts of the Gulf war.

Also, exporting waste by rail instead of using a different transportation mode doesn't reduce the tonnage or toxicity of waste. Rail export doesn't change the fact that waste export funding is going into corporate pockets out of state and out of the US, instead of staying in NYC as fiscal stimulus, multiplying in the local economy and providing other benefits -- as when local composting of organics provides local employment in the form of good "Green" union jobs, compost for NYC's parks, gardens, and trees, and a host of social benefits. And export by rail doesn't eliminate quality of life, health, and environmental problems in neighborhoods within and outside New York City where all that waste is tipped, processed, hauled, landfilled, and incinerated. Using rail to export New York City's waste is nothing much to brag about. Capturing and diverting waste from export at the increased levels that are in DSNY's Solid Waste Management Plan draft would reduce neighborhood problems, and really be something to brag about. Please shift existing funding to actions that support DSNY's 30% residential and 54% commercial waste diversion goals instead of just business-as-usual funding of filthy, unhealthy waste export by rail.

Why do I say filthy and unhealthy?

- With few exceptions the locomotives that haul waste are high-polluting 1970's diesel technology. See below a photo taken by a resident near the Met oval in Queens on March 8, 2026. You can see Waste Management MSW cans being hauled by ancient locomotives spewing clouds of toxic diesel emissions. Such waste-by-rail movements take place day after day. Spiking diesel prices also impact railroads and other aspects of waste export.



- Especially during the warm weather months, Municipal Solid Waste rail containers too often emit the stench rats love, because a third of the material in this black bag trash is still organics. Here is a photo of dented and punctured Waste Management MSW cans being hauled on the Bay Ridge line by PS 68 in Queens, NYC. The IBX will share the railroad right of way with waste-by-rail.



- Construction & Demolition Debris, C&D, can contain heavy metals, PCBs, asbestos, and other toxics. Yet C&D is crushed, dumped, and hauled in open top rail cars with floor drains, resulting in emissions of toxic blowoff, leachate, and gas in neighborhoods of NYC. To protect public safety a 2023 New York State law mandates solid covers for these rail cars. However, the National Waste and Recycling Association - New York State Chapter, Association of American Railroads, and American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association filed a lawsuit in January 2024 to stop this modest public protection. The case will be heard by Judge Ronnie Abrams in the Southern District of New York. November 2026 is when discovery is due. So, apparently the case will not be heard in 2026. Toxic C&D pollution continues to be dumped on NYC neighborhoods and other communities because private investors -- including international Macquarie/WIN Waste Innovations -- don't want to spend money using rail cars with solid covers.



**CURES - Civics United for Railroad Environmental Solutions**

Published by Mary Arnold · January 31 at 1:04 PM · 🌐

Private investors are making \$\$\$\$\$ by processing, hauling, and landfilling waste at the least cost to themselves. Investors dump costs on residents and communities in the form of air, land, and water pollution and health costs. When are they going to cover their rail cars with "hard tarps", as required by NYS law starting January 1, 2024?! As you can see from this promotional photo, these rail cars are not covered! They are shamelessly advertising one way they are harming families for profit! [Assemblywoman Jenifer Rajkumar](#)



**WIN Waste Innovations**

January 26 at 4:12 PM · 🌐

**#FunFactFriday:** Did you know WIN Waste is one of the largest integrated waste-by-rail companies in North America? 🚂 🗑️ We move more than 4 million tons of waste annually through our rail-served transfer stations — avoiding the carbon emissions of thousands of truck trips. Now that's a WIN. 🏆

[#winwaste](#) [#performancefortheplanet](#)



This muffin top load of C&D in a WIN Waste gondola is being hauled in NYC, covered only by pervious orange netting. The article below cites NYS law about the toxics found in C&D.

## NYC Council Member Holden to NYS: FIX WASTE-BY-RAIL PROBLEMS

*Or Be DENIED New Transfer Station Permit*

Civics  
United for  
Railroad  
Environmental  
Solutions

# CURES

By Mary Parisen-Lavelle, Chair  
Civics United for Railroad Environmental Solutions

**H**ere we go again, folks. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is reviewing another permit application for a new waste-by-rail transfer station: Peconic Environmental Services. The permit application proposes shipping the tonnage of up to 5,300 additional large, Plate F rail gondolas of "C&D Residue" into NYC from Suffolk County annually. All of these rail cars of landfill-bound waste will be handled by the New York & Atlantic Railway and CSX in and around Fresh Pond Yard.

In response to the permit application, on October 20, 2022, Council Member Bob Holden submitted a blistering public comment to DEC. (see Letters, page 12) He said the permit should be denied unless New York State addresses community problems that already can be anticipated. Council Member Holden's letter specifically refers to adverse community impacts caused by a lack of state waste-by-rail containment standards. What does the Peconic Environmental Services application disclose that points to how this industry dumps problems and costs on neighborhoods? What happens to your family when they load waste odors, blowoff, and leachate into rail gondolas with open tops and drains in the bottom?

**The problem of foul odors coming from rail gondolas of "C&D Residue"**

The Peconic Environmental Services permit application discloses information that points to why rail cars hauling "C&D Residue" can emit foul odors and leachate. The application discloses that the transfer station dumps its potential leachate and odor problems into rail gondolas that they ship "away" into your neighborhood. The application says: "FLOOR DRAINS - The facility shall not collect leachate and store it in underground tanks. These are prone to clogging and produce foul odors. Instead, the concrete slab shall be pitched towards the center region of the tipping floor. Moisture is typically absorbed within the C&D material. In the event standing water is discovered, absorbent pads or booms shall be utilized and then disposed of with the C&D material."

**The problem of stinking leachate draining out the bottom of the rail car**

The Peconic Environmental Services permit application says they will use the same type of open rail gondolas that are already being used for "C&D Residue"-by-rail, with railroad compliant tarps. These gondolas are open at the top and have drains in the bottom. The railroad compliant tarps used today, under the CSX tariff, are pervious orange mesh that allows precipitation to enter the rail gondola. Because of the way the bottom of the rail gondolas are shaped, and because they are never completely emptied, filthy leachate both collects in the bottom of the rail car and drains out in your neighborhood.

**The problem of waste blowoff polluting community air**

Since the waste is not completely contained within the rail cars, the cars emit clouds of dusty C&D blowoff in neighborhoods, as they are hauled, classified, and the wind blows through them. And yet the Peconic Environmental Services application says they will test it... "(e) Should any fill material or residue leave the facility for reuse, it shall be analyzed in accordance with the sampling and analysis requirements outlined in section 360.13(e) of Part 360. A minimum of one analysis is required for every 1000 cubic yards of fill material and must follow the criteria outlined in section 360.13(f) of Part 360"

Why would the applicant have to promise to test? What is NYS concerned about finding in the "C&D"? According to what is in the list below, it's toxic pollution! This material is crushed and dumped into rail gondolas that regularly emit possibly contaminated dust that no one is testing into community air!

**Analytical parameters. Fill material samples must be analyzed for:**

- (i) the Metals, PCBs/Pesticides, and Semi-volatile organic compounds listed in subdivision 375-6.8(b) of this Title;
- (ii) asbestos if demolition of structures has occurred on the site;
- (iii) volume of physical contaminants, if present, based on visual observation; and
- (iv) Volatile Organic Compounds listed in subdivision 375-6.8(b) of this Title, if their presence is possible based on site events such as an historic petroleum spill, odors, photoionization detector meter or other field instrument readings.

