

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

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June 15, 2022  
Start: 12:06 p.m.  
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HELD AT: Hybrid Hearing, 250 Broadway  
Committee Room, 16th Floor

B E F O R E: Sandy Nurse  
Chairperson

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

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2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: All right, ladies and  
3 gentlemen, we're getting ready to start.

4 Welcome to everybody here on our Zoom for this  
5 afternoon's meeting of the Committee on Sanitation  
6 and Solid Waste Management. Once again, if you're  
7 here to testify, you can sign up at the table with  
8 the Sergeant at Arms. Please silence all electronic  
9 devices at this time. If anybody that wishes to  
10 testify, again, we have slips here at the front for  
11 people that are testifying in person. If you have  
12 any written testimony, hold on to it until your name  
13 is called to testify. At that point, we'll bring  
14 it... we'll bring you to the table, we'll ask you for  
15 your statements, and we'll disseminate that  
16 information to all the members. Anybody online that  
17 wishes to send us testimony you can do so at  
18 testimony@council.nyc.gov. Again, that is  
19 testimony@council.nyc.gov. Madam Chair, we're ready  
20 to start.

21 CHAIR NURSE: Right. All right. Good afternoon,  
22 everyone. How you doing? All right.

23 Good afternoon, everyone. Let me just make  
24 sure... Okay. Thank you. Committee members  
25 Councilmembers Botthcer, Ossé, Gennaro, Velázquez,

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2 Fairs, Menin, DSNY Commissioner Jessica Tisch, Deputy  
3 Commissioner Bridget Anderson, Deputy Commissioner  
4 Greg Anderson for joining us today. And for everyone  
5 here who's... who's come in person. Welcome to the  
6 fifth committee this year for the Sanitation and  
7 Solid Waste Management's hearing on the Zero Waste  
8 legislative package. I think this is the hearing  
9 we've all been waiting for.

10 So, today is about New York City recommitting to  
11 a serious and aggressive path toward zero waste to  
12 landfills and incinerators by 2030, And most exciting  
13 is the bill for universal curbside organics, as the  
14 clearest way to make a dent in achieving that goal.

15 New York City residents generate 11,802.4 tons of  
16 waste per day, and we only divert approximately 17%  
17 of that from landfills or incineration, so it's not  
18 really great guys. From food waste to plastics,  
19 paper, metals, electronics, and more, the sheer  
20 amount of waste we export is nothing less than  
21 shocking. The thing that makes it really hard is  
22 that single-use items have proliferated, from the  
23 plastic fork that goes right into the trash to the  
24 biodegradable coffee cup that isn't being composted,  
25 to the million reusable bags that aren't really

2 recyclable, it is a misleading situation where we  
3 make a lot of green stuff and we're not really set up  
4 to dispose of it properly. Most New Yorkers don't  
5 have time to figure out what goes where with so many  
6 species of plastics as our State Assemblyman Steven  
7 Engelbreit says, so it is up to us to hold  
8 manufacturers accountable. Zero Waste isn't just  
9 about putting an item in the right wastebasket. It's  
10 about preventing waste in the first place, and we  
11 need New York State to lead on an aggressive and just  
12 extended producers responsibility program to really  
13 incentivize producers to stop making stuff our  
14 municipality cannot really recycle, and so our city  
15 doesn't have to pay astronomical amounts of money to  
16 deal with it.

17 Last month Councilmembers Hanif, Powers, and I,  
18 along with many Co-Primes introduced a robust slate  
19 of zero-waste legislation that will mandate  
20 residential curbside organics, increase our organic  
21 composting and recycling accessibility across all  
22 communities, and require the City to meet our 2030  
23 waste diversion goals.

24 So let's break down the package. We have Intro  
25 274 which establishes a mandated goal of diverting

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2 100% of city wide generated waste by 2030, where it's  
3 feasible. Intro 275 requires annual waste... annual  
4 zero waste reporting including timelines, waste  
5 diversion targets, and specifics around certain waste  
6 streams, diversion rates by community districts and  
7 more. Intro 244 establishes a universal curbside  
8 organics program, because this is the clearest path  
9 to achieve zero waste. Intro 280 expands  
10 opportunities for recycling of items not collected  
11 curbside equitably across all community districts.  
12 Intro 281 requires that each community district has  
13 at minimum three organic drop off sites, which has  
14 proven to be a successful model in so many  
15 communities.

16 So today is the day. Let's talk about what we  
17 all need to do to make this work. I have been  
18 waiting for this day for almost 11 years. I'm really  
19 excited. I know some of you have spent decades  
20 fighting for this and waiting on this. It's... it's  
21 exciting for all of us waste nerds. It's exciting  
22 for us to be here. And it's also wild because we're  
23 facing mass extinctions, historic droughts, and food  
24 shortages. And we still have to kind of come to work  
25 and act normal. And we are just at this very

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2 critical point of no return, and organic waste  
3 recycling is the clearest and cleanest way for New  
4 York City to make instrumental strides in achieving  
5 zero waste.

6       So whatever ideas you have, whatever you all  
7 think needs to be added to make these bills stronger,  
8 however, this council and this admin can, can work  
9 together to make it work well, let's... let's hear  
10 it. Let's hear it out.

11       Given that we need to implement a very large, a  
12 very expensive operation very urgently, I do feel  
13 some relief that Commissioner Tisch and Deputy  
14 Commissioners Anderson and Anderson, along with Mayor  
15 Adams new office of Climate and Environmental  
16 Justice, I feel some relief that you're going to get  
17 us over the finish line somehow, some way. And these  
18 bills are a call to action for our city to commit:  
19 Commit to being a city that the teenagers that are  
20 here in this room can actually live in at our age.  
21 And I'm proud to stand with the majority of my  
22 council colleagues as we set New York City on the  
23 path to being a national and global leader in  
24 addressing climate change, environmental justice, and  
25 waste equity.

2       So I... I'll stop there. As usual, I just want  
3 to thank my team, the lovely, Annel Hernandez, who is  
4 our Director of Climate Environmental Policy, my  
5 chief Mohammed Khan, who... who told me he wanted to  
6 dress up as a rat at our first sanitation rally  
7 (can't get better than that), and I also want to  
8 thank the Sanitation Committee Task Force (and as I  
9 learned last week, not all committees are called a  
10 task force, so I think it's pretty awesome), Jessica  
11 Albin, who, sadly, is not feeling well (please send  
12 her some wild wishes), John Seltzer (who I met for  
13 the first time last week and realized is  
14 significantly taller than me), and the fantastic  
15 Ricky Chawla. Thank you, Task Force.

16       And now I will hand it over to Councilmember  
17 Keith Powers to make some remarks on his bills.

18       COUNCILMEMBER POWERS: Thank you, Chair and good  
19 morning, everyone. It's nice to be back in this  
20 room. It's been a very long time, and it's been a  
21 busy week for all of us, but I'm glad that we're all  
22 here today discuss some very, very important  
23 legislation. And I want to thank Chair Nurse and all  
24 the members of that committee for taking time today  
25 to hear our zero waste package of legislation

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2 including two of my bills, Intro 280 and 281, which  
3 we've called the CORE Act, Community Organics and  
4 Recycling Empowerment Act, to be specific. This  
5 package includes... Zero Waste package includes the  
6 CORE Act, of course, Councilmember Hanif's universal  
7 curbside composting bill, and Chair Nurse's bill that  
8 I'm sure spoke about as well.

9 Our legislation will require three drop off  
10 composting sites in each community districts across  
11 the city, which must be easily accessible for all  
12 residents and open at least 20 hours every week.  
13 Many community districts, including funding that's in  
14 the budget for them already have drop off composting  
15 sites, but not all of them have enough and some are  
16 open only sporadically. The second bill allows for  
17 collection of recyclable materials like electronics,  
18 which divert significantly more waste away from our  
19 landfills. The CORE Act alongside the other bills  
20 will make it much easier for New Yorkers to  
21 incorporate composting and recycling into their daily  
22 routines by making them easy and accessible, and that  
23 is something that I think we all have seen is really  
24 critical for participation. I was really proud to  
25 introduce the CORE Act last session at the height of

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2 the pandemic, alongside our now Borough President  
3 Antonio Reynoso, when he was the Chair of this  
4 committee, and at the time, the future of all  
5 composting was in doubt while we went through one of  
6 the darkest moments in our city's history.

7       With the support advocates of and my colleagues,  
8 we introduced the CORE Act as a way to empower  
9 communities to have more disposal... waste disposal  
10 options, and to provide a more sustainable future.  
11 And we all know that many of these goals are... feel  
12 to many people in the distance, but they are here and  
13 we need to confront them immediately. It becomes  
14 apparent every single day, and it can be sometimes  
15 even daunting to consider how our individual actions  
16 can add up to the fight against things like climate  
17 change. But the decisions we make in our local  
18 communities in the city can play a tremendous role in  
19 the future of our city and our planet, and enabling  
20 these everyday steps will make New Yorkers even more  
21 able to in their daily lives keep up our ongoing  
22 fight. I really look forward to hearing testimony  
23 discussing these bills further. I want to really  
24 sincerely thank the Chair, Sandy Nurse, and our  
25 colleague, John Hindi, for taking this up as soon as

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2 it got to the City Council and actually even before I  
3 think, the Chair called me right after election and  
4 said, "Can we get to work on this?" So I really  
5 appreciate her enthusiasm and energy around it. And  
6 of course, I want to thank the Commissioner and  
7 everyone who, in my few months of being here, have  
8 been really great partners, not on just composting  
9 issues, but on larger sanitation issues in my  
10 district, and has been willing to be... take my  
11 annoying texts and phone calls all the time about  
12 things that are happening in my district. So with  
13 that being said, I hope we will get to a place of  
14 being able to pass these bills, and of course, look  
15 forward to everyone's input and testimony today.

16 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you. Councilmember  
17 Hanif is not here yet. When she comes, we'll let her  
18 speak.

19 So the only other thing I just wanted to mention  
20 is just how much support in the council these bills  
21 have. I think we are over 37 co-sponsors on each,  
22 which is a huge testament to all of... the three Co-  
23 Primes here, our staff working so hard and talking to  
24 as many people on the council and so there's...  
25 there's really wide support. And so I hope this is

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2 really about the logistics of how we're going to get  
3 this done, how much it's going to cost, like, what do  
4 we need to do? Because we're all ready to support  
5 this department in making it happen. So hopefully,  
6 Councilmember Hanif comes, but I'm going to turn it  
7 over to our Committee Counsel.

8 COUNSEL BYHOVSKY: Thank you Chair. I'm Irene  
9 Byhovsky, and I will be moderating this hybrid  
10 hearing today.

11 I want to remind members of the public who are  
12 testifying remotely, that you will be on mute until  
13 you're called on to testify, when you will be unmuted  
14 by the host. Please listen to for your name to be  
15 called. The first panelist to give testimony will be  
16 from the Administration, Commissioner Jessica Tisch,  
17 Deputy Commissioner Bridget Anderson, and Deputy  
18 Commissioner Gregory Anderson of the Department of  
19 Sanitation. I will now administer the oath, so  
20 please your right... raise your right hands. Thank  
21 you.

22 Do you affirm to tell truth, the whole truth and  
23 nothing but the truth before this committee and  
24 answer honestly to get some of the questions.

25 Thank you. You might begin your testimony.

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2 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Good morning Chair Nurse and  
3 members the City Council Committee on Sanitation and  
4 Solid Waste Management. And a special good morning  
5 to all the advocates some of you... some of whom I  
6 know, some of whom I don't know that I see sitting  
7 here.

8 My name is Jessica Tisch and I am the  
9 Commissioner of the New York City Department of  
10 Sanitation. I am joined today by Gregory Anderson,  
11 Deputy Commissioner for Policy and External Affairs,  
12 and Bridget Anderson, Deputy Commissioner for  
13 Recycling and Sustainability. Together we call them  
14 the Andersons. Thank you for the opportunity to  
15 testify this afternoon on this package of important  
16 legislation related to the department's Zero Waste  
17 efforts. I would like to begin the hearing by first  
18 thanking speaker Adams, Chairs Nurse... Chairs Nurse  
19 and Brannan, and of course Mayor Eric Adams for  
20 prioritizing sanitation services in the FY 23 adopted  
21 budget.

22 The budget agreement announced last Friday  
23 commits \$40.6 million in new funding for the  
24 sanitation services in FY 2023, including \$22 million  
25 for supplemental litter basket collection, bringing

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2 us to our highest levels of service in history, \$7.5  
3 million for precision cleaning to deploy targeted  
4 cleaning resources to clean litter and debris in the  
5 most challenging places, \$4.9 million for additional  
6 lot cleaning resources for vacant lots and city  
7 properties, and \$4.8 million for containerization and  
8 rodent-resistant litter baskets.

9       This is an unprecedented investment in cleaning  
10 up our city. I commit that I will maximize the value  
11 of this investment in every neighborhood in all five  
12 boroughs, and you will see and smell the impact of  
13 these investments in your districts almost instantly  
14 next month. We can look forward to that.

15       And now on to the hearing topic today. In my two  
16 months as Commissioner, I have had the pleasure of  
17 learning about all aspects of the agency, including  
18 of course all of our sustainability and zero waste  
19 programs. This department is so much more than just  
20 waste collection and snow removal. We are at the  
21 forefront of the city's fight against climate change,  
22 as we should be. Waste Management is responsible for  
23 emitting over 1.9 million tons of greenhouse gas  
24 emissions per year, equivalent to the emissions from  
25 nearly 500,000 passenger cars annually. When you

2 count the global emissions from extraction,  
3 manufacture, transport and sale of the products we  
4 use in New York City, the impact increases several  
5 times over. We are at a fork in the road moment as  
6 an agency with great opportunities and equally large  
7 challenges when it comes to zero waste. Let me start  
8 with the good news. We know what we must do to  
9 continue on our path toward zero waste. We have  
10 programs for every major category of waste from New  
11 Yorkers. I've included in my testimony a chart from  
12 our last waste characterization study that shows what  
13 makes up our waste stream, and the mayor's executive  
14 budget for FY 23 includes funding to conduct a new  
15 study that will help us make better decisions with  
16 the latest waste trends from New Yorkers, especially  
17 coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are excited  
18 to begin our new waste characterization study this  
19 summer, with the full report expected to be finalized  
20 in 2024.

21 Now on to our zero waste programs. First, let me  
22 talk about our longstanding residential program for  
23 curbside recyclables that include metal glass,  
24 plastics, paper, and cardboard. These materials  
25 represent about a third of the waste stream. This is

2 our most successful diverting initiative. We recycle  
3 about 690,000 tons every year with a capture rate of  
4 about 51% for paper and cardboard, and 50% for metal  
5 glass, plastic and cartons. Our curbside recycling  
6 program has been around for more than 30 years, and  
7 over time it has adapted to the changing nature of  
8 the waste stream. As a result of investments in  
9 local processing infrastructure and facilities, we  
10 have weathered the past few turbulent years in  
11 recycling markets, as other cities and towns  
12 unfortunately across the country suspended or cut  
13 back on curbside recycling. It is amazing to me that  
14 a newspaper that you throw in your green bin in  
15 Manhattan today, will be bagged... will be barged to  
16 Staten Island to become a pizza box sold in Brooklyn  
17 next week. This is the beauty of recycling.  
18 Products can live a new life time after time. We are  
19 working to create a more self-sustaining city. And  
20 the underpinning of successful program is that it is  
21 full circle. But a 50% capture rate is simply not  
22 good enough.

23       Next are the many programs we run to capture  
24 organic waste which is the most significant  
25 contributor of waste related greenhouse gas

2 emissions. This material also makes up 34% of the  
3 current waste stream, 46 million pounds a week. It  
4 represents a significant opportunity to reduce  
5 emissions from landfill waste by diverting this  
6 material for composting and anaerobic digestion and  
7 in the case specifically of food waste by minimizing  
8 it at the source. We currently have a multi-pronged  
9 approach to divert this waste from landfill,  
10 including smart bins. Last fall DSNY rolled out a  
11 pilot of 20 Smart bins, unstaffed controlled access  
12 foods grabbed drop off sites in Astoria, that pilot  
13 has been fabulous, with bins filling up daily. We're  
14 excited to expand this program with more than 100  
15 bins at school locations this fall, allowing students  
16 their families and members of the community to drop  
17 off their food scraps and take advantage of existing  
18 school organics service. We also plan to add more  
19 bins to build out the storage network this fall.