*N.Y. Comp. Codes R. & Regs. Tit. 6 § 360.13 - Special requirements for predetermined beneficial use of fill material*

Senator Joe Addabbo, Assembly Members Hevesi and Barnwell, and Congress Member Grace Meng have tried to enact legislation to establish standards for containment of waste in a rail car to protect communities. However, today all that "protects" our families from what is in the "C&D Residue" that blows and drains out of rail gondolas is that orange mesh. *Thank you, Council Member Holden for telling New York State this has to stop!*

**The railroad compliant tarps used today, under the CSX tariff, are pervious orange mesh that allows precipitation to enter the rail gondola.**

**What does the Peconic Environmental Services application disclose that points to how this industry dumps problems and costs on neighborhoods?**

**What happens to your family when they load waste odors, blowoff, and leachate into rail gondolas with open tops and drains in the bottom?**

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Again, please, shift existing DSNY funding to actions that result in less waste export tonnage, by whatever transportation mode. Put this funding to work capturing and diverting reusables, recyclables, and compostables for beneficial purposes within NYC and for affordability instead. Thank you.

Mary Arnold, CURES Board Member, [civicsunited@gmail.com](mailto:civicsunited@gmail.com), April 6, 2026

Dear Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management:

I am Alejandra Torres, with the Ironbound Community Corporation. ICC is a community-based non-profit organization in Ironbound, Newark, New Jersey, with over 50 years of environmental justice expertise.

Ironbound neighbors face severe health stressors because of their proximity to major polluters. Adding to the cumulative impacts of these polluting sites is New Jersey's largest garbage incinerator: Reworld Essex, mere yards away from residential homes. This incinerator is [one of the biggest polluters in New Jersey](#). For example, compared to other NJ major facilities with air permits, Reworld Essex is the [#2 emitter of arsenic, hydrogen chloride, mercury, and nitrogen oxides, #3 emitter of beryllium, #4 emitter of carbon tetrachloride, #5 emitter of lead and sulfur dioxide, and #6 emitter of carbon monoxide](#). The Reworld Essex incinerator is a bad actor. It has had [over 800 air permit violations since 2005](#). The most egregious violation was recent. In 2019, the [incinerator burned unauthorized medical waste](#), resulting in pink and purple smoke.

When the [incinerator burns trash, highly toxic chemicals like dioxins are formed in the combustion process](#) and immediately released into the air that Newarkers breathe. That means that when Reworld Essex burns NYC's trash, the lives of Ironbound pay the consequences. Manhattan sends 100% of its waste to incineration, [66% of which goes to Reworld Essex](#). That is environmental injustice. The Ironbound community should not be burdened with others' waste, much less 66% of it!

Approximately 75% of the waste that NYC currently exports is recyclable or compostable. Diverting that material away from export to recycling and composting is crucial. Every dollar spent diverting material away from landfill or incineration reduces the negative environmental and social impacts associated with exporting waste to communities such as the Ironbound district in Newark, New Jersey. Those impacts—including truck traffic, air pollution, and disposal burdens—are currently borne by communities in New York City *and* others. At the same time, diversion activities such as recycling and composting have the potential to retain more economic activity, jobs, and public investment within the city and region. We should consider what spending \$500 million within the five boroughs on recycling and composting could mean for New York City.

Without meaningful changes in policy and practice, New York City will continue exporting roughly eighty percent of its waste to landfill or incineration while harming EJ communities and miss an opportunity to create an infrastructure that provides economic benefits and improves quality of life. ICC ultimately hopes that DSNY will downsize and ultimately end its contracts with incinerators outside New York City, such as Reworld Essex in the Ironbound, Newark.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**Comments of Justin Wood, Director of Policy of  
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest  
to the New York City Council Committee on Sanitation  
Regarding the Draft 2026 Draft Solid Waste Management Plan  
on April 6, 2025**

Chair Sanchez and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Revised Draft 2026 Solid Waste Management Plan published by the Department of Sanitation (DSNY).

The City's long term solid waste management plan is of critical importance to public health, to our environment, and to our economy. Greenhouse gas emissions from the solid waste sector are estimated to make up 12% of New York State's economy-wide emissions – a share roughly equivalent to the state's entire electricity generation sector.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, local pollution and safety hazards associated with solid waste disposal sites, transfer stations, and truck fleets are often concentrated in disadvantaged communities. Despite an unprecedented federal assault on climate resilience, renewable energy, and infrastructure programs, solid waste policy remains largely within municipal and state control and waste reduction, reuse and recycling programs can sustain good, green jobs in and near our city.

To reduce the negative impacts and expense of solid waste disposal over the next decade, the SWMP should function as a blueprint for innovation, expansion of existing programs and infrastructure, and should set a pathway to achieving the diversion goals of the City's Zero Waste Act of 2023, the State's Solid Waste Management Plan, and the economy-wide emissions reductions goals of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act and Scoping Plan.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>New York State Solid Waste Management Plan, December 2023 p. vii. <https://dec.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2024-05/finalsswmp20232.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> See Local Law 86 of 2023: <https://intro.nyc/local-laws/2023-86>; New York State Solid Waste Management Plan, 2023: <https://dec.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2024-05/finalsswmp20232.pdf>; CLCPA Scoping Plan, Chapter 16, <https://climate.ny.gov/Resources/Scoping-Plan>.

The Transform Don't Trash NYC coalition published "[A People's SWMP](#)" including 30 community-driven recommendations for the 2026 plan, and we look forward to continued discussion of these initiatives with DSNY, the Mamdani administration, and the City Council.<sup>3</sup> NYLPI also submitted comments to DSNY on the Draft 2026 SWMP, which are revised below:

## **1. Waste Prevention and Reuse**

We strongly support the inclusion and implementation of waste reduction and recycling initiatives detailed in the Revised Draft 2026 SWMP, including expanded food donation efforts at NYC Public Schools, and by commercial food waste generators; expanded textile recycling; improved access to reuse and repair events; expanded recycling and reuse of construction and demolition materials; and recycling facilities; and passage of producer responsibility (EPR) legislation to incentivize waste reduction and use of recyclable materials by packaging manufacturers.

However, we are concerned that projections of citywide waste generation and diversion included in the Revised Draft 2026 SWMP show that, in sum, the proposed programs are not expected to achieve the goal of diverting 100% of recyclable materials from landfills set by the Zero Waste Act (Local Law 87 of 2023) nor the 2032 goal of a 51% diversion rate for municipal solid waste set by the State's Solid Waste Management Plan.<sup>4</sup> We believe a long-term plan must include a clear path to achieving both the City and State's ambitious and necessary waste reduction and greenhouse gas reduction goals.

For example, the SWMP could include:

- A pathway to significant reductions in disposed waste tonnage and waste export costs over the next decade, with an emphasis on reducing the quantities of waste incinerated in EJ communities such as

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<sup>3</sup> See "A People's SWMP: 30 Recommendations for a Solid Waste System that is Healthy and Safe for all New Yorkers," October 2025, <https://www.nylpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/A-Peoples-SWMP-Report.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> New York State Solid Waste Management Plan p. 60.

the ReWorld Essex facility in New Jersey. As diversion rates increase with investments in education, enforcement, and recycling and composting facilities, DSNY could reduce the number of refuse collection routes, increase the number of compost and recycling collection routes, and scale back or eliminate long-term contracts with waste incinerators and landfills.

- A comprehensive plan to divert construction and demolition waste from disposal while raising safety, employment, and recycling standards for haulers and facilities, and incentivizing utilization of C&D processors that achieve high diversion rates.

## **2. Commercial Utilization of Marine and Rail Transfer Stations**

The Revised Draft 2026 SWMP states that DSNY will monitor and assess the viability of accepting commercial waste at marine and rail transfer stations, currently exclusively used to containerize and export residential waste, in conjunction with the implementation of the Commercial Waste Zones (CWZ) program.<sup>5</sup>

We urge the Department to commit to accepting commercial waste at specific marine and rail-based facilities, especially where these facilities are near dense businesses districts and could substantially reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT), fuel, and labor costs for contractors participating in the new Commercial Waste Zones (CWZ) system.

A central aim of the current SWMP is to mitigate unfair concentrations of polluting and dangerous truck-based transfer stations in disadvantaged communities by directing DSNY and private sector partners to construct marine and rail-based waste facilities across the five boroughs. This environmental justice priority was memorialized in the Waste Equity Law (Local Law 152 of 2018) which required DSNY to reduce permitted tonnage at truck-based transfer stations in three overburdened communities, and by the Commercial Waste Zones law (Local Law 199 of 2019), which directs DSNY to consider the location and impacts of transfer stations when awarding contracts to private haulers under a zoned waste system.

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<sup>5</sup>DSNY Revised Draft SWMP, p. 13.

We stress that the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the 2006 SWMP included plans to accept significant quantities of commercial waste collected by private haulers at four marine transfer stations during overnight hours and determined that this would not result in adverse noise or other impacts to adjacent communities.<sup>6</sup>

### **3. Investing in Compost and Marine Transfer Facilities**

Unlike the current SWMP, the Revised Draft 2026 SWMP does not call for new or retrofitted facilities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce local air and water pollution, or to more fairly distribute the burdens of solid waste infrastructure. We believe this long-term plan is an opportunity to begin planning for specific capital investments that would advance these objectives and fulfill the waste equity promises of the current SWMP:

A) Building on the success and expansion of DSNY's Staten Island Composting Facility, we urge that the SWMP include plans for similar compost sites - including Rikers Island - to keep pace with necessary increases in curbside residential and commercial programs. Such facilities could substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with landfilling, co-digestion, and incineration of organic waste, could make truck routes more efficient and reduce VMT, and sustain hundreds of good, local jobs.

B) Following the failure to construct a planned barge-based facility for recyclables on the Gansevoort peninsula in Manhattan, we urge that the 2026 SWMP include plans for a similar Manhattan site to transport recyclables and construction and demolition waste from the borough via barge.

### **4. Commercial Waste Zones**

We are glad to see the landmark Commercial Waste Zones program created by Local Law 199 of 2019 centered as a major waste reduction initiative in the Revised Draft 2026 SWMP. This reform has enormous potential to uplift historically exploited workers, eliminate millions of unnecessary truck miles from our streets, and divert

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<sup>6</sup> DSNY Final Environmental Impact Statement for the New Solid Waste Management Plan, 2006, p. 2769, [https://a860-gpp.nyc.gov/concern/parent/xg94ht02g/file\\_sets/nv935633c](https://a860-gpp.nyc.gov/concern/parent/xg94ht02g/file_sets/nv935633c).

millions of tons of commercial waste from landfills and incinerators.

The public does not yet have access to new data being collected on quantities of waste collected, disposed, and recycled in zones that have been implemented. However, initial data collected in 2025 showed a low overall diversion rate for businesses in the Central Queens zone, with just 26% of waste collected for recycling and composting.<sup>7</sup>

We appreciate that price incentives included in CWZ contracts create substantial per-ton discounts for businesses that properly source-separate organic waste and recyclables as the program is rolled out in each zone. We recommend the inclusion of additional mechanisms in the 2026 SWMP to align and strengthen incentives for CWZ awardees and businesses to reduce disposed waste:

A) During and following the transition to the new system, DSNY, zone awardees, and subcontractors should launch extensive customer education on food rescue programs, community-based micro haulers, and waste reduction strategies, and incorporate these services into the extensive outreach, education, and enforcement strategies the department is undertaking in each zone;

B) As called for in the 2018 Commercial Waste Zones Implementation Plan, DSNY should seek to fund and scale up food rescue, re-use, micro-hauling, and local composting solutions for commercial waste, and incorporate innovation and pilot programs into the CWZ program;

C) DSNY can further explore ways to incentivize waste reduction in each zone. For example, some policy experts have proposed that the City create a diversion escrow fund that could be distributed to CWZ contractors that successfully achieve waste reduction goals in each zone.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> DSNY Commercial Waste Zone Annual Report, September 2025, p. 20, <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/dsny/downloads/resources/reports/cwz-implimentation-plan/cwz-annual-report-2025.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> Ben Miller, “Redesigning Commercial Waste Management in New York: Maximizing the Benefits of Franchise Zones,” Environmental Law In New York, October, 2019.

## 5. Fair Enforcement of Recycling Laws

We are supportive of the Revised Draft SWMP's framing of recycling law enforcement as an educational opportunity, and the proposal for on-the-ground neighborhood walk-throughs with community leaders and elected officials to identify issues and target enforcement efforts. We were concerned by the lack of enforcement of recycling rules under the previous administration. Following the rollout of citywide curbside organics collection in 2024, the amount of source-separated residential organics collected by DSNY increased after the City began issuing fines to non-compliant buildings and then decreased significantly after the Adams Administration ordered DSNY to suspend most enforcement of these recycling laws in April 2025.<sup>9</sup>

We encourage DSNY to lay out a targeted and progressive approach to recycling and organics enforcement in the SWMP, prioritizing the largest violators of source separation rules, such as large residential and commercial buildings, large food markets and grocery stores, large restaurants and cafeterias, and corporate chains.

Critically, the 2026 SWMP should also signal support for monitoring and enforcement efforts to ensure that CWZ awardees with a history of safety, labor, and environmental violations are meeting the highest performance standards in these areas, and face penalties including liquidated damages and termination of contracts in the event of poor performance.

Finally, the Draft 2026 SWMP finds that a large segment of NYC commercial waste is generated by small businesses with less than 100 employees.<sup>10</sup> Increasing diversion rates by this sector will be critical to reducing citywide disposed waste and can work in tandem with programs to make diversion solutions accessible and affordable for small businesses. We urge that the 2026 SWMP include new waste diversion programs targeted to small business, including:

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<sup>9</sup>NYC Independent Budget Office, "Curbside Composting: Current Trends in New York City's Organics Collection," April, 2026, <https://www.ibo.nyc.gov/assets/ibo/downloads/pdf/environment/2026/2026-april-curbside-composting-current-trends-in-nycs-organics-collection.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> Revised Draft 2026 SWMP, p. 55.