20 Second is food scrap drop off sites. This year  
21 the department doubled funding to support community  
22 compost partners and community hosted food scrap drop  
23 off sites from 3.5 million to 7 million annually.  
24 That's the most ever invested in those partners in  
25 those programs. Today our partners operate 223 Food

2 scrap drop off sites city wide also the largest  
3 number ever, including at least one in each community  
4 district. In April the Adams administration  
5 baselined this additional funding ensuring these  
6 sites will continue to serve as valuable educational  
7 tools and diversion points for food waste.

8 Third is school organics. Our young New Yorkers  
9 are our future, and it's important that we encourage  
10 them to learn good habits and principles from the  
11 start. That's why we are working with the department  
12 of education to expand organics collection to every  
13 New York City public school over the next two years.  
14 It is important that we get this right. And we are  
15 investing in intensive outreach and education as we  
16 roll out the program to the remaining schools. We  
17 are not reinventing the wheel. More than 600 schools  
18 already participate some for nearly a decade. We  
19 will work with principals, custodians, food service  
20 workers, teachers, classroom aides and students to  
21 ensure the right systems are in place and that they  
22 work.

23 Fourth is curbside organics program. This  
24 administration took the wise step of pausing the  
25 ineffective, inequitable, and overcomplicated opt-in

2 curbside organics program at the beginning of the  
3 year. As I mentioned last month, this administration  
4 is committed to making strides on organics, but we  
5 cannot throw good money after bad. I am in just my  
6 second month at the helm of this agency, and I am  
7 taking a deep dive into our past programs, what has  
8 worked and what hasn't. With this foundation, I am  
9 working with OMB, with City Hall, and the City  
10 Council and our dedicated community partners to  
11 develop a curbside organics program that people  
12 actually use and that is both effective and cost  
13 effective.

14 The last category of zero waste programs we run  
15 target the 9% of materials in our waste stream that  
16 are suited for reuse or require some form of  
17 specialized disposal or care. These materials  
18 include harmful household wastes such as paint and  
19 other chemicals, as well as electronics. The  
20 department has several programs to help New Yorkers  
21 safely and sustainably divert these products,  
22 including drop off sites, events, and curbside and  
23 apartment building collection. But these programs  
24 are hard to understand and often inconvenient to  
25 access. I am committed to streamlining these

2 services so they are as easy to use as curbside trash  
3 and recycling collection.

4 Those are the programs that we have to divert  
5 waste. But DSNY's approach to sending less waste to  
6 landfill is not just about diversion. We also  
7 facilitate donations and events for New Yorkers to  
8 swap unwanted clothing, furniture, and other  
9 products. Our Donate NYC portal helps individuals  
10 and organization give goods and find goods, by  
11 donating and reusing goods instead of discarding  
12 them, New Yorkers can greatly reduce waste, conserve  
13 energy and resources, save money and help provide  
14 jobs and human services for New Yorkers in need.  
15 Donate NYC also provides vital support for New York  
16 City's reuse community, helping nonprofit  
17 organizations and local reuse businesses increase and  
18 promote their reuse efforts.

19 Now, I did mention some challenges that come with  
20 our zero waste programs. The first issue can be seen  
21 in the pie chart I mentioned earlier, notably, the  
22 23% of items that are not recyclable in any way.  
23 What that means is even if we captured every single  
24 item that could be diverted from landfill from the  
25 categories of our waste profile, we'd still only

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2 reach a diversion rate of 77%. Addressing this 23%  
3 will take much more than just the Department of  
4 Sanitation. We're talking about changing consumer  
5 behavior and forcing drastic production innovations  
6 or packaging restrictions on producers. For some  
7 products disposal is unavoidable and we must look to  
8 technology advancements to extract energy from waste  
9 rather than just send it to landfill. We also must  
10 take steps to reduce waste at the source, including  
11 by making manufacturers and not municipalities  
12 responsible for the products they manufacture and  
13 that they sell. extended producer responsibility or  
14 EPR programs are an important tool in our toolkit.  
15 So far, the state EPR program for electronic waste  
16 has funded electronics collection programs across the  
17 state and diverted millions of pounds of valuable and  
18 hazardous materials. A program for paint rolled out  
19 last month and a bill to create EPR for carpet awaits  
20 the governor's signature. This session, we were  
21 strong advocates alongside the City Council for EPR  
22 bills for packaging and paper products, which would  
23 have unlocked a major new revenue stream to support  
24 recycling in New York City and force manufacturers to  
25 rethink the way they make and sell products. I was

2 very disappointed that this bill did not pass this  
3 year, and I hope we can have productive conversations  
4 this summer and full to position us for a better  
5 outcome in Albany next session.

6 Before I turn to the bills being heard today, I  
7 want to reiterate to you that reducing the amount of  
8 waste we generate, collect and dispose, and the air  
9 pollution and greenhouse gas emissions that come  
10 along with it, has been and will continue to be a  
11 core mission of this department. Our wide range of  
12 diversion programs are all meant to reduce the amount  
13 of waste we send to landfill saving the city money,  
14 conserving energy, and of course, doing our part to  
15 meet the city's ambitious climate goals.

16 Now on to the legislation. Intro 244 by  
17 Councilmember Hanif requires the Department to create  
18 a mandatory citywide curbside organics program for  
19 residential buildings. The bill would further  
20 require DSNY to develop outreach and education  
21 materials to inform residents about the program and  
22 instruct a resident... instruct residents on how to  
23 properly source and separate organic waste.

24 A few things on this: First, the council is  
25 correct to be focusing on increasing our diversion

2 rates for organic waste, as this represents the  
3 largest, most impactful opportunity we have to reduce  
4 greenhouse gas emissions. Second, I believe that a  
5 curbside organics program must be an important  
6 component of an overall organics strategy. Third, we  
7 have to recognize that, to date, less than 50% of New  
8 Yorkers have ever had access to a curbside organics  
9 collection program. I believe that you have to give  
10 people voluntary access to curbside food waste  
11 collection, and allow them to develop the muscle  
12 memory of separating... separating out their food  
13 waste material before we contemplate mandatory  
14 programs. Food waste separation requires complex  
15 cultural change that cannot, in its first instance,  
16 be strictly punitive. The next time that we roll out  
17 a curbside organics program must be our last. We  
18 must get it right this time. That is an area of my  
19 intense focus.

20 I made it a priority during my first two months  
21 as commissioner to do a review of the previous  
22 iteration of the organics program to learn from our  
23 mistakes and come up with potential solutions. I  
24 look forward to discussing our long range proposals  
25 with the council in the future. Intro 274 by Chair

2 Nurse establishes a goal of zero waste for New York  
3 City by 2030. The bill further requires a report and  
4 recommendation if the department determines that such  
5 city wide diversion goal is not feasible, despite the  
6 best efforts of the city. Though I support and  
7 applaud the spirit of the bill and the urgency of the  
8 issue at hand, we do have concerns with the bill in  
9 front of us. The previous administration set the  
10 goal of zero waste to landfill by 2030 in 2015, and  
11 very little progress has been made in the seven years  
12 since. The city wide diversion rate in 2015 was  
13 17.8%. That number today is just 20.8%. So halfway  
14 through the performance period, the diversion rate  
15 has only increased by 3%. We are simply not on a  
16 path toward zero waste by 2030 on our current  
17 trajectory, nor do we have enough time left in my  
18 opinion before 2030 for me to sit here today and  
19 genuinely tell you that I think that the goal is  
20 achievable.

21 I do think it's important to be transparent with  
22 the progress the department is making when it comes  
23 to diversion rates, including the types of policies  
24 needed to get zero waste. It's why I am supportive  
25 of the reporting requirements laid out in Intro 275,

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2 also by Chair Nurse. I am a data-driven person.  
3 Tracking this type of information will help the  
4 council and the public understand the challenges we  
5 face and celebrate the progress made towards a more  
6 responsible and sustainable city. We look forward to  
7 working with the council to advance this bill.

8 Intros 280 and 281 by Councilmember Powers would  
9 require the department to establish and operate at  
10 least three community recycling centers and three  
11 food waste drop off sites in each community district  
12 respectively.

13 Save events and food scrap drop off sites are key  
14 parts of our work to reduce waste from landfill. We  
15 also agree with the council that these events and  
16 sites must be accessible to New Yorkers and available  
17 throughout the city no matter where a New Yorker  
18 lives. I agree with the spirit of these bills.

19 However, I am concerned about the potential cost to  
20 implement specifically Intro 280. We are currently  
21 reviewing the cost and permitting requirements  
22 necessary to create a widespread network of permanent  
23 community recycling centers envisioned in that bill.

24 On Intro 281 , we have already nearly met the

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2 requirements of that bill, and our growing network of  
3 smart bins should take us there later this year.

4 I look forward to working with the council to  
5 create a suite of programs that are accessible,  
6 equitable, and effective, and ones that New Yorkers  
7 actually use.

8 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on these  
9 important pieces of legislation and allowing me time  
10 to give you an overview of our zero waste programs.  
11 I know we have a lot of common ground and share the  
12 same goals to have a clean, safe, healthy, and  
13 sustainable city. My hope is that we will work  
14 together on these bills and all future initiatives to  
15 get us there. I am now happy to answer any questions  
16 you may have.

17 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you, Commissioner Tisch  
18 for your transparency and honesty. I do want to give  
19 Councilmember Shahana Hanif an opportunity to discuss  
20 or share some remarks on her bill that she  
21 introduced.

22 COUNCILMEMBER HANIF: Thank you so much. Good  
23 afternoon. Apologies for my lateness. I'm  
24 Councilmember Shahana Hanif and I represent the 39th  
25 district in Brooklyn. Thank you to the Committee on

2 Sanitation and Solid Waste Management, and to my  
3 sister Chair Sandy Nurse for holding this critical  
4 hearing.

5 I'm super, super excited by my bill Intro 244,  
6 and that it's on today's agenda. It is timely. This  
7 bill would create a citywide curbside mandatory  
8 composting program for residential buildings. I want  
9 to express tons of gratitude to the Co-Prime sponsors  
10 who introduced this bill alongside me, Speaker Adams,  
11 Chair Nurse, Brooklyn Borough President Reynoso, and  
12 Councilmembers Powers, Won, Bottcher, Gennaro, Menin,  
13 Hudson, Cabán, Brewer, and Rivera. I also want to  
14 thank so many other Councilmembers for signing on as  
15 sponsors. We are currently up to 38 Councilmember  
16 sponsors, which is a vetoproof supermajority.

17 The overwhelming support and leadership behind  
18 this bill demonstrates that universal residential  
19 composting is a common sense solution that will  
20 solidify in New York City as an environmental justice  
21 leader and save our city money. Right now more than  
22 a third of all trash New Yorkers produced is organic  
23 waste that could be composted. This waste goes to  
24 landfills and incinerators that are located primarily  
25 in lower income communities of color. The impact on

2 the health of these communities is undeniable. Take  
3 Newark, for example, which houses Covanta Essex, one  
4 of the largest incinerators of New York City's trash.  
5 One in four children in Newark have asthma, more than  
6 three times higher than the national average.  
7 Compost rotting in landfill is also a serious  
8 contributor to the city's greenhouse gas emissions.  
9 When organic material decomposes, it releases  
10 methane, which is 25 times more destructive than  
11 carbon dioxide. Citywide composting addresses the  
12 urgency of global warming, the root cause of extreme  
13 weather events harming our neighbors. We can  
14 minimize harm here by diverting our organic waste to  
15 regenerative and environmentally conscious composting  
16 facilities that would nourish our city soil and  
17 provide farmers with rich fertilizer.

18 This is also a critical economic issue. The  
19 independent budget office, the public agency that  
20 conducts thorough and objective economic analysis for  
21 the city, has identified mandatory composting...  
22 curbside composting as a mechanism for savings.  
23 While there will naturally be startup costs  
24 associated with such a transformative program, by  
25 year five, these costs would be canceled out by

2 savings. After your five, the city would save  
3 approximately \$33 million annually. These savings  
4 are created by a number of factors including  
5 streamlining, composting, truck collection, reducing  
6 the amount of needed trash truck runs, and securing  
7 lower rates for organics processing due to economies  
8 of scale. Cities that have already implemented  
9 residential composting such as Seattle and San  
10 Francisco are seeing these benefits. This program  
11 would also create 1000s of good paying green jobs,  
12 which is why we've seen inspiring support from our  
13 siblings in the labor movement. I've seen the  
14 benefits of curbside composting through the opt-in  
15 program still available in Community Board six and  
16 seven which overlap with my district. But an opt-in  
17 system that is disproportionately available to higher  
18 income and whiter neighborhoods is not economically  
19 sustainable and fails to reach the environmental  
20 impact that the current crisis moment demands. I'm  
21 confident that through a comprehensive education  
22 campaign that is both culturally competent and  
23 language accessible, we can hit the participation  
24 levels needed for success.

2 I'll close by saying that I'm super thrilled to  
3 sponsor the CORE Act Intro 280 and 281 from Majority  
4 Leader Powers, and the Zero Waste bills Intros 274  
5 and 275 from Sanitation Chair Nurse. Together, this  
6 legislative package is a major step towards a truly  
7 Green New York City. Thank you. And I look forward  
8 to hearing the testimonies and questions from my  
9 colleagues.

10 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you, Councilmember  
11 Hanif. Okay, so I think this is the first hearing  
12 where we have majority of our committee here, so I'm  
13 trying to manage my questions with everyone's time  
14 constraints, and also we have a lot of young people  
15 in our audience that I hope... hope you'll stay and  
16 listen to. So I have... I'm only going to limit  
17 myself to four questions on zero waste, four on  
18 organics, and then turn it over to you all. I'll try  
19 to keep them short.

20 Okay, so on the topic of zero waste, can you  
21 discuss which parts of the city stream specifically  
22 are the hardest to divert? I know you mentioned,  
23 you've been rolling out chemical and paints and  
24 electronics, but some of the other things that we  
25 just aren't able to deal with?

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2           COMMISSIONER TISCH: Yeah. I would say that the  
3 hardest is that 23% of the waste tree in the other  
4 category. We don't have... that are not divertable.  
5 So that includes dirt, small debris, diapers,  
6 construction debris, pet waste, non-recyclable paper,  
7 plastic... certain plastic... sorry... certain non-  
8 recyclable paper, plastic, and glass products. With  
9 these items, diversion is incredibly challenging. I  
10 think the best tool to deal with some of them is  
11 bans. Not for all of them, obviously. For others,  
12 the best option that we have is waste to energy.

13           CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you. So what types of  
14 waste and how many tons of it are sent to incinerator  
15 facilities on a monthly average? And yeah... yeah.  
16 We'll start with that.

17           COMMISSIONER TISCH: Okay. So about 33% of our  
18 waste is sent to waste to energy facilities for  
19 disposal. These facilities are located in Newark,  
20 New Jersey, in Chester, Pennsylvania, and in Niagara  
21 Falls. They convert the waste to energy by burning  
22 it. The energy is then sold on the electric grid.  
23 Did you have another question about that?

24           CHAIRPERSON NURSE: I did but I feel like you  
25 answered a lot of it.

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2 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Okay.

3 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: So I'm trying to be  
4 respectful of time.

5 What sites, systems, equipment, infrastructure,  
6 you know, what are some of the things that the city  
7 needs to invest in to really tackle zero waste to  
8 landfill and incinerator? I... You know, I heard you  
9 clearly that 2030 feels unrealistic to you. I think  
10 that when we put our money and resources and  
11 priorities on it, we can do a lot, so I take issue  
12 with that. But if we didn't have constraints, what  
13 would be some of the stuff we could invest in now?  
14 What would be some of the obstacles that we could get  
15 in place now so we can...?

16 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Yeah, so I think there's two  
17 main categories of, you know, systems, equipment, and  
18 infrastructure, that we should be, and are investing  
19 in now to plan for the future. First category is  
20 processing facilities that will expand our for  
21 example, compost tonnage. The second category is...  
22 We're working with the Department of Environmental  
23 Protection to build out their anaerobic digestion  
24 facilities, which are co-located at their wastewater

25

2 treatment plants. So I think those are the two main  
3 areas that we should be, and we are focused on.

4 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: So sorry, I just got  
5 distracted by Jim leaving.

6 I'm going to move to organics. I think because,  
7 you know, in your testimony, when we talked about  
8 Councilmember Hanif's bill, Intro 244, you mentioned  
9 voluntary. And I think the administration has raised  
10 the issue of limited participation in the current  
11 program as the reason he gave for not expanding the  
12 program. It's the... The trucks aren't full. We're  
13 spending a lot of money on it. We've got people on  
14 overtime. The OMB specifically pointed out that a  
15 voluntary opt-in program is not effective and is  
16 costly. So if it's not a required program that...  
17 If we pass this bill and it's not a required program,  
18 or your vision of it is not a required program, I  
19 guess I'm... I'm not clear how it will be different  
20 from the phased-up expansion that we already failed  
21 to deliver fully to New York City, and we just cut.  
22 And to kind of... I would just love to hear more  
23 about what an approach would be a little more in  
24 detail.