- A) Enabling businesses to share street containers for organics, recycling, and refuse, improving sidewalk accessibility, making it easier for businesses with limited storage space to source separate organic waste and recyclables.
- B) Encouraging small businesses to cooperatively contract for waste and recycling services, and empowering Business Improvement Districts to negotiate for shared organics, recycling, and refuse collection services for their members;
- C) Exploring a program to enable space-constrained small businesses to utilize DSNY bins and collection services for organics collection.

## **6. Commercial Waste Characterization Study**

To understand the quantity and composition of the entire commercial waste stream and target diversion programs to businesses and zones, the 2026 SWMP should include plans to complete a comprehensive waste characterization study (including construction and demolition waste) as soon as possible. Current law gives DSNY until 2032 to complete a study, which is far too late to gain a basic understanding of this massive waste stream.<sup>11</sup>

## **7. Renewable Energy and Storage on Landfills**

We strongly support the proposal in the Draft 2026 SWMP to study the feasibility of building utility-scale solar facilities at Fresh Kills Landfill in Staten Island and the Edgemere Landfill in Far Rockaway.<sup>12</sup> Given New York City's pressing energy needs, rising electricity costs, and overreliance on polluting and inefficient peaker plants, we urge that these project advance as soon as possible, in partnership with the New York Power Authority

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<sup>11</sup> See Local Law 14 of 2025, <https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/newyorkcity/latest/NYAdmin/0-0-0-221553>.

<sup>12</sup> DSNY Revised Draft 2026 SWMP p. 160-161

(NYPA), the New York State Energy Research and Development Agency (NYSERDA), the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS), and the Mayor’s Office for Climate and Environmental Justice (MOCEJ), and that such plans provision of discounted energy to surrounding low- and moderate- income communities.

Utilizing landfills for renewable energy and storage facilities is also an opportunity to incorporate public education and dialogue on environmental justice, climate change, renewable energy and storage technologies, and the legacy of landfills and brownfields.

## **8. Long-Term Funding**

The Draft 2026 SWMP shows that department budgets have fluctuated from year to year and faced significant budget cuts in FY2021, and that city funding was reduced in FY2022 and FY2024.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, New York State grant funding for DSNY has also fluctuated, and volatility in state and federal support will almost certainly be exacerbated by a federal administration hostile to climate and infrastructure programs.

Inconsistent financial support has often constrained DSNY’s ability to implement waste reduction strategies, including outreach and education, community composting, textile recycling, and hazardous waste collections. This has contributed to stagnating citywide diversion rates and confusion among residents, business owners, and employees about rules and best practices for recycling and diversion. We strongly recommend that the 2026 SWMP identify state and local legislative solutions that would generate stable and meaningful long-term funding sources for waste diversion, sustainability, and capital expenses, such as:

- A) Expansion of extended producer responsibility programs to include packaging and other major components of the residential and commercial waste stream;
  
- B) Implementation of the State’s long-delayed Cap and Invest Program estimated to generate billions annually for climate and resiliency projects including solid waste management;<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> DSNY Revised Draft SWMP, p. 120.

<sup>14</sup> New York State Clean Air Initiative <https://capandinvest.ny.gov/>

- C) A statewide surcharge on disposed waste, as outlined in the New York State Solid Waste Management plan;<sup>15</sup>
- D) Interim state funding via an expansion of the New York State Sustainable Future Fund to at least \$3 billion annually and allocating funds for sustainable waste management programs.

We look forward to working closely with the Council, DSNY, the Mamdani administration, and New York State legislators to transform our unsustainable and costly waste export model to a system with far less waste generation with consistent and long-term investments in sustainable and local reuse, composting, and recycling industries.

Yours,

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<sup>15</sup> New York State Solid Waste Management Plan p. 61



**Testimony of Alia Soomro, Deputy Director for New York City Policy  
New York League of Conservation Voters  
City Council Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management  
Oversight Hearing on Finalizing the City’s Draft 2026-2036 Solid Waste Management Plan  
April 6, 2026**

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

One of NYLCV’s top priorities is achieving our zero waste by 2030 goal to not only curb our greenhouse gas emissions but to send less waste to landfills, which are disproportionately located in low income communities and communities of color. The higher rates of pollution from landfills and incinerators in these communities cause disproportionately higher cases of asthma, cancer, and other health issues and compound already existing environmental and racial inequities. The City must do everything in its power to address these environmental injustices. This also means **our city needs to move towards a system where we reduce waste in the first place** in order to minimize the burden of waste on environmental justice communities (whether in New York City or beyond), and a system where resources are reused and recovered.

**NYLCV supports the overall goals of DSNY’s draft NYC 2026 Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP26)**, which outlines a path for the reduction, recovery, and responsible management of New York City’s residential, institutional, commercial, special, and C&D waste for the next decade and, when possible, lay the groundwork for waste management practices in the decades beyond.

**[NYLCV submitted longer, written comments on DSNY’s Draft SWMP.](#) With that said, there are major waste-related laws and goals that DSNY needs to fully implement and ramp up funding for outreach and education efforts, including, but not limited to, the Commercial Waste Zones law, the Zero Waste Act of 2023, the zero waste goals outlined in [PlaNYC: Getting Sustainability Done](#), and increasing the city’s recycling rates through education, outreach, and enforcement.** We also urge DSNY to comprehensively plan its zero waste initiatives with other city and state planning initiatives, including (but not limited to) the NYS SWMP, the development of the NYC Environmental Justice for All Plan, the NYC Urban Forest Plan, and any future *PlaNYC* initiatives.

### Commercial Waste Zones

NYLCV strongly supported the passage of Local Law 199 of 2019, establishing the City's first Commercial Waste Zones (CWZ) program. Championed by a wide group of stakeholders, this law will overhaul the City's antiquated and inefficient commercial waste management system by dividing the City into 20 zones, limiting each zone to a maximum of three of private sanitation companies and five carters to provide containerized commercial waste collection services from dumpsters and compactors citywide, all selected through a competitive bid process (awardees).

NYLCV stands [with advocates](#) calling on DSNY to release an implementation timeline for the entire CWZs system by the end of 2026. We hope the City will dedicate the requisite amount of resources and funding for staffing, education, and outreach to fully implement the CWZ law and incentivize businesses and haulers to improve their recycling rates. NYLCV also urges DSNY to continue working towards transitioning to zero-emission vehicles for DSNY and commercial sanitation trucks. Lastly, we urge the next Mayoral Administration to work with the City Council in expanding commercial organics separation requirements to all food businesses by the end of 2026. This expansion must be complemented with robust outreach, education, and enforcement.

### Organics

In order to make our city cleaner, more sustainable, and work towards reaching our zero waste goals, NYLCV strongly supports organic waste recycling as well as reducing our food waste in the first place. A [recent report by the Independent Budget Office](#) (IBO) found that "the City's mandatory composting program, launched in October 2024, produced early progress. But the most meaningful gains were driven by fine-based enforcement. In April 2025, when fine-based enforcement began, weekly organics collection tonnage nearly tripled over the four-week period. That sharp response suggests that fine-based enforcement is an effective tool to increase compliance. When enforcement was effectively paused later that month, momentum stalled for the rest of the year. From May through December 2025, the final months of the Adams administration, weekly organics tonnage declined by 43%." IBO has also highlighted that the organics processing budget is underfunded.

As the FY27 budget process is upon us, NYLCV urges DSNY to increase staffing to ramp up outreach, education, and enforcement efforts for the residential organics program, including ensuring that any educational materials are in the designated citywide languages and any other language deemed appropriate. DSNY must leverage connections to local organizations, elected officials, and Community Boards to educate residents about this program in order to change behaviors when it comes to recycling organic waste. DSNY must also continue supporting and working with the Community Composting Network and other local organizations to build awareness and change behavior towards organic waste recycling.

### Recycling

According to [DSNY's 2023 Waste Characterization Study](#), "much of what could be recycled was not separated for recycling. Approximately one-third of the materials DSNY collected curbside were recyclable metals, glass, plastics (MGP), and paper—about 1 million tons of DSNY

managed waste that could have been recovered in 2023. However, of that amount, only about 600,000 tons of MGP and paper (60%) were separated for recycling by residents and institutions.” Additionally, the study stated that metal, glass, plastic and paper recycling outcomes have declined from previous study years; capture rates have decreased, while contamination rates have increased. It’s clear that New York City still has a long way to go when it comes to recycling rates and enforcement.

NYLCV supports DSNY’s overall goal of improving and expanding residential and commercial recycling recovery efforts. Most importantly, this means the City must increase funding for DSNY staffing to educate and enforce in order to increase the diversion of materials collected curbside. Regardless of the specific type of materials, DSNY needs to hold more in-person recycling drop-off events in accessible areas of the city, whether it’s for e-waste, textiles, or paint. DSNY must mobilize a citywide network of local organizations, elected officials, Community Boards in order to increase awareness and education about the different types of recycling, as well as door-to-door neighborhood multilingual canvassing. We also support DSNY’s goal of promoting packaging reuse and reducing the amount of packaging used and disposed of. Below we outline more on our support for an extended producer responsibility (EPR) law at the state level.

#### Waste Equity

NYLCV supports the goals set out in Local Law 152 of 2018, the Waste Equity Law, to reduce waste transfer capacity in the three most impacted communities, namely Brooklyn Community District 1, Queens Community District 12, and Bronx Community Districts 1 and 2, while prohibiting increases in the amounts of waste that could be sent to facilities in communities already handling more than 10% of the City’s trash. DSNY should accept and process commercial solid waste at all city-owned or operated marine and rail transfer stations, and to publicly report the amount and type of waste received at such stations on an annual basis. DSNY’s marine transfer stations (one in Manhattan, two in Brooklyn, and one in Queens) have reduced long-range truck traffic and associated climate and air pollution by containerizing and transporting municipal solid waste via barge and rail, more fuel efficient modes of transportation that avoid congested highway bridges and tunnels.

#### Waste Infrastructure

When it comes to DSNY’s waste-related infrastructure, we urge the City to take action to upgrade the City’s wastewater treatment plants’ digesters to process organic waste into renewable energy to reduce local pollution and help address food waste, including exploring the feasibility of public-private partnerships. We also support DSNY’s goal of evaluating opportunities for co-location of new and innovative wastewater and/or organics waste management infrastructure at city-owned properties, including locations that have been previously evaluated, such as Rikers Island; expanding codigestion and beneficial use of biosolids and biogas; and pursuing the goal of 100% diversion of biosolids from landfills by 2030 by diversifying end-use sites and vendors.

NYLCV also supports DSNY’s efforts to containerize our waste since it will reduce litter on the ground, the mounds of plastic trash bags on our sidewalks, and the rat population. We also

underscore the need for long-term funding for Automated Side-Loading Trucks and containers. Going forward, NYLCV hopes the City learns from the pilot in Manhattan CB9 and Brooklyn CB2 to implement and fully fund a permanent citywide waste containerization program on our streets to streamline waste and prevent buildup on sidewalks and trashrooms.

#### Intro 355

NYLCV supports Intro 355, sponsored by Council Member Nurse, which would require the Commissioner of Sanitation to designate organic waste as a recyclable material for city agencies. With the rollout of our citywide curbside organics program, collection of food waste is now available in all five boroughs. This program prevents food scraps from being thrown in landfills, preventing further emissions and turning them into compost. Building off of this program, this bill would allow city agencies to lead by example and help us move closer to our zero waste by 2030 mandate.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

April 8, 2026

TO: NYC Council Members

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on DSNY's revised draft solid waste management plan after having watched the hearing in full.

Unfortunately, I did not have the benefit of reviewing the revisions to the original draft SWMP as it was only posted on the Friday before this hearing at 5pm, making it impossible for interested parties to read and respond in time for this hearing. I spent hours reading the original draft SWMP and writing and submitting comments, there is no way for me to quickly see what comments were included in the revision. All the comments received for the Draft SWMP should be made publicly available in order to see what concerns the public, which comments were accepted and which were not.

My takeaways and comments from the hearing are primarily:

1. REDUCING WASTE APPEARS TO BE A LOW PRIORITY - BEHIND CONTAINERIZATION & CWZ
  - Although it's critical to pass the PRRIA/EPR bill, it is not the only answer to reducing waste, which seemed to be the only answer offered by Commissioner Anderson multiple times. Especially as the bill might not pass. Industry push back is fierce and they are well funded. Industry does not want to take responsibility for the excessive toxic waste they inflict upon consumers. Industry does not police itself and there is not enough of a powerful force sticking up for us - the consumers and tax payers of NYC. While I hope the bill passes, what is DSNY's Plan B?
  
2. WE NEED MORE RESOURCES DEDICATED TO REDUCING WASTE TO INCREASE PARTICIPATION IN RECYCLING - ESPECIALLY ORGANICS DIVERSION
  - DSNY repeatedly states that they don't need additional resources. DSNY believes it has all the resources it needs for current programs. I believe the Commissioner actually said they have "more than enough" resources to do the job. However, if it had all the resources and funding it needs, then why have recycling rates flatlined for years? DSNY has enough resources to maintain the flatlining recycling program (business as usual) and leaves it up to New Yorkers to use these programs, when an aggressive, well funded marketing campaign, including the use of social marketing tactics to change behavior, is needed..
    - Significant behavior change and a cultural shift is needed. The Commissioner seemed to say he had not heard it framed that way. NYC is the melting pot of America with so many different languages and cultural differences - all of which need to receive customized education and outreach efforts, so they can better understand how to recycle and why it's important.

- Related to organics collection, I have heard DSNY state that their outreach and education efforts are largely focused on door to door canvassing by their Enforcement Officers to buildings that receive violations.
  - We need to know what they are learning from all this canvassing and what they are doing to address concerns they are confronted with. That information would go a long way in helping other buildings citywide. DSNY should provide a summary report of this canvassing ASAP and update it regularly. I was disappointed that no information on this canvassing effort was shared during the hearing. All other outreach & education is contracted out to non-profit partners - which are underfunded and have to fight for funding every year.
  - Many buildings are asking for more than one organics collection day per week. I assume DSNY is hearing this directly during the door to door canvassing. This is an example of the data that DSNY should be compiling and sharing as it's a common concern that needs to be addressed.
    - DSNY stated they would need more resources to add organics collection days and should be quantifying this need and submitting a funding request to the Council asap - before the summer months when a pilot could be launched.
  - Some buildings apparently hire supplemental service from private carters for extra organics collection - more than once a week. DSNY should also be researching this and sharing that data as well.
- The Commissioner stated that as long as we have trash, we will need incinerators! (WTE or landfills). Perhaps true in the short term, but is there any interest or motivation in moving toward less toxic, more sustainable waste practices? Many of us seek better solutions - and we have them.
  - Health impacts in EJ communities are not the purview of DSNY either. It appears that DSNY's job does not include making efforts to reduce waste sent to be burned or buried or improve living conditions in those areas that are polluted by their work. Is anyone else going to take responsibility and at least appear to make any effort to reduce this problem? This falls on City Council and the Mayor's office and I'm not sure all of these new electeds understand yet the extent of the problem we create with our waste. If they did, perhaps we can come up with some out of the box solutions..