2           COMMISSIONER TISCH: Sure. So I would say that  
3 there are two levers that you have to think about and  
4 look at when you're looking at these curbside  
5 organics program. First is cost. The old program  
6 was done so inefficiently that it cost over a million  
7 dollars per district to run. That's like bread-and-  
8 butter stuff, right? Like, is it done on straight  
9 time versus overtime? Are we routing the trucks  
10 appropriately? Are we using dual bins or rear  
11 loaders? Like are we... Those are the types of  
12 things where you can like squeeze out a whole lot of  
13 efficiencies and make drastic improvements over the  
14 old program to substantially bring down the cost. So  
15 I think a key driver of, you know, the reason why we  
16 wanted to pause the expansion of the old program was  
17 because the program just wasn't designed well on a  
18 cost basis. And I do have a lot of confidence after  
19 looking at this for two months that a program can be  
20 designed at half the cost, you hope and expect.

21           The second lever, as you mentioned, is  
22 participation. I saw a poll last week that said that  
23 over 65% of New Yorkers were interested in  
24 participating in an organics program, and that poll  
25 broke it out also by borough. And I think in every

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2 borough it was over 50% of interest. That tells me  
3 that there is real interest in participating in  
4 curbside... in an organics program, if that program  
5 is made easy to use.

6       And therein lies the other big flaw that I saw  
7 with the existing/old program, which is you had to  
8 opt into it not once, but twice. First, you had to  
9 have what I call like "vote" to like get your  
10 district a high enough interest rate to participate.  
11 And then you had to tell the Department of Sanitation  
12 again -- like once your district was selected, "Also,  
13 by the way, I would like a brown bin and I want...  
14 and I want service." Just too many hurdles to clear.  
15 We need to make this uncomplicated. We need to make  
16 this straightforward for New Yorkers, because we  
17 could spend as much money as you know... 10 times  
18 the amount of money that we spend on messaging, but  
19 when the message is so convoluted, no one's going to  
20 get it... or not enough people are going to get it.  
21 And what I'm talking about doing is doing something  
22 that is like, eventually, like universal and easy to  
23 use.

24       CHAIRPERSON NURSE: So would that have a phase  
25 out program? Or would that, you know, would it be

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2 the same as adding more districts or it'd be like,  
3 "Alright, we're giving everyone a bin, and you can  
4 use it or not."

5 COMMISSIONER TISCH: I believe that you have to  
6 walk before you can run. And to date, as of today,  
7 June 2022, less than half of New Yorkers have ever  
8 had an opportunity to participate in a curbside  
9 organics program. And I think you need to give the  
10 give people a voluntary opportunity to participate --  
11 my opinion -- before you go straight to mandatory.

12 So I also think that the investments that we have  
13 made, for example, in the schools, in teaching our  
14 kids like our next generation of New Yorkers, that is  
15 going to like culturally change the way this... this  
16 city and people in this city think about organics...  
17 organics collections. So I think the first thing we  
18 have to do is invest in our kids. Second thing we  
19 have to do is roll out a voluntary program. And then  
20 we start thinking about mandatory in my opinion. And  
21 I think you can get it much more cost effectively  
22 then was previously done.

23 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: I guess it's just hard for me  
24 to imagine what you mean about everyone's  
25 participating but it's not mandatory. So are we

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2 just... How... How does... How does that happen? If  
3 we're saying, let's have a curbside program for  
4 everybody. I've never got to use it, by the way. So  
5 I'm in that choir. But if we pass this bill, and we  
6 say, and it's veto proof, and we say, "Hey, we're  
7 going to we're going to do this program." How are we  
8 going to allow every New Yorker who wants to do it,  
9 do it? And... I just don't understand how it would  
10 be different from putting the recycling bin in front  
11 of your apartment building or... or...

12 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Well, today 50% of our  
13 recyclables are collected, right? So we're much  
14 farther along with recycling than with organics.  
15 My... my thought and my sense is, give people an  
16 opportunity to participate, and then make the  
17 decision on whether you want to go... want and or  
18 need to go to mandatory. It may very well be that if  
19 you look at the data after, you know, after people  
20 have had an opportunity to use the program for a  
21 while and say, "We need we need mandatory." That  
22 could be but like, I would like to see that data  
23 before that decision is made.

24 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay, so what do you think a  
25 program like this is going to cost New York City? To

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2 really make it work and achieve the way you're  
3 envisioning it?

4 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Yeah, so as I said, the last  
5 program was nearly a million dollars per district.  
6 That's without the OTPS costs, so really over... well  
7 over a million dollars for per district. I think  
8 that that cost, as I mentioned before, is way too...  
9 way too high, not sustainable for the city. I think  
10 the cost can be significantly brought down, as I  
11 discussed before, with routing, clear message...  
12 clear messaging... better routing, clear messaging,  
13 more optimal selection of rear loaders versus dual  
14 bends. There's just a lot of low hanging fruit, to  
15 improve upon the old program to make it significantly  
16 less than a million dollars per district per year.

17 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Last question, and... No,  
18 two more questions. They're pretty quick. You've  
19 mentioned some of the existing facilities we send to,  
20 and that there's plans for the... the kind of dual  
21 wastewater recovery plus the anaerobic digestion. Do  
22 you... Do you know if there are plans to site some of  
23 that in New York City? Or how many?

24 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Well, as I mentioned, we are  
25 working with the Department of Environmental

2 Protection to... on their anaerobic digesters to  
3 build out that capacity to be able to process  
4 significantly more organic waste than is processed  
5 there today. And I think that that infrastructure,  
6 which is co-located at our wastewater treatment  
7 plants, is the infrastructure that we should... is  
8 among the infrastructure that we should be very  
9 focused on building out. I think it's an incredibly  
10 exciting opportunity, and it's something that I look  
11 forward to delving deeper into as we develop certain  
12 plans, including the solid waste management plan,  
13 this sustainable sustainability plan of 2024. I  
14 think we should devote energy and effort there. And  
15 also in New York City, this fall we are building  
16 out... we're adding significantly more capacity to  
17 our composting facility in Staten Island up in  
18 Freshkills. So I think those are the two main areas  
19 of focus.

20 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. Do you know by chance,  
21 how many you think of those anaerobic digester co-  
22 located facilities New York City would need to really  
23 absorb a lot of this material?

24 COMMISSIONER TISCH: So today, they're processing  
25 it was 250 tons a day? Today, their capacity is 250

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2 tons a day. My sense is that if we invest in  
3 those... upgrading those digesters, you... I don't  
4 want to speak for DEP, I've got to be careful too,  
5 but you can do like an order of magnitude more. But  
6 I would like DEP -- that is my guess -- I would like  
7 DP to speak about that. And that is something that  
8 will be and must be a crucial part of the solid waste  
9 management plan.

10 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Great. My last question, and  
11 I'll turn it over to everyone is: How can DSNY  
12 effectively partner with NYCHA to establish a  
13 successful organic waste collection operation?

14 COMMISSIONER TISCH: So, I think one good example  
15 of that is we have an organics bin in front... in  
16 front of the Ravenswood houses. And that bin is  
17 full every day. And as we roll out our smart bin  
18 program, we've had such a successful pilot in  
19 Astoria, co-locating them or locating them nearby  
20 NYCHA developments is definitely a strategic and  
21 important thing to do and build on the success of  
22 that program. The other thing I would say about the  
23 smart bins is we get pristine organic material from  
24 those smart bins. So it really has been a very  
25 exciting strategy that we are looking to roll out, to

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2 say nothing of the fact that they are not staffed,  
3 and that they're just accessible 24/7.

4 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: And are there any  
5 conversations besides the smart bins? Because, I  
6 mean, one of those smart bins is like, what, less  
7 than 50 pounds for, you know, a sizable development.  
8 So I understand the idea of putting them around  
9 residents have to come, you know, down the elevator  
10 when... when they work and go all the way out. But  
11 do you think there should be more conversations with  
12 NYCHA for a more scaled-up program?

13 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Oh, sure. And I think...  
14 You know, we work very closely with NYCHA,  
15 specifically now we're working with them a  
16 containerization pilot, which we're very excited  
17 about, but as we develop a curbside plan, NYCHA has  
18 to be at the table and a very important stakeholder  
19 in the development of those efforts.

20 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Great. I'm going to pass  
21 over some time now to Councilmembers. So I'm going  
22 to recognize Councilmember Menin for questions.

23 COUNCILMEMBER MENIN: Great. Thank you so much  
24 Chair Nurse. And thank you, Commissioner for the  
25 testimony. So I have a number of questions.

2           So you indicated that limited public  
3 participation is obviously an issue with the curbside  
4 organics collection program. What kind of outreach is  
5 the agency doing?

6           COMMISSIONER TISCH: So there's different buckets  
7 of outreach. On the school's roll out, the outreach  
8 is robust, meaning the plan is -- as we roll out at  
9 the next -- we spend about a million dollars a year  
10 on outreach at schools. That's going to double over  
11 the next two years as we as we roll out organics at  
12 the remainder of New York City schools. We do that  
13 through our partner called Grow NYC. And then Greg  
14 or Bridget, would you like to talk about the outreach  
15 that is done for the existing curbside organics  
16 program?

17           DEPUTY COMMISSIONER B ANDERSON: Thank you for  
18 that question. We... we have a multi-pronged  
19 approach as the Commissioner mentioned. We do  
20 mailers. We do a mailer to... to anyone to sign up  
21 for the program. We do targeted mailers to building  
22 management companies because one of the hurdles has  
23 been having buildings sign on to a program where  
24 maybe there are residents who've expressed interest  
25 in the program. We do webinars for anyone who's

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2 interested to learn more about how to do the program.  
3 This has been a key during COVID. We also do in-  
4 person outreach. So we do canvassing door-to-door in  
5 neighborhoods. We do... We have a multilingual staff  
6 to manage that program. All of our mailers and  
7 flyers and things are in multiple languages. So we  
8 have a multi-pronged approach. We also go to city...  
9 Community Board meetings. Anyone who wants to host  
10 us at community groups, we go and we speak to them.  
11 We have giveaways for kitchen containers for people  
12 who are interested in participating the program. So  
13 we have a number of different incentives in person  
14 and remote tools to educate.

15 COUNCILMEMBER MENIN: Okay, what about NYCHA,  
16 community and civic organizations, and CBOs? What is  
17 the outreach there?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER B ANDERSON: Yep. So we  
19 requested to get onto the agenda to any community  
20 board that is interested in having us speak about the  
21 program. We have a working group with NYCHA  
22 sustainability and their operation staff, where we  
23 work out how to leverage existing green groups within  
24 NYCHA to advance composting programs. And any...  
25 Basically, any community group that invites us to a

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2 meeting, we are there. So we have a staff... a  
3 robust staff, both sanitation and a nonprofit called  
4 Big Reuse, who does outreach on our behalf?

5 COUNCILMEMBER MENIN: And I know that other  
6 cities like Minneapolis have a very high uptake rate.  
7 Are you looking at other cities, both domestically  
8 and internationally? And what are you using in terms  
9 of lessons learned from those cities?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER B ANDERSON: Absolutely.  
11 We... We have very strong relationships with  
12 Minneapolis, with Seattle, with Toronto, with San  
13 Francisco, and we look at their programs, figure out  
14 how their programs relate to New York City and our  
15 condition, and what best practices we can take and  
16 use. Absolutely.

17 COUNCILMEMBER MENIN: Okay, moving on. For the  
18 Clean Curbs Pilot Program for BIDs and commercial  
19 property owners, one request that I've heard now  
20 repeat candidly from participants is for a uniform  
21 city standard design for the containers. Could you  
22 give an update on that?

23 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Yeah, I can. Thank you for  
24 that question. We need a uniform city design. And  
25 in the adopted budget, we had \$4.8 million to develop

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2 that design and for rat-proof, litter baskets. And  
3 so the work to develop the general parameters of that  
4 design began now... began with that... that funding  
5 that was allocated for that purpose. I think on the  
6 clean curbs and containerization, remember, it's not  
7 a one-size-fits-all. Various BID, commercial,  
8 residential, and even like neighborhood-to-  
9 neighborhood, but I... I feel strongly that there  
10 needs to be a common design, or common elements of  
11 the design for New York City to create standard... as  
12 much standardization as you can create, and we don't  
13 have that now with the Clean Curbs Program. So the  
14 Clean Curbs Program, there are like very few local  
15 vendors who make these... these containers, so we're  
16 buying the containers from, you know, the local  
17 vendor who... who does it. But that can't be the  
18 container that is rolled out more broadly.

19 COUNCILMEMBER MENIN: Okay, great. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you, Councilmember  
21 Menin. Councilmember Brewer.

22 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Thank you very much.  
23 First I want to congratulate Community Affairs  
24 liaison, Marisa Yannick, because she's fabulous  
25 answers every single 24/7 question, and also

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2 Manhattan Borough Chief James Levy, and everybody at  
3 CB7 sanitation. They're fabulous.

4       So I am in the district... one of them that has  
5 voluntary, and I want to say, the staff is wonderful.  
6 When somebody stole my bin, I got a next... another  
7 one the next day. So they're wonderful. There's a  
8 but though. I still get a lot of complaints from  
9 larger buildings that it is hard to communicate with  
10 staff and get what they need. And I do get my block,  
11 which is unfortunately very active, you know, when...  
12 when a truck misses, then there are concerns. So  
13 there... as we are... I actually believe in the  
14 mandatory and I'll tell you why: Because it is so  
15 darn hard to get people to change their habits and do  
16 it. I mean, I try, and I... and my district sucks.  
17 We're like at the bottom... or something... or close  
18 to the bottom. The only thing worse is district  
19 seven. But Brooklyn and Bronx are doing really well.  
20 So now I'm really pissed. But we're going to work on  
21 that.

22       We did go from Manhattan 24.9 in January, two  
23 40.6 tonnes, so that's better. But it's... it's  
24 really a challenge, and you do have to make it easy.  
25 So my question is, what incentives even in the

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2 current volunteer... in other words, I have a bin, I  
3 won't tell you who but somebody from the sanitation  
4 gave it to me years ago, I've been holding on to it  
5 for 10 years, now I can use it for my kitchen. But  
6 you have to have the hardware stores advertising  
7 them. You have to have an online -- I don't use  
8 online but whoever wants to use online. There's no  
9 sort of, like you said comprehensive way. So what...  
10 what would you do differently, staffing, and bin-  
11 wise, and communication? I know you mentioned a  
12 little bit, but it has to be so robust, to get up to  
13 the 50% or whatever the point is, when it's not  
14 expensive compared to what we're dealing with now.

15 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Actually, I think it has to  
16 be... The two big things that we can do is make it  
17 simple and easy to use. I think only the most  
18 motivated New Yorkers are going to use the program as  
19 it is designed now, because there is so much extra  
20 action that is required from them. If we could just  
21 tell them, "Hey, you're going to have service. It's  
22 going to be on this day. Start leaving your organic  
23 material." Like I... I really believe that more New  
24 Yorkers will use it if we just make it more simple.

25

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2 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: All right. I mean, I  
3 agree with you. I just want to say that you have to  
4 get the bin, you have to have the simple, you have to  
5 have the staff that's responsive, and when somebody  
6 calls it has to be answered. Even in my district  
7 now, as good an experience that I've had, and I just  
8 go with Gale Brewer and not "Councilmember", I would  
9 assume I'm not getting that response from others. So  
10 even in the voluntary, it's got to be made easier  
11 right now, just as a suggestion.

12 The second thing is: With the schools, how are  
13 we going to do outreach? I heard that you're going  
14 to do the million and then 2 million for people who  
15 want to bring their organics, composting to the  
16 school? Is that part of the... Because I don't think  
17 school staff is going to do the outreach and do the  
18 work. So I've been, you know, 1.0, 2.0, old, new.  
19 I've been through all the scenarios personally.

20 COMMISSIONER TISCH: So with the schools, there's  
21 two different pieces of outreach. The first is the  
22 outreach to get the school up and running with their  
23 organics collection. That's like the in the school.  
24 For that we have GrowNYC \$2 million a year for the  
25 next two years. That's what they are going to be

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2 doing to work on the 500 or 600 schools that still  
3 don't have organics collection, bringing them online.  
4 And I think there is a robust action up... a robust  
5 communication plan and outreach plan around that.  
6 The second piece with the school related is the...  
7 the smart bins. And for that I would like Bridget to  
8 talk about the how the communication is going to  
9 work.