### 3. THE CITY COUNCIL MUST PASS EXPANSION OF COMMERCIAL ORGANIC WASTE COLLECTION TO ALL BUSINESSES

- Int 31 currently only has 7 sponsors. Please rally your colleagues in the city council to add their names and pass this legislation asap. Please do not let this languish until year end and risk another carryover. DSNY has been asking for years.

- **I very much thank the current sponsors!** Shaun Abreu, Sandy Nurse, Farah N. Louis, Gale A. Brewer, Selvena N. Brooks-Powers, Shahana K. Hanif, Justin E. Sanchez

#### 4. CONTAINERIZATION & COMMERCIAL WASTE ZONES (LONG DELAYED) ARE DSNY'S IMMEDIATE STATED PRIORITIES & FOCUS AREAS

- The rollout of the containerization of waste using empire bins should include dedicated empire bins for organics, as the schools have in the pilot districts. This should, at minimum, be piloted in the residential pilot in MN9 asap. This could alleviate building complaints about not having enough space for "compost" bins for individual buildings - which is a constant refrain that I assume DSNY is aware of.
  - What has DSNY learned from the MN9 empire bins pilot and the schools that have dedicated organics empire bins? A report must be requested and required to be shared publicly to help other buildings and districts. . Is legislation needed to require this information? If so, please draft.
  - I fear that DSNY's prioritization of CWZs and containerization - while important and long delayed - will kick waste reduction efforts even further down the road and our recycling rates will continue to stagnate.
  - The concerns from the environmental justice communities negatively impacted by the movement of NYC's waste need to be amplified so more of NYC residents are aware of and concerned about the burdens and health impacts we inflict on our fellow New Yorkers in the South Bronx, North Brooklyn and South East Queens. I applaud those Council Members like Chair Sanchez and Zhuang who made strong cases about the inequities in their districts.

#### 5. NYCHA

- It is inexcusable that NYCHA has such poor recycling rates and hardly any access to organics collection. Much work to be done and prioritized. This is an obvious area that needs more resources.
  - Thankfully we have organizations like Compost Power, Green City Force and Inner City Green Team working in some campuses. These organizations are the much needed boots on the ground that we need more of and should receive increased funding to work in more campuses to help NYCHA residents..
- Gale Brewer asked for the NYCHA data that includes which campuses have received brown and smart orange bins. This information should also be made publicly available. I have heard of orange bins being removed from one complex.

#### 6. CONSTRUCTION & DEMOLITION:

- It's long past time that DSNY require commercial waste data. Happy to hear that a waste characterization study of commercial waste is scheduled for 2028 but I wish we didn't have to wait that long.

- COMMERCIAL/RESIDENTIAL CONVERSIONS: One issue not mentioned during the hearing is the significant amount of waste created by commercial to residential conversions . I have seen first hand with a building that was sold for conversion leaving an astounding amount of office waste that was simply hauled away by private carters - sight unseen. Another HUGE waste problem that seemingly has low awareness but needs attention asap!.
  - Some agency should be partnering w/DSNY to monitor this - Housing & Building committee might be a good start. Please start connecting those dots asap and require these buildings and haulers to report data as part of any conversion

I have three final requests

1. As all city agencies are required to submit their recycling plans, those plans should be shared and made publicly available. The city needs to set an example if it expects New Yorkers to manage their own waste properly and improve on their recycling practices. I constantly hear that “the city doesn’t do it, why should I”?
2. Provide an update on how much of the organics DSNY collects is actually composted vs co-digested. Last I heard, 60% went to Newtown Creek for co-digestion and 40% composted. I believe there are other compost sites that we send to (besides SI). There was some information included in the draft SWMP, but I am interested in the latest percentage breakdown, as well as any efforts that will be made to divert more organics collected for actual “composting” as this is how orange smart bins are marked. I see many opportunities to expand actual composting - community and mid scale, throughout the city. Can composting on Rikers be expanded? If so, when and at what cost?
3. How do we unleash Mayor Mamdani’s followers and engage with the new Department of Mass Engagement to encourage more New Yorkers to compost and recycle?

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Allison Allen

**Testimony to NYC Council Sanitation and Solid Waste Management Committee**  
**NYC's 2026 Solid Waste Management Plan**

**April 6, 2026**

*Audrey Jenkins, MPH*

Dear members of the NYC Council Sanitation and Solid Waste Management Committee,

My name is Audrey Jenkins, and I am a doctoral candidate at The New School studying public empowerment in urban social-ecological policymaking. I am also a quantitative research associate at the Center for New York City Affairs Economic and Fiscal Policy unit where I analyze local labor and wage inequities.

The 2026 NYC Solid Waste Management Plan is much more than a plan to reduce waste and mitigate its impacts. Waste systems have deep social implications as the societal value of the materials we discard is both established and distributed by laws, programs, and pre-existing social and economic inequities. This has historically subjected communities to environmental injustices while simultaneously devaluing and ultimately limiting access to these materials.

In this light, SWMP26 is a declaration of the City's desire to shift how it values and distributes that value of discarded materials, and with what social impact. The revised SWMP26 clearly seeks to establish circular economies that minimize environmental injustices, therefore raising the value of discarded materials, however economic equity in the distribution of these valued materials is not seriously considered. Furthermore, broad participation in designing the city's solid waste systems is left out entirely.

I ask the City Council and DSNY to revise the SMWP26 to:

- 1) **Make equitable distribution of both the use value and economic value created by circular economies an explicit objective of the ten-year plan.** Reuse materials have direct use value (e.g. using compost to amend soil) and economic value (city contracts for diversion and processing, and product sales) that should be maximized for the equitable benefit of New Yorkers. Equitable opportunities can be achieved by ensuring:
  - a) that the demand for use value in New York City neighborhoods is prioritized and fulfilled in the ways that communities desire and with secure funding,
  - b) that the quality and distribution of enterprising resources like land, start-up costs, and other funding needs for engaging in circular economies is accessible, particularly in racially marginalized and lower-income communities.

This goes far beyond the M/WBE contracting goals mentioned in the draft SWMP26, requiring intentional cultivation of knowledge, resource access, and pathways to entrepreneurship in the ways that New Yorkers desire and equitably across neighborhoods.

### **1.1 Organics recommendations:**

The City currently contracts with regional vendors for high throughput pre-processing of organics that is then either processed by those vendors, or is delivered to a processing site like the Staten Island Composting Facility or waste water treatment plant like Newtown Creek. As curbside organics collection rates increase, the city will need additional capacity to pre-process and process organics collected by DSNY. Land access and start-up costs are often prohibitive for everyday New Yorkers, creating unique barriers of entry into this specific industry. This is primarily “economic value”.

#### ***However, New Yorkers are not just interested in scale, but in quality.***

Many residents are interested in expanding **hyper-local collection and processing at the city block and neighborhood levels** to both offset DSNY collection and hauling burdens, educate and engage the public, and produce high quality compost alongside community-focused resilience resources like food production. This is both “use value” and “economic value” - especially because the quality of small-scale compost exceeds industrial compost in application tests for urban farming.

These desires generally fall in the “community composting” category, which is currently sidelined in SWMP26. **No plans have been made to expand, secure additional funds, or ensure equitable access to community composting in SWMP26.**

The City should collaborate with entrepreneurs in lower-income communities to address both barriers to competitive contract applications in the organics processing industry and support needed for community composting activities that communities desire.

Explicit economic equity objectives in SWMP26 also allows the City to take greater advantage of State resources, particularly around organics. The State’s SWMP goal #4.2.9 (page 47) indicates that the State will “provide financial assistance for local, nonprofit, and small-scale organics collection and processing operations” starting next year. This means that the City could use its own SWMP to advocate that state dollars reach neighborhoods and composters equitably in our city. The city can make a commitment to support and grow our already diverse ecosystem of local composting operations through mechanisms like low-cost land use agreements and city contracts to better position and prepare local enterprises and organizations for access to those financial benefits, and ensure that these operators receive timely information and direct support for accessing these State funding opportunities.

### **Recommended changes to 2. Organics Diversion and Recovery Program:**

Addition: “2.8 Establish pathways and equity standards for organics contracts”

Edit initiative title “2.7 *Expand* support for community composting” and add milestones:

- Establish reliable and accessible community compost quality testing resources
- Assess and develop pathways for equitably fulfilling demand for community composting resources in collaboration with community-based entrepreneurs

## **1.2 Go beyond M/WBE for equity**

Building explicit social equity measures in our essential services systems like waste and circularity is an invaluable tool for New York, the city with the highest income inequality in the country. Across all NYC households, 62% are economically insecure, and 50% struggle to meet basic needs. This inequity is racially stratified, with rising and persistent unemployment and labor force discouragement over the past year among New Yorkers of color, with Black unemployment now at 8.6%, compared to just 3% among white workers. History shows that New Yorkers of color experience deeper, longer-lasting instability and hardship from economic downturns. Ensuring that communities are integrated into essential services can help flip the script of New York inequity.

This will require a concerted effort across city agencies including DSNY, land-stewarding agencies, Small Business Services (SBS), and the Mayor's Office of Contract Services (MOCS) to go beyond existing M/WBE methods for equitable contracting and goal with deep support and engagement around equity and access.

The revised draft SWMP has not incorporated equity at this level as an explicit objective. *Omitting this objective from the plan fundamentally builds inequity into NYC's solid waste management systems.*

- 2) **Use the SWMP26 as an opportunity to deepen democracy.** Waste is everyone's business as an intimate part of our daily lives; how we design our waste systems impacts our relationship with waste itself as well as with each other. The closest the revised SWMP26 comes to proposing public participation in waste system design is goal 1.7. Convene New York City's Circular Economy Stakeholders, however this goal does not list residents, building managers, or non-circular economy businesses as stakeholders, and currently provides no indication of the nature of this convening and does not suggest a structure for sharing decision-making power with stakeholders. Instead, the goals states that "DSNY will lead the development of a virtual hub to increase coordination, compile research, collect data, and share best practices," with no indication that stakeholders will be engaged using ideal methods for collectively defining and imagining needs, desires, and pathways for equity and quality of life in the city.

On page 28 of its SWMP, New York State includes in its vision an aim to "strive for full public participation, fairness, and environmental justice" by ensuring "that all New York State residents have the opportunity to meaningfully engage and participate in materials management planning in their communities."

While the State Department of Environmental Conservation reviews the SWMP draft over the next months, the City and State have an opportunity to pursue this vision of "meaningful participation," by:

- 1) extending the public feedback period to the end of summer 2026,

2) building participation objectives into the SWMP for next 10 years of implementation, with funding for compensated and equity-centered participation such as citizen's assemblies, local waste system and circularity visioning and system development processes, and outreach and engagement for Solid Waste Advisor Boards.

**Recommended changes to SWMP26:**

Add "9. SWMP36 Public Participation" to the SWMP26 list of programs, with the following milestones:

- Gather feedback on the SWMP26 development process
- Design a public participation approach for developing SWMP36 (for public feedback and finalize by 2029)
- Initiate SWMP36 development in 2030, with the first draft due to the public much earlier (for example by 2033)

I am grateful for the City's efforts with SWMP26, and for venues like the City Council hearings and SWAB meetings for collecting public input, and for all of the people who continue to steward these spaces in a deep spirit of public empowerment. There is still much to do as we shape a sustainable social and ecological future. Thank you for your time and serious engagement with and incorporation of the feedback you are receiving on SWMP26.

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April 8, 2026

To: The Honorable City Councilmember Justin Sanchez, and members of the City Council Committee of Sanitation and Solid Waste Management

From: Ellen M. Cooper, NYC Resident [REDACTED]

Re: Achieving a Culture Shift

I am writing to reflect on one of the issues discussed during the April 6, 2026 Hearing on the Solid Waste Management Plan. I thank you and the Committee for the thorough and thoughtful questioning of the Sanitation Commissioner during the entire hearing, and for your excellent leadership.

You said at the end of Monday's hearing that "for success, we need a culture shift." I agree and assume you mean success in diverting material away from landfills and incineration.

I am a Master Composter 2023 (through the NYC Compost Project), Trash Academy graduate 2024, active member of Manhattan SWAB Organics Committee, former member of Manhattan SWAB. I am also an Award-winning Public Relations and Media expert. During more than four decades as a Communications Executive in the Media and Cable Television industry, I have learned what it takes to achieve massive public awareness and buy-in.

If NYC is not planning to stop transporting to landfill and incineration anytime soon, then the only way to mitigate the environmental damage we cause in these communities, is to drastically reduce the amount of material that we send to these facilities. Firstly, to substantially reduce the organic waste sent to landfill, and secondly, to limit the toxic and bulk material that is burned.

All of this requires not only an easy-to-use system, but also, a willing and engaged citizenry.

#### BULK & TOXIC MATERIAL:

Building the system for diverting bulk and toxic material from residents is doable, but requires a rethink to provide more, easier ways for New Yorkers to drop off or have picked up things that can be diverted. A network of public/private initiatives that focuses on reuseable, repairable, shareable, rentable, recyclable items, especially bulk items like furniture, toys, sports equipment, lighting or gadgets/machinery, etc. will not only stop this material from burning, but it can create a secondary green economy with new jobs, job training and infrastructure. I have previously written testimony about this (submitted 1/15/26) and remind you of Anna Sachs' brilliant suggestion regarding creating a city Department of Circularity.