10 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: You have to Anderson's we  
11 have to Adams's

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER B ANDERSON: That's right.  
13 So the smart bins are co located with schools to  
14 leverage efficiencies of service, right? But they're  
15 not a school program. They're really for the  
16 neighborhood and for the community. So the outreach  
17 plan will be to be communicating directly with the  
18 neighborhood and the community where those bins are  
19 located, and that'll be the same combination. It'll  
20 be mailers. It'll be online opportunities to learn  
21 about it. We'll have a field... we'll have  
22 canvassing and field staff in the... in the field.  
23 We'll be doing, you know, attending any meeting  
24 anyone invites us to. So it'll be robust. It'll be  
25 multilingual, but it's really geared towards the

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2 neighborhood and for the families of the students who  
3 are at the school, because it's... it's not the  
4 school staff that are doing that program. It's us.

5 COMMISSIONER TISCH: I would also add, I believe  
6 that the outreach is important. The bin itself,  
7 located right in front of the school where parents,  
8 family members, or adults drop their... their kid  
9 off. It's a bright orange bin that says compost on  
10 it. It's... it's hard to miss. And the one thing  
11 that I am very interested in where I think we're  
12 learning from the pilot in Astoria, is the bins need  
13 to be locked. But we need to make it so that it's  
14 very easy for people to open the bin and not have a  
15 whole signup drama. And so we are working very  
16 closely with Big Belly. You know, I have a tech  
17 background to develop a very simple app that New  
18 Yorkers can download and use to open any of the  
19 compost bins. That way they don't have to request a  
20 key card or, or anything like that. Again, like  
21 simplicity.

22 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Okay. And then just I've  
23 been to Newtown Creek a couple of times with Pam and  
24 is the question for NYCHA or for anybody: I've  
25 always been confused as to who likes, you know,

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2 agency-wise is in-sync disposers or not? Now, I  
3 understand you said earlier, more capacity means more  
4 utilization. I get that. But are the commercial  
5 stores using them? Or is it just NYCHA that's been  
6 proposed to use them? How are we dealing with this  
7 issue of disposers?

8 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Deputy Commissioner Greg  
9 Anderson is going to answer this one.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER G ANDERSON: Thank you,  
11 Councilmember. So for the in-sync disposers,  
12 currently, they're... they're not allowed for  
13 commercial establishments because of DEP regulations.  
14 DEP does have some concerns, which... which they  
15 could speak to in greater detail about the impact on  
16 the sewer system and... and the runoff into the  
17 harbor. But as far as residential properties, those  
18 are totally... totally legal. And, you know, they  
19 there have been some pilots, particularly with NYCHA,  
20 I think Barook Houses when you were borough  
21 president, Councilmember.

22 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Baruch.

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER G ANDERSON: Baruch. Sorry.  
24 I'm not a Manhattan resident, so I don't practice  
25 that. But yeah, so I think that's somewhere that

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2 there is opportunity to grow. Obviously, you know,  
3 we also are looking at curbside options, as the  
4 Commissioner has mentioned, and that's, that's where  
5 we're really focused on.

6 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Okay. It's a little  
7 confusing to see that this instinct would work for  
8 people will be easier, but there may be concerns on  
9 the waste management side. I understand. The final  
10 question, how many people on the staff now for the  
11 composting program for the seven districts?

12 COMMISSIONER TISCH: So there's two types of  
13 staff. There's collections, like trucks, and then  
14 there's Bridget's staff that does the programmatic  
15 and outreach stuff. Bridget, would you like to speak  
16 about your... your staff?

17 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: And can you also... we're  
18 hearing from online, people can't hear so just make  
19 sure to lean into the mic or speak loudly. Thank  
20 you.

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER B ANDERSON: For the outreach  
22 staff, we have four full time dedicated staff. And  
23 that's for everything: Logistics, outreach,  
24 planning, etc. We also have 10 full time nonprofit  
25 staff who are out in the field every day, and that's

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2 coupled with a lot of support for our communications  
3 team, from our community affairs team. So there's a  
4 lot of people working on this. But in terms of full  
5 time dedicated staff, it's... it's 4 from sanitation  
6 and 10 from the nonprofit group.

7 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Okay. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you, Councilmember  
9 brewer for all the knowledge you're bringing of the  
10 versions. And I'm going to recognize Councilmember  
11 Powers.

12 COUNCILMEMBER POWERS: Thank you. Thanks for  
13 your answers so far and your testimony. I'd like to  
14 dig in a little more into the drop-off sites and a  
15 little bit about residential composting.

16 So right now there are 208 composting drop-off  
17 sites: 61 in Brooklyn, 55 in Manhattan, 42 in  
18 Queens, 35 in The Bronx, and 15 on Staten Island, and  
19 there's always been concerns around equity around  
20 what neighborhoods have access to those sites,  
21 around... concerns around staffing, signage,  
22 accessibility hours of operation, so forth. And a  
23 map of the sites demonstrates that the greatest  
24 accesses facilities are currently found in some of  
25 the highest income neighborhoods, and I would imagine

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2 that the pickup also is happening, I know, in some of  
3 the higher areas of utilization are in higher income  
4 neighborhoods with a need to kind of expand  
5 obviously, the residential over time, and hopefully  
6 we get there. But on the drop off, so you're adding  
7 100 smart bins, I think. Is that correct?

8 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Yes, that's... that's what's  
9 budgeted.

10 COUNCILMEMBER POWERS: Okay, at school sites.  
11 And do we have the map yet to where those are going?

12 COMMISSIONER TISCH: No. We are developing that  
13 map and we plan to do it in coordination with the  
14 council. The bins don't start coming in until  
15 October, because we can't place the order until July  
16 1. But we plan for the bins to come in October.  
17 They have to get their app straightened out. This  
18 Big Belly company has to get their app straightened  
19 out, so it's very easy for any New Yorker to use.  
20 And so we're going to begin the conversations about  
21 where to site the first 100 bins shortly.

22 COUNCILMEMBER POWERS: And there's 20 in Astoria.  
23 So there the 120 total? Is that fair to say?

24 COMMISSIONER TISCH: No. So... So right now,  
25 between our local partners who run their compost

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2 sites, and collection sites, and the bins, we have  
3 223 places city wide, where New Yorkers can drop off  
4 their organic material. I will say that some of the  
5 inequity you see: Part of it is just based on where  
6 green markets are, where our partners, you know,  
7 decide to do their work. I think we can compensate a  
8 lot for that, and we should compensate a lot for that  
9 with our sighting of the smart bins. As I said, I  
10 think that that's a strategy we really need to double  
11 down on. I mean, the pilot in Astoria has been has  
12 been fabulous. So I think like if we have a hearing  
13 like this a year from now, I think that the  
14 distribution of where these drop off sites are is  
15 going to change meaningfully because we have so much  
16 more flexibility with the smart bins. And because  
17 that's going to be an important part of our go  
18 forward strategy.

19 COUNCILMEMBER POWERS: So residential pickup  
20 right now is very limited. I know Community Board 6  
21 in my area has it. I know that Councilmember Hanif  
22 has in her district. It's seven... is it seven  
23 community districts that have it right now?

24 COMMISSIONER TISCH: It is seven community  
25 districts. I can tell you what they are. It's

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2 Brooklyn 1... Brooklyn 1...1, 2, 6, and 7, Manhattan  
3 6, and 7, and Bronx 8.

4 COUNCILMEMBER POWERS: Okay. So limited, of  
5 course, plus the 223... I have 208... but 223... I  
6 think number or 223 you said stops, and then you're  
7 going to add in the 100 new smart bins?

8 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Correct.

9 COUNCILMEMBER POWERS: So how are you going to  
10 determine where those lines are? Like what is going  
11 to be the criteria by which, where those 100...?

12 COMMISSIONER TISCH: So I'm a data driven person,  
13 we're going to look on a map... dots on a map... of  
14 where the existing opportunities are and make sure  
15 that we site them in districts or by schools where  
16 there aren't opportunities to do organics collection.  
17 There's a... there's a small amount of this, but it's  
18 important for me to point out of the siting that has  
19 to be done, like based on efficiency, meaning... We  
20 want... If we're putting a bin at a school, in front  
21 of a school, we want it to be a school that is  
22 already turned on for organics collection, because  
23 then the truck that picks up the organics material at  
24 the school also gets the bin and it's like super easy  
25 and not expensive.

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2 COUNCILMEMBER POWERS: You mean like schools that  
3 are already participating in a program...?

4 COMMISSIONER TISCH: They have organic separation  
5 in their school like we collect organic  
6 (crosstalk)...

7 COUNCILMEMBER POWERS: It's my... I don't know...  
8 it's been my recollection that some boroughs don't  
9 have that. I'm talking about... it's like Manhattan,  
10 the Bronx and...

11 COMMISSIONER TISCH: No, in Manhattan... I have  
12 the numbers... the numbers Here, but Manhattan is  
13 about... about... hold on. I think most schools in  
14 Manhattan have organics collection and separation.  
15 And the only schools in Manhattan that don't have it  
16 today are the schools that are... have... that  
17 containerize their wastes. So they'll... they'll be  
18 included over the next two years.

19 COUNCILMEMBER POWERS: But I'm saying once we  
20 move... let's take Manhattan. I know Manhattan has  
21 it. But does the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens...

22 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Oh yeah. There are schools  
23 in every borough today that have organics separation  
24 that are very good candidates today for bins.

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2 COUNCILMEMBER POWERS: Okay. So when you put  
3 that whole big picture together, you have the 230...  
4 whatever it is... drop-off sites you have, 100 new  
5 smart bins, you have the residential composting...  
6 It still strikes me that there are going to be some  
7 gaps in the ability to serve people, when you do the  
8 criteria of sites that don't have... you know,  
9 schools that don't have... that have an existing  
10 program... When you do all those layers, because 100  
11 bins is 100 schools, but there's...

12 COMMISSIONER TISCH: 100 is insufficient to  
13 meet... if you're getting at this... 100 is  
14 insufficient to meet the size and scale of the  
15 program that ultimately should be rolled out, but if  
16 you think about this, our pilot started like a few  
17 months ago. Yeah, our pilot started nine months ago,  
18 and that was 20 bins. We are rapidly exiting pilot  
19 phase and going to full rollout phase. So I would  
20 think of the 100 as a start, which like, hopefully,  
21 two years from now we'll look back and say, Hey,  
22 remember what it was only 100?

23 COUNCILMEMBER POWERS: Okay, so when we in the  
24 testimony say there's going to be... meet the  
25 requirements of Intro 281, my legislation about

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2 requiring three drop off sites. When you roll 100  
3 out, your belief is that there will be three drop  
4 offs. I think there should be a bit more, but  
5 then...

6 COMMISSIONER TISCH: I think we are going to meet  
7 your bill's requirements... I'm confident that we  
8 will be able to meet your bills requirements of three  
9 in every district this calendar year.

10 COUNCILMEMBER POWERS: Okay. And I look forward  
11 to the mayor's signature when we pass the bill on  
12 that. Okay, so that is... that is good to hear. And  
13 I do think 100 is insufficient, but I'm glad we're  
14 starting, and obviously we want to work together to  
15 figure out where those locations should be, because I  
16 have plenty Councilmember here... colleagues. I  
17 have some in my district or pickup. We have three  
18 drop off sites in Committee Board 6, I think right  
19 now, but it'd be good to be able to expand it to  
20 other places in the city as well. Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you, Councilmember  
22 Powers. Next, I'm going to recognize Councilmember  
23 Hanif, and then I have following that Richardson  
24 Jordan, Bottcher, Williams, Ossé, Velázquez.

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2 COUNCILMEMBER HANIF: Thank you Chair. So I'm  
3 super-grateful to know that the department is working  
4 towards developing a curbside organic program that  
5 people actually use. Could you remind us when this  
6 opt-in program began in New York City?

7 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Bridget, do you have a  
8 timeline? We call it the 2019 program.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER B ANDERSON: Right. So we  
10 had the original pilot that was cut in the beginning  
11 of the pandemic, and then we restored a signup  
12 program... the opt in program. The signups started  
13 in August, and the first district to get service was  
14 in October. And so most of these districts... the  
15 seven districts have only had service since the  
16 beginning of this calendar year.

17 COUNCILMEMBER HANIF: So the organics program,  
18 just to be clear... The curbside program began in  
19 2019?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER B ANDERSON: Uh, the current  
21 program began last fall... The current program that  
22 has seven districts.

23 COMMISSIONER TISCH: I think I can help clarify.  
24 There have been multiple programs. There was a 2019  
25 program which was 24 districts. That program was

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2 ended at the beginning of the pandemic. It was fully  
3 cut. And then it was brought back with seven  
4 districts, which is where it is right now not growing  
5 or expanding, but it was brought back and those  
6 districts started to get service in... [to B  
7 Anderson] you said December?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER B ANDERSON: Yeah, late fall  
9 and winter of last year.

10 COUNCILMEMBER HANIF: Okay. That's helpful to  
11 know because that means we don't have a lot of  
12 critical data...

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER B ANDERSON: Right.

14 COUNCILMEMBER HANIF: ...on the program.

15 We also know that many New Yorkers across the  
16 iterations of this program have been turned away  
17 from... by managers or landlords... their buildings.  
18 What role does sanitation play here?

19 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Uh, Deputy Commissioner Greg  
20 Anderson is going to take this one.

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER G ANDERSON: Sure. Thank you  
22 councilman for the question. So in previous programs  
23 and in the current opt in program, we... we work with  
24 building management to get them to actually  
25 participate. It doesn't help if a resident wants to

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2 participate, but the porter the super in the building  
3 won't set out the bin, or won't... won't use the bin  
4 in any way. So our staff under Commissioner Bridget  
5 Anderson, and our contracted outreach staff, they'll  
6 work with -- sorry, there's a tremendous amount of  
7 feedback -- they'll work with the building management  
8 companies, everything from large building management  
9 companies, all the way down to small owners, and they  
10 will work with the porters they work a lot with  
11 30TVJ, as well, to educate them on how to participate  
12 in the program and get them to actually use the bins.

13 COUNCILMEMBER HANIF: And whose is "they"? Are  
14 you describing the very low number of staffers who  
15 are...?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER G ANDERSON: Yeah. It's our  
17 staff, both within in the department as well as our  
18 contracted outreach staff with \_\_\_\_\_.

19 COUNCILMEMBER HANIF: Understood. And...

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER G ANDERSON: So sorry to  
21 interrupt, but we also have our field supervisors who  
22 will go out to buildings and speak to the building  
23 representative, whether it's the super or the staff  
24 on site, and try to get them to participate as well.

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2 COUNCILMEMBER HANIF: And then is there an  
3 evaluation currently set in place that assesses the  
4 number of people participating, to help the  
5 department think through opportunities to expand and  
6 ask for meaningful funding?

7 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Yeah, we have a lot of data.  
8 Much of it is posted online, but a lot of data on  
9 participation in the seven districts. So for  
10 example... Is there a specific district you're  
11 interested in? Or do you just want me to give you  
12 like an example?

13 COUNCILMEMBER HANIF: I would love to get a...  
14 just an overview.

15 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Okay. So... So for actual  
16 service, the households that actually like have the  
17 brown bins and are getting service among the seven  
18 districts, ranges from 4.4% of the district to 32% of  
19 the district. 4.4, which is far and away the lowest  
20 is Manhattan six, and 32% is Brooklyn six. So that's  
21 the range. I have numbers for every district:  
22 percentages, addresses... number of addresses with  
23 actual service, whatever data you want to see.

24 COUNCILMEMBER HANIF: So then knowing these  
25 numbers for the seven, what's the education component

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2 around the opt in program? How many... I'd love to  
3 know just some more clarity around sanitation  
4 workers, the nonprofit partners? How are we viewing  
5 these numbers as a way to grow the program?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER B ANDERSON: One of the  
7 ways... So we did several mailers to recruit people  
8 to sign up. We've been doing in-person canvassing.  
9 We've been doing... going to community groups, to  
10 civics. We've been doing volunteer coordination  
11 days, so people who know their neighbors can speak to  
12 their neighbors about the program. When... Once we  
13 get signups to try to get a critical mass, we then  
14 canvass the blocks where somebody has signed up to  
15 say, "Hey, your neighbor's doing this. Why don't you  
16 join in?" So that truck is already going down the  
17 road, it could pick up from more locations. We have  
18 also had occasionally a free rider opportunity where  
19 people will set out a bin that they had, but they  
20 hadn't signed up. So then we go back. We make sure  
21 that they know... That we get them signed in so we  
22 know that they're participating and that the truck  
23 will pick them up.

24 COUNCILMEMBER HANIF: Got it. So the piece  
25 around neighbors getting the word out to other

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2 neighbors. Is there like a program? Or is that just  
3 like a one neighbor is doing it, and you've sort of  
4 just voluntold them to talk to other neighbors?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER B ANDERSON: We have a... We  
6 have a volunteer program. So we recruit volunteers.  
7 We train volunteers. We have regularly scheduled  
8 times where the volunteers meet up and discuss  
9 strategy.

10 COUNCILMEMBER HANIF: Is that... Is there a  
11 specific program or how are people involved?

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER B ANDERSON: The place where  
13 all the information is is MakeCompost.NYC. That is  
14 the website where you can see all of the information  
15 we have about volunteering to help us recruit more  
16 participants.

17 COUNCILMEMBER HANIF: Thank you. That's good to  
18 know. So currently, recycling as a mandatory  
19 program... How many residents are fined for  
20 residential recycling violations every year?

21 COMMISSIONER TISCH: I am so sorry. I do not  
22 have our summons numbers with us, but I can get that  
23 for you right after this hearing, or perhaps during  
24 this hearing.

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2 COUNCILMEMBER HANIF: That would be great and  
3 helpful, given that the mandatory composting would be  
4 an extension of recycling. So that would be  
5 helpful... helpful to have. And then what's the  
6 program rate for the opt in... for the opt in  
7 program?

8 COMMISSIONER TISCH: The what rate?

9 COUNCILMEMBER HANIF: The opt in? What's the  
10 program rate for composting... curbside composting?

11 COMMISSIONER TISCH: What do you mean by program  
12 rate? How... What percent of...?

13 COUNCILMEMBER HANIF: Like, how many people are  
14 you seeing on a daily or weekly opting in?

15 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Okay. I don't have these  
16 numbers added up. To... No. I know. So, in the  
17 seven districts -- sorry, I'm just doing really quick  
18 math -- it's like 12,000 addresses with service. So  
19 at any one address, you can... and I just did that  
20 very quick math giving you a rough. So it's  
21 12,000... A little over 12,000 addresses that  
22 received service. And just to be clear, at any given  
23 address, there could be... like, it could be multiple  
24 apartments. So I don't mean to say that it's just  
25 12,000 households that receive the service. But what

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2 we're seeing is that in any given week, for any given  
3 collection, only, like less than 50% of those people  
4 who even like opted in, got the brown bin, and are on  
5 our route, are actually leaving organic material out.

6 COUNCILMEMBER HANIF: Understood. I mean, from  
7 our brief conversation right now, it's just clear to  
8 me that we need a mandatory program, and we need it  
9 soon. And so I just want to emphasize what Chair  
10 Nurse said: That a voluntary city wide system,  
11 rather than mandatory, would mimic all of the issues  
12 with the current opt in program. And so I'm really  
13 looking forward to more conversations and more  
14 thoughtful ways to expand, but really to get to where  
15 we need to be, which is mandatory composting across  
16 the city.

17 COMMISSIONER TISCH: I have your answer to your  
18 question about the violations for recycling in FY 21  
19 -- and we can get you more recent data -- we issued  
20 35,590 violations for recycling-related issues.

21 COUNCILMEMBER HANIF: Got it. That was 35,500?

22 COMMISSIONER TISCH: 590.

23 COUNCILMEMBER HANIF: 590. Okay. Thank you. I  
24 will let you know if I had any more questions. Thank  
25 you.

2 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you, Councilmember  
3 Hanif. I'm sorry to interrupt. I do have one  
4 question: Is that based off the... those recycling  
5 tickets or summons -- I'm sorry, I don't know the  
6 right terminology. Can you just share a little bit  
7 more about how that happens? Is that somebody makes  
8 a complaint? That's a worker on a truck seeing  
9 something? Or seeing that it's mixed or  
10 contaminated? So can you just give a little bit more  
11 so that we can imagine what somebody who doesn't, you  
12 know, separate out their food waste or something  
13 might be looking at.

14 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Sure. Three different  
15 pieces to enforcement: There's obviously the  
16 sanitation police... fairly small numbers of those.  
17 We have civilian enforcement agents assigned to the  
18 sanitation department. And then, you know, in each  
19 district, we have supervisors. And so the  
20 enforcement is done by those three general  
21 categories, or groups of people. And it can be... it  
22 can range from a proactive inspection, to a  
23 complaint, to 311. So it runs... it does run the  
24 full gamut.

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2 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay, thank you. I'm going  
3 to recognize Councilmember Richardson Jordan.

4 COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON JORDAN: Hi, thank you.  
5 Thank you for the testimony as well. I have a couple  
6 specific questions, and if... if you don't have the  
7 response, then maybe... maybe there could be follow  
8 up. I wanted to ask: Of the 55 composting sites in  
9 Manhattan how many were in the Central Harlem area?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER B ANDERSON: We can get back  
11 to you on that specifically.

12 COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON JORDAN: Okay. And then  
13 for the door-to-door canvassing, who are the  
14 community partners for that effort?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER B ANDERSON: For the door to  
16 door canvassing, it really runs the gamut. So we  
17 have a nonprofit, Big Reuse, who is the primary field  
18 outreach staff. They then work with local community  
19 groups. They've developed relationships with local  
20 community partners, civic associations to help  
21 recruit volunteers. It often happens in a very  
22 grassroots manner. People hear about it. They sign  
23 up.

24 COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON JORDAN: Okay. And then  
25 I wanted to ask if there's any specific effort around

2 culturally-relevant outreach and education. And just  
3 to be clear, I don't mean just language, but having  
4 having people on the lead that's reflective of the  
5 community, having outreach folks who are rooted in  
6 that community, and what's going on in that space,  
7 particularly, so that we can get more organics  
8 happening in our majority black and brown  
9 neighborhoods.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER B ANDERSON: Absolutely, and  
11 I think we are... we can always do more, we want to  
12 do more. Some examples of... of what we do there:  
13 We will hire, if... when we were doing our original  
14 rollout, district by district, we would hire folks  
15 from the neighborhood for that rollout, specifically.  
16 Someone who speaks Yiddish, or you know, et cetera.  
17 And we also have learned to target certain cultural  
18 events where there is a lot of food being generated  
19 at those events. It's a perfect touch point to speak  
20 to a lot of people to actually do the... the  
21 separation of the food at the event. So that's been  
22 a pretty successful strategy on our part. But we can  
23 always do more and we want to do more.

24 COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON JORDAN: Okay, if  
25 it's... if it's possible, if I could get some

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2 followup information on the composting sites, and  
3 also, I know that's... I know, it's like drilling  
4 down to the drill down, but the community partners  
5 that you're working with in and around my district.  
6 I would love to try to help facilitate more growth,

7 COMMISSIONER TISCH: We appreciate that and we  
8 will get it to you.

9 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you, Councilmember  
10 Richardson Jordan, I recognize Councilmember  
11 Bottcher.

12 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHEER: Hi Commissioner.

13 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHEER: I want to ask you about  
14 pay as you throw. Because to me, this is a potential  
15 key to getting participation and composting way up.  
16 Pay as you throw... or also known as Save As You  
17 Throw... a nicer a nicer way of presenting it, where  
18 households or buildings are charged for landfill-  
19 bound waste. They don't pay for recycling. They  
20 don't pay for organic waste. But landfill-bound  
21 waste perhaps exceeding a certain amount, buildings  
22 are charged for that. In my view, that's when you'll  
23 really see participation in these programs go up,  
24 combined with a mandatory organic waste program. I  
25 understand that the city paid a consultant a million

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2 dollars a few years ago to look into this model.

3 It's done in San Francisco, Seattle, and 1000s of

4 towns around the country. But we don't do it here.

5 Could you let us know what the latest is on Save as

6 you throw? And... and what happened with that study

7 that was commissioned?

8 COMMISSIONER TISCH: So, you're referring to a

9 2017 study that was commissioned, I believe. The

10 dollar value lines up. It was supposed to be a

11 million dollars. Unfortunately, that study got

12 killed. So there is there is no study, which is a

13 shame for us, because it would have been great to

14 have. In 2012... Going as far back as 2012, there

15 was a feasibility assessment of doing it, I think,

16 focused on the nonprofit sector. But that's by no

17 means a citywide study. So I think if you're

18 interested in Save As You Throw, that is something

19 that obviously would need to be thoughtfully studied

20 and has not yet been studied. It's a good candidate

21 for studying in the solid waste management plan,

22 which is 2026. Or if we want to study it earlier

23 there are obviously... we can make opportunities to

24 do that.

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2 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: That's a shame that the  
3 study was killed. Does it really require a million  
4 dollar study? Can we study it now? Do we have to  
5 wait for that kind of...?

6 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Oh, my recommendation is  
7 that this... before we think about rolling something  
8 like this out, that it be studied. Like if you just  
9 think about illegal dumping now, and what... I've  
10 spent so much time going to so many different  
11 districts that really suffer from the blight of  
12 illegal dumping. Will that increase or impact  
13 illegal dumping in the city? I think yes. Like what  
14 do we do with bags that, you know, aren't in the  
15 special orange bag. Like how does that work? What  
16 does that mean for the city? And how it how it looks  
17 and feels. So I think it's definitely something to  
18 study before you roll out.

19 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: Of course, we need to  
20 study it. But you know, it's just so disappointing.  
21 Now we have to wait for another budget cycle. And  
22 here we have... here we had a study on the table,  
23 that would have cost a million dollars in a budget of  
24 billions of dollars. Save As You Throw would save  
25 hundreds of millions of dollars a year, potentially,

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2 and get recycling way up, organic waste way up. So  
3 that's disappointing. I would love to work on that.  
4 I know that Chair Nurse is passionate about that.  
5 Let's let's talk about that.

6 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Sure.

7 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you, Councilmember  
8 Boucher. And probably the reason it was killed is  
9 because somebody called it a Pay As You Throw  
10 program. So let's never say that, again. [laughs]

11 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHE: You will never hear me  
12 say that again.

13 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Agreed. And I do have one  
14 question, just to piggyback on that. If it were to  
15 be a part of a solid waste... the SWAMP visioning. I  
16 mean... I know that there's going to be I believe  
17 hearings on what needs to be in that before it  
18 happens. And I know that folks had been... if I'm  
19 remembering correctly, a firm has been hired to kind  
20 of design the process. There were some other things  
21 that we had talked about in previous hearings, or  
22 studies around microplastics, or something else that  
23 was going to be folded into all of this stuff. So  
24 I'm just curious... like genuinely: Is this  
25 something that genuinely can be folded into the SWAMP

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2 in a real substantial way? Or does it really need to  
3 be a breakout study?

4 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Oh, no. The... the SWAMP is  
5 definitely the right place for it. Like without a  
6 doubt.

7 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Fantastic. Okay, so I'm next  
8 going to recognize Councilmember Williams.

9 COUNCILMEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you. Hi,  
10 Commissioner. Before I start, I just wanted to, of  
11 course as I always do, thank the Department of  
12 Sanitation specifically Deputy Chief Aleko. We love  
13 him very much. As you mentioned, I think my district  
14 is probably one of the highest... It's definitely  
15 one of the highest districts reporting illegal  
16 dumping. So we continue to have this issue and  
17 Department of Sanitation literally comes out and  
18 cleans it up within 24 to 32 hours. So we greatly  
19 appreciate that, so much so that I'm using all of my  
20 time to give you this big thank you.

21 That said, we also have waste transfer stations  
22 in my district. And you know, they use tractor  
23 trailers to export and dispose of New York City's  
24 waste. This generates unnecessary traffic, truck  
25 traffic and pollution. Some waste transfer stations

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2 are looking to shift to expand their exports to rail.  
3 So I just wanted to know, from your opinion, do you  
4 think this shift will allow significant carbon waste  
5 reduction? Are there other methods that are  
6 recommended in order to achieve a more  
7 environmentally sound approach to dispose of waste?

8 COMMISSIONER TISCH: I think the commercial waste  
9 zone is going to be huge in that area. And I  
10 specifically think it's going to be the biggest four  
11 districts that have the transfer stations. And then  
12 we're talking about having the amount of truck  
13 traffic through those districts. So I think that  
14 that is like the single biggest thing going on in  
15 that area. And not just the single biggest thing. I  
16 think it's massive and it's coming.

17 COUNCILMEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay. And to that... to  
18 that note, Councilmember Menin had to leave, but she  
19 had a question around any updates for the RFP for the  
20 commercial waste zones?

21 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Yeah. The proposals are due  
22 on July 15. They are still due on July 15. Nothing  
23 has changed.

24 COUNCILMEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay. So another  
25 question that I have, that was a question that I

2 thought of, through the questions of my colleagues  
3 around violations. So my district primarily is small  
4 property owners. And so a lot of times they have to  
5 bear the brunt of lots of sanitation violations,  
6 tickets, et cetera. And so, as we look to create a  
7 mandatory composting program, I just want to  
8 understand how the department plans -- and I know  
9 we've been talking a lot about outreach and  
10 education, and maybe this question is like for my  
11 colleagues -- but I'm just trying to understand how  
12 we ensure that folks who, quite frankly are going to  
13 bear the brunt of certain enforcements are actually  
14 aware. And so to your point, about only less than  
15 50% of New Yorkers actually use the program, one of  
16 the things that I used to say all the time is: When  
17 they actually make this mandatory people in my  
18 district won't even know what to do, and then again,  
19 would be subject to fines. So I just want to  
20 understand as we look to make it mandatory: How are  
21 we ensuring that people can actually comply and  
22 they're not further, you know, held accountable to  
23 additional fines.

24 COMMISSIONER TISCH: So, mandatory equals  
25 punitive. I want to be really clear about that.

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2 When you put in place a mandatory program, that means  
3 we're asking the Department of Sanitation to enforce  
4 its rules. So the -- what was it 36,000? --  
5 approximately 36,000 fines were written for recycling  
6 and FY 21. That number, if this becomes mandatory  
7 will be so much higher for organics, just because in  
8 the early years... not just not just weeks and  
9 months, but in the early years, it takes time. That  
10 is why I strongly encourage us all to think about not  
11 starting out mandatory, because less than 50% of New  
12 Yorkers have ever had even access or the ability to  
13 participate. So when you tell us to do a mandatory  
14 program, that means we go around fining residents for  
15 not participating. And I would like to start out by  
16 not fining them and giving them a reasonable amount  
17 of time to have access to the program and to  
18 participate before we start fining

19 COUNCILMEMBER WILLIAMS: Just a follow up. I  
20 would love to know out of the 36,000 or 35,000  
21 violations, how many are within my district? I know  
22 you may not have it now. But I would love to go into  
23 how many are in my district, because that is  
24 something that I heard a lot. A lot of seniors have  
25 issues with bringing their trash. Again, we have

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2 illegal dumping issues. So sometimes people dump  
3 trash in front of people's properties, and they have  
4 to pay fines. So yes, I would like to talk more  
5 about the mandatory issue because I definitely don't  
6 want people in my district to then be subject to  
7 fines.

8 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Mandatory is fines.

9 COUNCILMEMBER WILLIAMS: Yeah. And I think it  
10 looks a little different for people that own property  
11 versus people who are renting. That burden is a  
12 little higher. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you, Councilmember  
14 Williams. And just to note that the commissioner did  
15 mention and... and I think the comptroller's rep will  
16 reiterate that, I think it was over 60% of people in  
17 the survey per district per borough want this?

18 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Yup.

19 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: They want it. So, you know.

20 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Well, there was... the study  
21 I was... (crosstalk)

22 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: If people began and people  
23 will use it... and people will use it properly.

24 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Yeah. The study I was  
25 saying was actually not the comptrollers. It was a

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2 different... different poll. But yes, that  
3 comptroller study also had great data around it.

4 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay, so we're almost done  
5 with our row of members, and then we will open it up.

6 Thank you for all the young people here who are  
7 patiently waiting. Welcome to government.

8 Councilmember Ossé.

9 COUNCILMEMBER OSSÉ: Thank you, Chair Nurse.  
10 Hello, Commissioner. Good afternoon. How are you?

11 COMMISSIONER TISCH: I'm good. Thank you.

12 COUNCILMEMBER OSSÉ: Good. I've got two  
13 questions for you. You testified the RPF process for  
14 the commercial waste zones is still ongoing.

15 Historically, the routes trucks take pass through  
16 black and brown neighborhoods like mine, often  
17 bringing in congestion, traffic, and air pollution.

18 How will you make sure that the RPF process for the  
19 trucking companies and other companies used to  
20 implement the commercial waste zone plan don't  
21 mitigate these issues?

22 COMMISSIONER TISCH: So as I was just saying to  
23 your colleague, commercial waste zones -- put the RFP  
24 process aside for a second -- the commercial waste  
25 zone program when rolled out, from going to only

2 three carters per zone in the city, will halve the  
3 amount of truck traffic... the number of trucks in  
4 the city, and that impact will be most meaningfully  
5 felt -- well, it will be felt everywhere -- but it  
6 will be most meaningfully felt in the parts of the  
7 city that have the transfer stations in them, because  
8 that means fewer trucks going in and out of those  
9 parts of the city.

10 As for the RFP process, I think the thing that's  
11 important about that is that it stay on track without  
12 delays, that the program actually get implemented, so  
13 we actually see results instead of talking about how  
14 great those results will be. And so we expect to get  
15 the responses back on July 15. There will be a cure  
16 period and an evaluation period, and then the zones  
17 will be awarded. Then there will be a phased  
18 implementation where we don't just turn on the whole  
19 city overnight, but we go zone by zone and turn  
20 them... turn them on. So that's how it will work.

21 COUNCILMEMBER OSSÉ: Thank you. And just a  
22 second question, and we talked about this in my  
23 office two weeks ago and I was really grateful for  
24 your answer, but obviously I would love it on the  
25 record: When these organic drop off sites and the

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2 city wide program is implemented into law, can we get  
3 a guarantee from the Department of Sanitation that  
4 this program will launch in the neighborhoods that  
5 have been left out of the opt-in organics program?  
6 Like the neighborhoods in my district where  
7 constituents were unable to qualify for the initial  
8 program because of our shared distaste for signups?

9 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Yes.

10 COUNCILMEMBER OSSÉ: Thank you.

11 COMMISSIONER TISCH: For the record.

12 COUNCILMEMBER OSSÉ: I yield my time.

13 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Wonderful. Okay. Last but  
14 certainly not least, Councilmember Marjorie  
15 Velázquez.

16 COUNCILMEMBER VELÁZQUEZ: Good afternoon, and  
17 thank you so much, Commissioner. As you well know, I  
18 deeply appreciate you and the whole... agency as a  
19 whole. You guys have always treated us so well since  
20 the start of this year. So we appreciate our  
21 partnership. And with that, I think certain things  
22 that my colleagues have expressed brings up the point  
23 that we need more partnership. And so if you could  
24 also provide us... and I think it'd be helpful... and  
25 I'm going to speak here freely from the other

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2 members, if you could all, by precinct, local  
3 community partners, also violations per district, so  
4 that way we have a better grasp. As we're talking  
5 about mandatory and punitive, oftentimes it's  
6 communities like mine that take the biggest hits. We  
7 already are dealing with massive amounts of dumping,  
8 now to add on to that fines for small homeowners,  
9 it's... it's just too much for us. So that'd be  
10 super helpful.

11 COMMISSIONER TISCH: We can get that city-wide by  
12 district.

13 COUNCILMEMBER VELÁZQUEZ: You're the best. Thank  
14 you so much. And that's about it. Those are my  
15 questions. I appreciate you.

16 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Fantastic. Okay, so now I  
17 believe... sorry, we're having a little switch for a  
18 second.

19 COUNSEL LYNN: Thank you. My name is Elliot Lynn  
20 and I will be moderating this portion of the hearing.

21 We will now turn to public testimony. Each  
22 panelist will be given three minutes to speak.

23 Please begin once the sergeant has started the timer.

24 For panelists testifying in person please come to the

25 dais as your name is called, and wait for your turn

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2 to speak. For panelists who are testifying remotely,  
3 once your name is called a member of our staff will  
4 unmute you and the Sergeant At Arms will give you the  
5 go ahead to begin on setting the timer. Please wait  
6 for the sergeant to announce that you may begin  
7 before delivering your testimony. Chair?

8 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Are you ready? If Brooklyn  
9 Borough President Antonio Reynoso is on the line we  
10 can give him the floor.

11 Okay, so let's go ahead and hear from Jamie  
12 Statter from the New York City Comptroller's Office  
13 if you're present or online.

14 DIRECTOR STATTER: Thank you Chair Nurse and to  
15 the committee for convening this hearing and allowing  
16 me to testify today. My name is Jamie Statler. I'm  
17 the Director of Climate Infrastructure in the New  
18 York City Comptroller's Office. Comptroller Lander  
19 has long been a leading advocate for scaling up our  
20 city's zero waste efforts, including through his  
21 sponsorship of the plastic bag and Styrofoam ban  
22 bills and as a champion of implementing and expanding  
23 the composting program.

24 As the most populous city in the country, good  
25 government in New York requires that we get the

2 basics right. And of course, nothing is more basic  
3 to urban life than waste management. As you've  
4 noted, this spring Comptroller Lander hosted town  
5 halls attended by 461 people across the city to hear  
6 what New Yorkers have to say on sanitation. We heard  
7 clearly that New Yorkers want and deserve better  
8 sanitation services in their neighborhoods. And as  
9 you've noted in this hearing, they also want curbside  
10 composting. Thank you to the leadership of this  
11 committee who won restorations to the sanitation  
12 department's budget, but we cannot stop there. In  
13 his role as chief accountability officer for this  
14 City, Comptroller Lander enthusiastically supports  
15 the bills you're considering today because they make  
16 real on our city's commitments. New Yorkers should  
17 hear regularly from the administration on its  
18 progress and efforts towards achieving zero waste by  
19 2030. Further, meeting the city's Zero Waste  
20 commitments requires that the city expand, not  
21 contract, the collection of organic waste and  
22 recycling. In 2018, York City had the largest  
23 composting program in the nation. We serve served  
24 five boroughs and 3.5 million people. As has been  
25 extensively discussed, these services were cut at the

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2 onset of the pandemic. But the climate crisis  
3 requires that we move forward not backward, and we  
4 encourage you to continue leading in this area. Our  
5 office is proud to support the slate of bills you're  
6 considering and aid in your efforts to effectively  
7 provide critical services to New Yorkers and mitigate  
8 the impacts of climate change. Thank you again.

9 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you and thank you to  
10 the comptroller's office.

11 So I'm going to skip ahead and invite some of our  
12 young people to come up so they can enjoy their day  
13 off from school and not be in this over-air-  
14 conditioned room all day. Marcel Khuranazon[sp?]  
15 from the New York Harbor School, Lina Lychai[sp?] --  
16 please, I'm sorry, if I'm messing up names -- I think  
17 we have two at a time. So if you want to come up and  
18 you can give your... your testimony.

19 Three minutes. Okay. So Marcel, you can go  
20 first, you get three minutes and the clock is there  
21 if you want to have a reference.

22 MR. KHURANAZON[SP?]: Cool. Thank you, Ms. Nurse  
23 and the rest of the committee. Hi, my name is Marcel  
24 Khurnazon[sp?]. And I am a steward of the Marine  
25 Affairs Program at the New York Harbor School and

2 I've been composting, and educating others about  
3 composting for about two years now. And I've seen  
4 how great it is. I even smelled it too. Every time  
5 I ask someone about their opinions on composting, I'm  
6 always hearing varied responses, but a majority of  
7 responses is "I hear it's great." I've heard it from  
8 politicians, family, friends, and schoolmates. It's  
9 an great way. It's just a little bit greener. And  
10 when this bill was proposed, or... when this package  
11 of bills were proposed, I thought that the city was  
12 going to change for the better. But passing this  
13 bill, you can create a lot of opportunities for  
14 people of all ages: Young people who want to learn  
15 more about the environment and how it's changing,  
16 they can learn about. Old... not old... The elderly  
17 can learn about... can learn about the world they are  
18 leaving behind. It's just... a lot of people can be  
19 helped with this bill. They can leaves... not leave  
20 something behind. More or less, they could change  
21 something. Either they can grow up in a world where  
22 they're asked... well, they can... their actions will  
23 change things for the better. They could live their  
24 lives knowing that they've done something even...  
25 even small can be great. And this is New York City.

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2 I've seen people just move on the subway. We're  
3 seeing some of the weirdest stuff ever. I've seen  
4 people just live life the way they want to without  
5 caring about what other people think of them or how  
6 others are living. New York City is very adaptable,  
7 in that when I think about proposing these new  
8 bills... all of these new bills, that people will get  
9 the memo pretty quickly. It might take a couple of  
10 years. Yes, sure. People are still people. But at  
11 the end of the day it all starts here. So I think  
12 instead of asking: Why should we spend doing this?  
13 A better question we'll be trying to find the answer  
14 for why not? Thank you for your time.

15 [Applause]

16 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you. Lina, I'm going  
17 to invite you to speak.

18 MS. LYCHAI[SP?]: My name is Lina Lychai[sp?] and  
19 I'm a student in Marine Affairs Policy and Advocacy  
20 at the New York Harbor School. I'm the Vice  
21 President of the Future Farmers of America Chapter  
22 and Sustainability Club. I'm passionate about zero  
23 waste and sustainability inside and outside of  
24 school, and zero waste has been attempted in our  
25 school community through Marine Affairs and Policy.

2 I support the... I support the introductions today.  
3 However, the big issue being noticed in schools and  
4 communities is a lack of curbside organics  
5 collection. Some people don't want to participate.  
6 Some people don't have the materials. And some  
7 people don't have the ability to learn how to sort.  
8 Schools are a miniature version of how our society  
9 functions. And looking at schools can tell you the  
10 development of implementing these Zero Waste  
11 practices in the schools and communities. My peers  
12 and I try to enforce proper sorting of waste. Since  
13 it is accessible in our school, it should be  
14 accessible in all neighborhoods and schools. If you  
15 can't sort in schools around New York City, how could  
16 this happen outside of schools and neighborhoods?  
17 The answer is most students aren't able to because  
18 the communities don't have compost buckets or pick-up  
19 and drop-off sites.

20 The issue of not-accessible compost pickup or  
21 drop off is a concern. This is not the first time  
22 this has been proposed. If we're ready to do some  
23 school, what issue would come up if it was added to  
24 the community? By adding these pickup sites and  
25 compost bins, there's a bigger sense of community and

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2 the people do not need to do all the extra work...  
3 just the bare minimum that gets everything started.  
4 In my neighborhood superintendents and building  
5 management can pick whether they want a brown bin or  
6 not, and the reality is that once you get the bin,  
7 you have to educate the building. Adding a pickup  
8 would eliminate the chore that some people think of  
9 searching and even paying for a drop-off site.

10 To sum it up, it is significant to fulfill the  
11 goal of adding more accessible residential curbside  
12 organics and bringing up the topic of limiting waste,  
13 as we know that zero waste is a long term goal that  
14 could expand years ahead. Thank you.

15 [Applause]

16 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you. Thank you, Lina.  
17 So we're going to have Catherine Murphy and... sorry.  
18 Okay, Catherine Murphy, Liana Martin Peterson, and  
19 after that, Robert Mark Custay[sp?]. Okay, the three  
20 of you can come up and get ready.

21 And Lacey whenever... just ping me. Just  
22 remember to lean into your mic so folks online can  
23 hear you. Okay? Thank you.

24 MS. MURPHY: Hi, my name is Catherine Murphy and  
25 I'm currently a junior at the Urban Assembly in New

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2 York Harbor School, and I'm a part of the  
3 Professional Diving CTE program. Throughout the  
4 year, I've been a part of the Zero Waste  
5 sustainability club. Once a week I and five others  
6 would soar through the schools... schools waste and  
7 properly dispose of it. This has been a unique  
8 experience because since I'm in diving, doing this  
9 work exposes me to the sustainability...  
10 Sustainability club. Sustainability shouldn't be for  
11 people who have access or care. It should be for  
12 all. Similar to what I'm doing... Similar to what  
13 my school is doing, I support the laws introduced  
14 today.

15       The problem is how difficult it is to sort out  
16 the contaminants in the compost. As properly sorting  
17 the school's waste takes a decent amount of time, one  
18 could wonder what would happen if we implemented this  
19 into our city. People need to have easy access to  
20 drop... drop off sites. If our school is able to  
21 have proper access to a system that sorts our  
22 compost, then anyone should have the same  
23 opportunities. With the creation of new local  
24 compost sites, we will open more job opportunities,  
25 and there needs to be a push for sorting waste

2 properly. The closest organic waste drop off site  
3 near me is not within walking... walking distance at  
4 all. People do have busy lives and aren't able to go  
5 out of their way to drop off their organic waste.  
6 There needs to be curbside pickup available. There  
7 is no direct access to this organic waste drop...  
8 drop off... drop off sites. This has led to people  
9 around me self-composting. And since we don't have  
10 the proper space for a compost system, this has led  
11 to the smell and rot of organic waste traveling  
12 through the area. With access to curbside pickup,  
13 there will be a larger group of people who  
14 participate in the proper sorting of their waste. In  
15 school since we run... run the sustainability group  
16 through Marine Affairs and Policy and face the  
17 challenge of sorting. If our school is able to do  
18 the minimum for the improvement of our environment,  
19 shouldn't the city be doing this as well? It's not  
20 going to be an easy start, but shouldn't the city  
21 have already taken the first step in this process?  
22 The goal for zero waste will always stand in the  
23 future. With residential curbside pickup and organic  
24 waste drop off sites, we as a city take a step closer  
25 to this final product. Thank you for your time.

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2 [Applause]

3 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you. Next up is  
4 Liana... Liana.

5 MS. PETERSON: My name is Liana Martin Peterson  
6 and I'm in the Marine Affairs Policy and Advocacy  
7 Program at the New York Harbor School. I am  
8 President of my school sustainability club and Future  
9 Farmers of America chapter. Implementing Zero Waste  
10 regulations is something that I advocate for,  
11 specifically the laws introduced today. My family  
12 and I try our best to be zero waste at home however,  
13 we have to go out of our way to achieve this goal.  
14 This happens through limited accessibility and  
15 resources to do so. Last summer my family and I had  
16 a lot of electrical waste. The nearest drop off site  
17 was an hour away by car. Since there aren't many  
18 local ones we just had to throw away all of this  
19 stuff improperly. If we were able to have more  
20 recycling centers around, we would be able to  
21 properly dispose of our waste. And the same thing  
22 goes for things like compost and other recycling.  
23 During the school year of 2020 to 2021, my school  
24 conducted a compost-at-home experiment. We would  
25 have the students in my class collect organics at

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2 home and it would be... and they would get picked up  
3 by an intern from the school. Because of this 90% of  
4 students in my CTE participated in this compost  
5 collection. If we didn't have somebody picking up  
6 the compost, then less students would participate.  
7 If we... We were all able to soar and did fairly well  
8 with few contaminants in our compost. It's just that  
9 dropping off isn't what I want to do because of the  
10 additional step. If we were able to have... able to  
11 have people pick up our waste, it would be more  
12 efficient. The city should employ more local micro-  
13 haulers to aid in facilitating the Zero Waste goal.  
14 As they already do. This should be extended  
15 expanded, not diminished. Both drop off sites  
16 should... Both drop off sites and pickup should be  
17 available for all residents. Collecting organics  
18 isn't hard because there are simple rules to follow.

19       At school in the controlled environment we work  
20 in, we have a group of five students that sort  
21 through all the waste... sort through all the  
22 organics. This year alone, we diverted over 3000  
23 pounds of waste from a traditional landfill site.  
24 However, not many people are aware of this process.  
25 And it's fairly simple. If a group of five students

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2 can manage the waste for a school of 500 then it  
3 shouldn't be hard for a small family to do it at  
4 home.

5 Now, but that is only with the right control. My  
6 school is on the same island as a drop off spot, and  
7 we are able to compost only a few feet away from  
8 where the organic waste comes from. If we put  
9 systems in place where people don't have to go out of  
10 their way to manage their waste, then we might have  
11 more people participating. Right now my  
12 sustainability team at school is contemplating if we  
13 can work for five days a week sorting through the  
14 school's organics, but we know that we don't have the  
15 time for it. If my school can't even have all the  
16 resources we have, is the city even ready for this?  
17 Thank you.

18 [Applause]

19 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you. Robert?

20 And then after I'm just going to... so you all  
21 can be ready, Ian McCollum and Arianna Zanos. Go  
22 ahead, Robert.

23 MR. MARKUSKE: Hi, everybody. My name is Robert  
24 Markuske. I'm the sustainability coordinator and  
25 teacher of Marine Affairs at New York Harbor School.

2 It's nice actually to see some familiar faces. And  
3 especially Chairman Nurse, we saw you on Monday with  
4 the marine debris intro. And this is all directly  
5 related, right? If we could take care of what we  
6 have on land, it probably won't end up in the water.  
7 I'm not going to sit here and go through how we need  
8 to do curbside collection and do composting. I think  
9 we all agree on those things. But what I am going to  
10 offer is I think I have a unique position, being  
11 these young people's sustainability coordinator and  
12 teacher at New York Harbor School who attempts to be  
13 zero waste. There's some great insights that I think  
14 that I can just give some suggestions. And I'm kind  
15 of going off my script here. But listening to the  
16 Commissioner's testimony and listening to the  
17 committee today. You know, some things like hit me.

18 For one is -- I just want to address some things  
19 that were said. We've done the GrowNYC outreach, and  
20 it's great, but it lasts six weeks. So after six  
21 weeks, the school was left to deal with that. Like  
22 Liana has mentioned, we're a school that takes care  
23 of our own waste. We're on an island. Earth Matter,  
24 the nonprofit, is also right down the road from us on  
25 that island. So it's really easy for us to do that.

2           So I could just imagine... you know me, you know,  
3 I'm a teacher of Marine Affairs that focuses on  
4 sustainability, and the Sustainability Coordinator.  
5 It's a lot of work, right? And it's an unfunded  
6 mandate, as I like to say. So I don't think schools  
7 should be viewed as like the panacea. I also think  
8 that these outreach programs should last more than  
9 six weeks. A suggestion that I'm pushing for, and  
10 Marcel is actually back there, because he is the  
11 person that I think of... I think a graduate from a  
12 school such as ours, there should be a sustainability  
13 coordinator that hires newly... people right out of  
14 high school, that should be put back into the  
15 community that they just came from to manage the  
16 sustainability. So Marcel is actually working  
17 internship over the summer, for Earth Matter. I'm  
18 hoping he... he's in our school in the fall to manage  
19 sustainability.

20           So I think getting kids that leave a community to  
21 come back to the community would aid in education  
22 being a panacea for sustainability. That's really  
23 all I have.

24           But I did have a comment. I think I heard  
25 there's four full time staff and 10 nonprofit

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2 partners that work with... with you to manage this.  
3 That's about the same as I have. And I'm a school  
4 for 500 students. You're managing a city. So I  
5 just... I just really sort of. This is a big ask.  
6 Of course, we all support it. But like Liana said,  
7 We diverted 3200 pounds of waste sorting one day a  
8 week with five kids. And we're questioning now, can  
9 we scale that up next year? So like, we need a whole  
10 army of people to do this. And the sanitation  
11 department kind of has to commit to that, and make it  
12 mandatory? Yes, that's it. Thanks.

13 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Councilmember Brewer had a  
14 question for you.

15 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: First of all,  
16 congratulations to the students at The Harbor School  
17 and to you for your leadership. I was, you know,  
18 part of the group of the eight moms who did start  
19 organics in the schools on the Upper West Side. So I  
20 know... and the challenge... the problems began...  
21 and obviously, we hope that Marcel and NYCGrow can  
22 stop it was that you put the wrong things into the  
23 wrong bins, and that's when the whole program stopped  
24 in the school. So my question to you is: In  
25 addition to NYCGrow, which will be there for a period

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2 of time, what else should the... you know, is it an  
3 ambassador as you suggested? Is there anything else  
4 that you think could make the program work in the  
5 schools? Obviously, you do have right down the road  
6 -- not even -- you have the farm. And so that makes  
7 a big difference. We don't have farms, mostly in the  
8 neighborhoods. So I've just wanted to hear from you,  
9 because this is a big undertaking, what else  
10 specifically? Thank you.

11 MR. MARKUSKE: So I'm going to answer that  
12 question. And then Liana has something to add too.

13 Like I said, I think that... Like for instance, I  
14 teach a career technical program, and then to make my  
15 life easier, I have integrated sustainability into  
16 that CTE program. So I actually teach about  
17 sustainability. So my job is, as a sustainability  
18 coordinator, managing has made it easier because it's  
19 part of her curriculum, right? But most  
20 sustainability coordinators, they're math teachers,  
21 science teachers, history teachers, and then they do  
22 that in addition, and it's generally unfunded. So  
23 like a sustainability coordinator should not be a  
24 teacher. It should be a staff position in schools.  
25 So that's why I suggested being students like... like

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2 Liana is going to be a senior next year. Let's say  
3 she goes to college in the city. She could work in a  
4 school being a sustainability coordinator, right?

5 And I also... Like another thing I thought about  
6 like Marcel is actually taking the sanitation exam  
7 that's being offered right now. I'm unaware if  
8 sustainability is on that exam. Or maybe there  
9 should be a sustainability coordinator exam, a civil  
10 service exam, to fund... to fulfill these positions,  
11 right? It shouldn't be in addition to something  
12 else. It should be a whole thing itself, right?

13 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Did you want to offer...?

14 MS. PETERSON: I also think that the best way to  
15 like enforce this is by teaching it in classes. And  
16 as he said, like every single class because,  
17 Katherine and I, we monitor it in our lunch room.  
18 And so we would watch students -- and I know you're  
19 bringing up the thing that the waste is not getting  
20 put into the right bins -- and I feel like if we  
21 introduce that more in class, then it will actually  
22 happen. Because just me and Katherine or telling a  
23 group of kids to do like the right thing doesn't  
24 always work out. But I think if we go over something  
25 like this in class, like I do in Marine Policy,

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2 because all of the students in that class do it. If  
3 we have them... if we have teaching this kind of  
4 thing in class, then I think it will happen more in  
5 the cafeteria.

6 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you, panelists, for  
7 your insights. I'm going to bring a couple more of  
8 our youth participants here today: Ian and Ariana.  
9 And then followed by Lacey on behalf of the Brooklyn  
10 Borough President, and then Eric Goldstein. So when  
11 you're ready, just lean into the mic and press the  
12 button.

13 MR. MCCOLLUM: Can everyone hear me okay? Yeah.  
14 Okay, perfect. Good afternoon, Chairwoman Nurse and  
15 members of the sanitation committee. My name is Ian  
16 McCollum. I'm a member of the youth-led climate  
17 organization, Triage, and a ninth grade high school  
18 student in the city.

19 So as early as elementary school, I organized on  
20 our schools gardening committee and green teams to  
21 educate fellow students on how to properly sort their  
22 waste in schools. I've seen firsthand the effects  
23 that compost pickups at schools and funding those  
24 pickups has had on the reduction of waste and broader  
25 awareness about our impact that we have on increasing

2 landfill waste. We were able to reduce our landfill  
3 waste in schools only because our city picked up the  
4 compost separately and fully funded those  
5 supplementary education material programs in our  
6 schools. We deserve these compost programs city wide  
7 at all New York City public schools. I'm calling on  
8 the members of the sanitation committee to fully  
9 support this legislative package, which includes  
10 funding the expansion of the city wide composting and  
11 zero waste programs. During the onset of the  
12 pandemic, the city was tasked with balancing the  
13 fiscal budget shortfall, and therefore cut major  
14 funding for street trash pickups and various other  
15 DSNY composting programs as well as education around  
16 those composting programs. With a new budget season  
17 and concluding we have a responsibility to set  
18 stringent timelines on steps to achieve  
19 sustainability, responsible waste disposal city wide  
20 mandated. City Comptroller Brad Lander noted that  
21 over \$100 million in taxpayer money can be saved by  
22 taking waste... food waste out of our landfills which  
23 could be put towards expanding composting citywide as  
24 well as supplementary educational materials. These  
25 are simply common sense bills to strengthen

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2 transparency within composting and implementation as  
3 well as restoring those vital programs that were cut  
4 since the onset of the COVID pandemic.

5       Therefore, I urge members of this committee to  
6 take a closer look at the impacts that cutting  
7 funding for these quality of life programs has had on  
8 their constituents, as well as communities of color  
9 in New York City and supporting and advocating for  
10 both a fully-funded sanitation budget, a restored  
11 citywide composting program that is mandatory, and  
12 allows us to meet our zero waste goals in the future.  
13 Thank you.

14       [APPLAUSE]

15       CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you. Thank you,  
16 Ariana?

17       MS. ZANOS: Can you hear me?

18       CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Yep.

19       MS. ZANOS: Okay, good afternoon. My name is  
20 Ariana. I attend high school and live in Queens.  
21 I'm an organizer with Triage because I care about  
22 preserving the community I grew up in one that is  
23 under attack by developers and polluters. Our city  
24 has seen the devastating impacts of the climate  
25 crisis on our frontline communities. I live in

2 Astoria, which is part of Asthma Alley. And just  
3 last summer, we saw the devastating impacts of  
4 flooding during Hurricane Ida. Our city was not  
5 ready for a crisis like this. And we cannot talk  
6 about the climate crisis without understanding waste  
7 management. We must ensure that we have a plan to  
8 send zero waste to landfills by 2030, and not after  
9 that, because we can't have trash piling up on our  
10 streets as natural disasters become more prevalent.  
11 It's a public health issue that affects frontline  
12 communities the most.

13 The magnitude and intensity of the climate crisis  
14 makes it easy for young people like me to feel  
15 powerless and nervous about what is to come. At  
16 triage, we understand that the city government cannot  
17 afford to renege on our climate commitments. It is  
18 imperative to invest in zero waste infrastructure and  
19 stay on target, and meet our 2015 goal of sending  
20 zero waste to landfills by 2030. We should not only  
21 be investing in sanitation, but we should also commit  
22 to ensuring transparency. Bill 275 does just that by  
23 not only mandating that the commissioner has a plan,  
24 but that the public has an annual report detailing  
25 our progress and our shortcomings. Making sure the

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2 city meets these commitments is important to me, and  
3 students like me. And New Yorkers should be able to  
4 follow this progress in real time. As a youth  
5 organizer, I do my best to fight for a present and  
6 future that centers climate justice. And I ask you  
7 all to do the same by passing these bills.

8 [APPLAUSE]

9 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you, Arianna. Such  
10 informed young people here. So I'm going to invite  
11 Lacey... Lacey Tauber on behalf of Brooklyn Borough  
12 President, former sanitation Chair Antonio Reynoso,  
13 and then Eric Goldstein, if you'd like to join us as  
14 well.

15 MS. TAUBER: Okay, hi everyone. My name is Lacey  
16 Tauber. And I'm here to represent Brooklyn Borough  
17 President Antonio Reynoso, as the Chair just said. I  
18 wanted to just shout out the all the kids who are  
19 testifying today because I teach grad students how to  
20 do this. And I will say they were all at least as  
21 good as they are. So I'm very impressed. And I want  
22 to thank the Commissioner for... for staying and  
23 listening. And I know the borough president is  
24 really looking forward to meeting with you soon. And  
25 so I want to thank Chair Nurse and the sanitation

2 committee members for the opportunity to speak today,  
3 on behalf of Brooklyn Borough President Antonio  
4 Reynoso. As the former Chair of this committee, he  
5 wants to thank the committee for holding this hearing  
6 today about this very important package of  
7 legislation that will help bring our city closer to  
8 its stated goal of sending zero waste to landfills by  
9 2030.

10 So there's a bit here about how this... we said  
11 "stated goal" because Mayor Adams has said on record  
12 that he wants to achieve it, but the truth is that  
13 we're... we're not making progress toward it. I  
14 think we heard a lot about that today and that you  
15 know, our city wide diversion rate has been stuck.  
16 Meaning we're paying for the vast majority of the  
17 waste we generate to be trucked to out-of-state  
18 landfills, which costs money, contributes to climate  
19 change, and exacerbates health issues in  
20 environmental justice communities. So making the  
21 progress we need is going to require quick  
22 implementation of smart policies like the ones being  
23 considered today.

24 Because approximately 30% of waste that New  
25 Yorkers sent to landfills organic waste, changing the

2 way we handle the food we throw away will help us  
3 make the largest gains toward this goal. The New  
4 School organics program and associated smart bins  
5 will help, but the scale isn't really enough to  
6 tackle the issue. Intro 244 requiring a citywide  
7 curbside organics collection program is the best way  
8 to get this done efficiently. In more than one  
9 previous hearing and this one today, the  
10 administration has said that expanding this program,  
11 that they... they were concerned that they didn't  
12 want to throw good money after bad. However, as  
13 Councilmember Hanif mentioned, last year the  
14 Independent Budget Office found that increasing  
15 participation in the curbside program would reduce  
16 per ton collection costs significantly. As they put  
17 it, the more curbside tonnage the cheaper per ton it  
18 becomes to pick up any of the waste stream DSNY  
19 collects. So even if this required extra checks, the  
20 study found the associated increase in emissions  
21 would be more than offset by diverting the organics  
22 from landfill.

23       Unfortunately, we lost our opportunity to plan  
24 for this in this budget cycle. And now we have a  
25 full year to get this legislation done and plan

2 accordingly. In the meantime, we do you need to  
3 shore up our community based drop off sites as  
4 proposed an Intro 281, which are the only option for  
5 so many New Yorkers who don't currently have access  
6 to the curbside program. However, the borough  
7 president wants to be clear that adding more drop off  
8 sites is not going far enough to fixing the ultimate  
9 problem, and that universal curbside collection is  
10 the true solution. In the long term we will not only  
11 be helping the planet, but will save taxpayer money  
12 too.

13 On Intro 280, which would establish community  
14 recycling centers in every community district. This  
15 was conceived of during the height of the pandemic  
16 when cuts to sanitation recycling programs were at  
17 their worst, yet it remains relevant today. Because  
18 proper disposal of E waste and hazardous materials is  
19 important yet compliance can be tough, the city's by  
20 appointment e waste pickup program is limited in  
21 scope and larger buildings must opt in. The  
22 Hazardous Materials program requires residents to  
23 transport their materials to a drop off site, and  
24 with only one drop off site per borough too much of  
25 this type of waste currently ends up in landfill. So

2 creating community based drop off centers is a smart  
3 solution, and residents can also have the option to  
4 bring their organics or textiles and larger items  
5 that cannot be collected at the curb.

6 On Intros 274 and 275, the borough president  
7 wants to lend his support to codifying the goal of  
8 sending zero waste to landfill by 2030 and requiring  
9 the city to report on their progress toward it. This  
10 mandate could spur new investment and innovation from  
11 DSNY. For example, the EPA reports that communities  
12 that have implemented an incentive-based, save-as-  
13 you-throw model have seen significant increases in  
14 recycling and reductions in waste. As we discussed,  
15 sanitation has studied this model, but has not yet --  
16 well actually I thought that they did but maybe we  
17 don't actually have a study after all -- has not  
18 taken steps toward implementation. So this along  
19 with other transformative programs, such as  
20 commercial waste collection zones, which the BP is  
21 very much looking forward to see beginning this  
22 summer, and policies to limit single use plastics  
23 could help us make huge strides towards our zero  
24 waste goals.

2 Thank you so much for your time today. Let's  
3 keep working together to make our streets cleaner and  
4 our waste management systems more sustainable. Thank  
5 you.

6 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Thank you Chair Nurse. I'm Eric  
7 Goldstein, New York City environment director at the  
8 Natural Resources Defense Council. Thanks to you, to  
9 Majority Leader Powers for Councilmember Hanif, and  
10 every co-sponsor of these bills, as well as of course  
11 Speaker Adams for advancing them and this hearing.

12 The Harbor students were terrific, but we don't  
13 want to have to wait until they run for the City  
14 Council in order to see these programs successfully  
15 implemented. We've been waiting for this day, as you  
16 said for more than a decade, even before Mayor  
17 Bloomberg said in his final State of the City address  
18 that composting was the final frontier for recycling,  
19 that it would save more money for taxpayers than  
20 landfilling, and that he wanted to see it go city  
21 wide. So it's really exciting to see the council at  
22 this point, and we look forward to working with you.

23 We support all of these bills, but I'll focus on  
24 Intro 244 which we believe is the most important  
25 piece of legislation that's been introduced in the

2 City Council this year. Councilmember Hanif's  
3 statement was really beautiful and said it all: Just  
4 to recap very briefly, food waste accounts for a  
5 third of what we throw out in our municipal waste  
6 stream. The overwhelming bulk of it goes to  
7 landfills and incinerators. In landfills it  
8 generates methane. In incinerators, the high  
9 moisture content fouls the burn and adds to added  
10 pollution. We've got one of our incinerators in  
11 Newark, New Jersey, so most of these incinerators and  
12 landfills are in black and brown communities. It's  
13 an environmental justice issue. It's a crazy way to  
14 go.

15 In contrast, composting produces a useful end  
16 product. It creates twice as many jobs per tonne of  
17 waste disposed as does landfilling, four times as  
18 many jobs per tonne of waste disposed of as does  
19 incineration. And as the IBO concluded, and as the  
20 experience in Seattle shows, we can save money if  
21 we... over the long term if we implement this program  
22 successfully.

23 The heart and soul of Intro 244 is the directive  
24 that the sanitation department shall establish a  
25 mandatory citywide organics curbside collection

2 program. We know from experience that the voluntary  
3 programs haven't worked for variety reasons. And  
4 while we support and continue to support the  
5 community drop off programs -- they play a vital role  
6 and will continue to do so -- they will never be able  
7 to achieve maximization of the benefits of composting  
8 or the economic advantages of wide scale composting.

9 The Commissioner -- and we welcome her and  
10 respect her views on this but -- she said that we  
11 need to go back to voluntary before we contemplate  
12 mandatory, and we respectfully disagree. The council  
13 needs to lead the city and the sanitation department.  
14 We don't want to wait another 10 years to move these  
15 programs forward. And as the council moves... We  
16 know for a fact that mandatory does not have to be  
17 punitive, with sensible enforcement programs. We  
18 can't leave the timing of full implementation to city  
19 hall. That didn't work for Mayor Bloomberg. It  
20 didn't work under Mayor de Blasio, and it's unlikely  
21 to work under Mayor Adams. That's why visionary  
22 legislative leaders adopt mandates. Congress didn't  
23 wait for the automobile industry to voluntarily  
24 decide to install pollution controls, or to increase  
25 gas mileage. They set realistic dates and set a

2 mandate. Nobody's looking to create unrealistic  
3 deadlines or draconian enforcement. These programs  
4 can be phased in. Say six months of voluntary phase  
5 in period before it becomes mandatory, and maybe even  
6 another six months before violations are issued, but  
7 you need mandatory collection and an element like  
8 that to ensure broad participation.

9       With that we have three friendly amendments to  
10 proposed Intro 244. First, we recommend that the  
11 final bill include a provision directing the  
12 sanitation department to produce a study on what went  
13 right and what went wrong in the city's previous  
14 curbside composting pilot projects. The Commissioner  
15 has indicated that much of this work is already  
16 underway, and that's terrific. We need to learn the  
17 lessons from successful mandatory composting programs  
18 in other jurisdictions. And so a study like this  
19 should evaluate the public education program that  
20 we've used in the past: What went right, what went  
21 wrong with that, assess the frequency of curbside  
22 composting collections and how that affects  
23 participation, review the design of the brown bin  
24 collection bins and whether adjustments are needed to

2 that, figure out what measures other cities have used  
3 to implement and maximize public participation.

4       Second, we recommend that the final bill  
5 incorporate a provision that the sanitation  
6 department prepare a comprehensive plan for how its  
7 universal collection program will be designed and  
8 implemented. Again, that plan should be based upon  
9 the study that it's completed... or would complete  
10 under the prior paragraph that I mentioned. That  
11 plan would include a schedule that provides for  
12 phase-in of at least weekly curbside collection  
13 organics in every city residence, a directive that  
14 school buildings be required to separate their  
15 organics, a strategy to ensure convenient composting  
16 opportunities for residents in every NYCHA  
17 development, proposed adjustments that may be needed  
18 or advisable for the department's collection  
19 scheduled, for their work rules, and a description of  
20 how the department will work with the unions to  
21 ensure smooth implementation of any changes that are  
22 necessary, and a discussion of how community organics  
23 collections and local composting processing  
24 operations can... that are now successfully run by  
25 nonprofits like GrowNYC and the botanic gardens can

2 be integrated into the whole program. So that plan  
3 ought to be produced by the department by a date  
4 certain, and there ought to be an opportunity for  
5 public comment before the plan is finalized.

6 Third we recommend that the final The bill  
7 includes a non-discretionary timetable for completion  
8 of that study, completion of that plan, as well as  
9 for full scale implementation of curbside composting  
10 collections for every city household. We suggest  
11 that this program include intermediate benchmarks, so  
12 that there's a clear timetable for initiation of  
13 public education efforts, for phase-in of the  
14 mandatory programs so that the department can assess  
15 on anticipated starter problems. All of this can  
16 take, you know, a three-or-four-year period of phase-  
17 in, but it's essential that the council set forth an  
18 unambiguous timetable so that the department knows  
19 what is expected of it, and so that the public then  
20 is given the three or four years to familiarize  
21 itself with the program and therefore lead to a  
22 successful implementation.

23 So, again, we're... we support the other pieces  
24 of legislation too, and in our written testimony we  
25 set forth some of our thinking behind that. We look

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2 forward to working with you and appreciate this  
3 opportunity to testify. As I said at the outset,  
4 this set of builds is among the most exciting moments  
5 we've had on the solid waste front with the exception  
6 of the enactment of the commercial waste zone  
7 legislation. This is the biggest news that's  
8 happened in decades on solid waste in New York and we  
9 want to get with you across the finish line.

10 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you as always, Eric.  
11 Thank you so much. Is Lonnie here in person? No?  
12 Okay. So we're trying to allow folks who are in the  
13 room to testify. So we have Demi Moore. Okay.  
14 Jacqueline Barnett, and Mary Krieger. So you'll be  
15 next. Yeah, just three at a time. So, Demi, when  
16 you're ready, you can go ahead.

17 MS. MOORE: Good afternoon, Councilmember Nurse  
18 and members of the committee. My name is Demi Moore,  
19 and I'm here on behalf of the Natural Resources  
20 Defense Council in addition to Eric, where I'm  
21 spending my summer researching different ways to  
22 combat the climate crisis through the lens of  
23 environmental law. I've spent the past few weeks  
24 studying universal composting legislation in three  
25 major American cities, namely San Francisco, Seattle

2 and Portland. And the lessons these cities have  
3 learned along the way can help give teeth to zero  
4 waste initiatives that otherwise place the burden of  
5 diverting refuse away from environmentally hazardous  
6 landfills on individual consumers rather than on  
7 communities that share in the responsibility of  
8 protecting the environment.

9 All three cities started out like New York, they  
10 were all where we currently are struggling to manage  
11 voluntary composting programs that proved to be  
12 unsustainable due to a general lack of incentives,  
13 widespread participation, and logistical support.  
14 Within years, however, they have managed to change  
15 course through mandates that register composting as a  
16 core priority and an integral part of city living.  
17 San Francisco began voluntary food waste collection  
18 in 2001 and adopted a mandatory requirement just  
19 eight years later in 2009, which made it the first  
20 city in the nation to adopt universal composting  
21 legislation. This directive applied just one year  
22 later, and also applies to everyone who visits lives  
23 in and does business in the city, requiring that they  
24 separate out compostables recyclables and trash.  
25 Detailed in the ordinance is a comprehensive guide

2 for tourists residences and businesses that dispose  
3 of waste within the bounds of the city as well as  
4 administrators who work to ensure compliance. The  
5 city officials credit the success of the mandate to  
6 2003 Food Service and packaging waste reduction  
7 ordinance, as well as a 2001 voluntary composting  
8 program, which served as a kind of pilot in the years  
9 that preceded the official ordinance.

10 Seattle was the second US city to implement a  
11 universal composting program in 2015, when the city  
12 initiated a total ban on food waste and the garbage  
13 after it had begun requiring that residential  
14 properties participate in food waste collection years  
15 before that in 2009. These mandates were also  
16 preceded by a voluntary collections program that  
17 began in 2005. Metro, a regional government based in  
18 Portland, Oregon adopted a 2018 ordinance that  
19 requires certain food-waste-generating businesses in  
20 the city to dispose of food waste in carts, dumpsters  
21 and, compactors specifically designed for compost.  
22 The law which came into effect just last year after a  
23 pandemic-related delay will phase in affected  
24 businesses over the next three to four years. Though  
25 the mandate currently includes businesses that

2 generate 1000 or more pounds of food... food scraps  
3 per week, it will eventually include most businesses  
4 and institutions, as long as these establishments  
5 discard of 250 or more pounds of food waste scraps  
6 per week, and Metro anticipates that the requirement  
7 will more than double the amount of food scraps  
8 diverted from landfills in any given year and is  
9 planned for a total ban on landfill disposal of  
10 commercial food waste in 2025.

11 Universal composting programs in San Francisco,  
12 Seattle and Portland put into evidence that we need  
13 not compromise the health and safety of the  
14 environment and our communities for what appear to be  
15 short term savings. An alternative way forward rule  
16 will require a plan that is comprehensive and its  
17 offerings, administratively feasible, agile in its  
18 approach to the climate crisis and food insecurity,  
19 and accessible to New York City's diverse population.

20 These cities serve as a testament to the fact  
21 that there is no time to waste when there is so much  
22 to be gained. I urge a vote in favor of a mandate  
23 for universal composting in New York City. Thank you  
24 for your time.

2 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you Demi. Thank you so  
3 much. I'd love to get some of that testimony on the  
4 record. We'd love to look at it, and your studies.

5 Jacqueline, are you here? Okay. Mary, would you  
6 like to come up. And then for the online crowd,  
7 we're going to hear from Shiv next, Samwell Namir  
8 Olivarez, and then... and then we'll move down the  
9 rest of the list.

10 MS. KRIEGER: Hi, my name is Mary Krieger. I'm a  
11 member of the compost team at It's Easy Being Green,  
12 an Upper West Side neighborhood environmental group.  
13 I'm also a member of the Jewish Climate Action  
14 Network. I'm testifying today in support of Intro  
15 0244 and all the other bills in this very important  
16 package. And I want to thank Councilmember Hanif and  
17 the sponsors and the Chair, and all the... all the  
18 co-sponsors of this important legislation.

19 Several years ago I decided to work in my  
20 neighborhood to support curbside composting. My  
21 teammates and I have talked to our neighbors at block  
22 parties, subway steps, and educational events. We've  
23 met with residents, board members, supers, building  
24 managers, and owners. Without exception,  
25 stakeholders and participating buildings are

2 enthusiastic about the program. Supers like it  
3 especially because buildings stay cleaner and the  
4 bins are rodent proof. After a Department of  
5 Sanitation outreach worker answered questions at a  
6 kitchen container giveaway event in my building,  
7 several residents told me they were going to start to  
8 compost and our building compost output increased  
9 accordingly. However, our efforts have reached only  
10 a fraction of the buildings in our neighborhood.  
11 There are buildings where tenants want composting,  
12 but the management or landlord does not understand  
13 the program and is not responsive. Even in my  
14 building, which had composting pre-pandemic and since  
15 December of last year, 50% of, I would say, of the  
16 people in the building compost, the other 50% of the  
17 people in our building choose not to. It's not a  
18 matter of education. It's a matter of developing a  
19 new habit. It's simple and easy in our building.  
20 But it is not required, and as Gale Brewer said, it  
21 has to be required if we're really going to meet  
22 those 2030 goals, and there can't be a long period  
23 where it's voluntary. We'll never get to those  
24 goals. People in other cities do it. It's not  
25 rocket science, and I think that there are ways that

2 the sanitation department can deal with educational  
3 outreach in parts of the city that have... have not  
4 had the advantage yet of composting. There's no  
5 reason they have to level fines right away. They  
6 can... There can be a phase-in period with that to  
7 give people time to learn about the program, so  
8 they're not unduly penalized. Recycling of non-  
9 organics is mandatory. People just do it and I think  
10 it should be the same thing for composting. It's...  
11 It's the only way it's going to work and we don't  
12 have time to... to have a long, long educational  
13 outreach period. So I urge you to pass this bill,  
14 and the other bills. And thank you for putting this  
15 together.

16 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you so much Mary.

17 Next up online will be Shiv Soin, and then  
18 followed by Samuel Namir Oliveras, and then we'll  
19 resume the list.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

21 MR. SOIN: Am I good to start?

22 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Yes.

23 MR. SOIN: Thank you. Good afternoon, Chairwoman  
24 Nurse and members of the Sanitation Committee. My  
25 name is Shiv Soin. I'm a resident in lower Manhattan

2 and I also serve as the executive director of Triage,  
3 a youth organization fighting for climate justice  
4 here in New York City.

5 I speak on behalf of hundreds of our members, all  
6 of whom are high school and college students within  
7 the five boroughs of New York City, to strongly say  
8 their support for the full Zero Waste legislative  
9 package, which includes bills introduced by  
10 Councilmembers Nurse, Powers, and Hanif. I also want  
11 to take a moment to thank the hundreds of advocates  
12 who have been pushing for a legislative package like  
13 this, many of whom are on the call, and other several  
14 environmental bills, quite frankly, longer than I've  
15 been alive. So I'm humbled to share my voice in  
16 support to see... my voice and support and hope to  
17 see these bills implemented.

18 Our city is facing a climate emergency. New York  
19 City's solid waste system creates 1.66 metric tons of  
20 greenhouse gas emissions annually. Communities of  
21 color and lower income residents are feeling the  
22 impacts of the climate crisis right now. This is not  
23 an issue for the future. It's an issue for the  
24 present. One of the most important actions that New  
25 York City and this committee in particular can and

2 should take is passing the Zero Waste legislative  
3 package. More than a third of the city's waste can be  
4 composted, and if we make composting universal, we  
5 can make significant progress in our emissions and  
6 environmental justice goals.

7 Universal composting and zero waste schools is  
8 also a critical issue for everybody in our city, but  
9 in particular the students that are our members, as  
10 well as students that we also did hear from earlier  
11 today. I hope we can see zero waste schools in  
12 particular expand so that all students have the  
13 opportunity to learn and engage with their  
14 environment... with their environment in a thoughtful  
15 manner.

16 I spend my day talking to hundreds of students  
17 across the city and they tell me the importance of  
18 going to a clean healthy school and the positive  
19 impact it has on their education. Every student and  
20 every New Yorker deserves a clean environment and we  
21 need to act.

22 I urge the committee and the council to move  
23 forward on this legislation and implemented as soon  
24 as possible. Thank you so much for your time.

2 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you Shiv. Okay, so now  
3 we're going to resume to Eleanor Tahbaz from NYLPI.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

5 MS. TAHBAZ: Am I ready to start?

6 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Yes.

7 MS. TAHBAZ: Good afternoon, and thank you Chair  
8 Nurse and members of the sanitation committee for the  
9 opportunity to speak today. My name is Eleanor  
10 Tahbaz, and I'm a policy intern at New York Lawyers  
11 for the Public Interest. We support all the bills  
12 being presented today. We're grateful to each of you  
13 for advancing legislation that would make major  
14 strides toward a more sustainable waste system in New  
15 York City. As our world faces an escalating climate  
16 crisis, the city continues to send almost 80% of our  
17 municipal waste to landfills and incinerators. This  
18 waste can be recycled and reused. Solid waste is  
19 estimated to contribute at least 12% of the state's  
20 greenhouse gas emissions, and the harmful impacts of  
21 our inadequate waste system are felt daily throughout  
22 the city as rat population surge, piles of garbage  
23 bags block our sidewalks and streets and  
24 environmental justice communities continue to  
25 experience disproportionate harm.

2 NYLPI is in support of these bills, and we offer  
3 the following suggested amendments which are in more  
4 detail in my written... written testimony. We urge  
5 that Intro 274 critically define city generated waste  
6 to explicitly include all municipal waste, commercial  
7 trade waste, and construction and demolition waste  
8 generated in the city. In Intro 275, we urge this  
9 council to include diversion from incinerators in the  
10 diversion plants and include the waste generated in  
11 NYCHA housing. We also believe it's important that  
12 Intros 274 and 275 include planning for diversion of  
13 commercial waste in each waste zone established by  
14 Local Law 199.

15 We applaud Intro 244 because it establishes  
16 mandatory and universal composting across the city  
17 and we recognize how extremely important the  
18 mandatory... extremely important it is.

19 Finally, NYLPI continues to support Intros 280  
20 and 281, known as the CORE Act, which would lock in  
21 and build upon the success of community drop off  
22 sites organic waste and recyclables, and ensure its  
23 equitable distribution and access to these sites. In  
24 recent years, budget cuts, freezes, and delays to  
25 diversion programs have undermined participation in

2 recycling programs, taking us backward from our goal  
3 of zero waste by 2030, and perpetuating existing  
4 inequalities within our waste management systems.  
5 Therefore, we enthusiastically support these bills  
6 and the Rapid City wide scale up of our waste system,  
7 and we urge the Council to pass these bills and then  
8 for Mayor Eric Adams to sign them into law as soon as  
9 possible.

10 I also want to applaud all the young people here  
11 today who are participating and calling for action is  
12 great to see and hear how much you care for about  
13 your communities and you should all be very proud of  
14 your efforts here today.

15 Thank you again to