#### ORGANICS:

But to get 8+ million residents' food and organic waste out of landfills and into beneficial use, we depend on each individual household. Here's where your culture shift becomes imperative. Our current method of the occasional mailer, the occasional bus ad will NOT result in the culture shift you desire. Taking the current path, we will never improve our diversion of organics. People need to be inspired, motivated, educated, activated. A multi-disciplinary think tank including marketers, educators, and government could bring new ideas into development. (Add someone from San Francisco for good measure.) To evolve a culture, we need many groups on board: community groups of all kinds, peer groups, public schools and colleges, churches, artists, arts organizations, film, music, outdoor festivals, The Sanitation Foundation, SWABs, environmental groups and more. New York is rich with options. But more than anything, we need to deputize and empower the thousands of people who have graduated from the Trash Academy and the Master Composter courses, and all the people involved in community gardens and Community Composting. They are educated, passionate and want this program to succeed, desperately! (Brown bin + Community Composting). Send them out to do interviews, demonstrations, conduct tours, create fun events. Empower them to make social media content, answer questions, visit buildings and schools, let people join, spread the word, often and everywhere. Make a "Compost Hub" online where all questions can get answered. And support it all with Marketing and PR dollars. Only then might we move the needle.

Respectfully,

Ellen M. Cooper

Manhattan, NYC

## ***Response to April 6<sup>th</sup> Hearing held by NYC City council***

*My name is Katherine Hanner. I am a member of the Manhattan SWAB and a longtime resident of Morningside Heights. Here are my thoughts*

I am heartened to hear that Commissioner Anderson believes that more outreach and education is required in order for us to reach higher diversion rates. To that end, I encourage DSNY to implement these two simple but effective strategies, both of which have negligible costs. Both involve engaging managing agents/building owners.

First, DSNY should **utilize the recycling Coordinator email addresses already collected by HPD** to educate and inform building personnel about recycling, composting and other DSNY policies. Sanitation can simply send mass emails to these important individuals about rules and regs with helpful links to DSNY's website, on-line training, where to get labels and handouts, etc.

Secondly, years ago DSNY had a **sample lease rider** for recycling on its website. This form should be mandated for all multiple dwellings so that new residents, as well as those executing lease renewals, would sign the document. Or it could be added to the annual filings now required for things like lead paint and window guards. These "gentle reminders" would go a long way in keeping residents informed on how and where to recycle, compost, etc. in their buildings.

In addition to the above suggestions, I would like to stress that the real problem facing us is:

### **Too much garbage.**

That is the crux of the problem. The amount of garbage we produce here in NYC and in the US is ever growing. The draft SWMP26 gets it right by highlighting the Waste Management Hierarchy with its top goal of "Reduce and Reuse".

As was expressed so well by a number of speakers at the January 12<sup>th</sup> hearing, containerizing waste is not the end story—it still needs to go somewhere—and that "somewhere" includes landfills and incinerators, resulting in polluted air and water, adverse health effects and a heck of a lot of greenhouse gases.

Besides the environmental and moral issues of sending our waste far from NYC, there is also high cost to NYC taxpayers for doing this. We currently pay close to \$500 million dollars annually to send it away.

*So how do we get away from our disposable society?*

I suggest what we borrow from the past but also look to the future.

From the past, I suggest we go back to washing dishes. Yes, *washing dishes*. There was a time when our public schools had dishwashing equipment. While so-called compostable plates and recyclable cutlery may sound good, washable dishes can be used thousands of times, unlike single use “disposables”. And what about fast casual food establishments? Why can't they be required to serve their drinks and food on real dishes? Most of their customers sit at tables for long periods—so why are they serving their products in single use disposables? And for those who order take out, can't signage be mandated urging the takeout crowd to bring their own reusable coffee cup? Or perhaps an extra 5 cents, similar to the 5-cent requirement of NY's bag bill, could be charged on single use to-go cups.

Another idea from the past is returnable bottles. Deposit laws have been shown to work at decreasing litter and in upping recycling rates. However, we need to expand the definition of returnable bottles and to increase the fee to ten cents. This is what the Better Bottle Bill which has been pending in Albany for the last few years seeks to change. It's time for NYC government and its lobbyists to get behind this bill as well as the Package Reduction and Infrastructure Act (PPRIA). Extended Producer Responsibility bills like PPRIA make a lot of sense since isn't it time that the companies that produce all this packaging start paying for its disposal? A couple of years ago DSNY commissioner Tisch held a press conference in support of PPRIA. Let's do it again but make New York City's support stronger and louder!

We also need some new ideas and techniques. Our current Mayor has proposed city run stores that would offer healthy foods. Why not also offer e-waste, textile recycling and repair classes at these sites?

And then there's data. New technologies have made data collection easier than ever. Let's break out and organize NYC's solid waste collection data, including details on commercial carting, and mandate its inclusion in NYC's open data system.

Lastly, and yes often my eyes glaze over when I hear the words “more study is needed...” But can't we do a serious study on Save As You Throw (SAYT)? Indeed, isn't it time to think of trash collection as a necessary utility? Keep in mind that since NYC started billing for actual water usage, there has been over a 40% drop in per person water usage. Sometimes economic incentives are necessary. While no one is denying that such a policy would have challenges in a densely populated city like NYC, let's also keep in mind that Seoul Korea, with over 10 million inhabitants, has had a SAYT program since 1995.

In short, let's get serious about actions that reduce our waste!

Katherine Hanner [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
NYC, NY 10025

# New York City Council Testimony

April 2026

My name is Ray Craig and I am a born and raised New Yorker now living in Philadelphia. When I went to college outside Philadelphia, I had the privilege of meeting community members of the nearby city of Chester, PA. From them I learned that my trash was being sent from NYC to Chester to be burned at Reworld (previously Covanta) incinerator, the largest in the country. At my college, my trash was sent to Chester to be burned. And even now my trash is still being sent to Chester to be burned. It is absolutely disgusting and inexcusable to dump our waste on another community. This is a textbook example of environmental racism, where Chester is treated as a sacrifice zone and as if Chester residents don't matter because Chester is a majority Black city. New York City is absolutely complicit in this and it has to stop. No more sending NYC trash to Chester!!

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jennifer McDonnell

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: DSNY

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Gregory Anderson

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: DSNY

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 4/6/20

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Matthew Civeillo

Address: 311 West 50th St

I represent: Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board

Address: \_\_\_\_\_



Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dennis S. Schock

Address: 25 Cliff St.

I represent: Local 532

Address: 25-CLIFF

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JUSTIN WOOD

Address: 151 W 34th St. NY 10001

I represent: NYCPD

Address: 151 W. 34th St NY 10001

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dennis Schock

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Charter School Assoc Local 831

Address: 25 Cliff St.

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: ERIC GOLDSTEIN (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL

Address: 40 WEST 20 ST NY NY

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. SWMP heavy Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 4/6/26

Name: RHONDA KEY SER (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Cafeteria Culture

Address: 8th St. NYC

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 4/6/2026

Name: Brian Cain (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Independent Budget Office

Address: 110 William St, New York, NY 10038

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 4/6/2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Elliot Jackson Antkush

Address: 110 William 14th Floor, New York, NY, 10038

I represent: Independent Budget office

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 4/6/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ryan Dougherty

Address: [Redacted] Brooklyn NY 11206

I represent: NYC Independent Budget office

Address: 110 William St, New York, NY 10038

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 4/6/2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jenille Scott

Address: 42 Broadway Suite 2160 NY NY 10004

I represent: ALIGN / Transform Don't Trash

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. 0125-2026

in favor  in opposition

0355-2026

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Marisa DeDominicis

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: By self and 2 other members

Address: Same

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Katherine Kitchener

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: DSAVY

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms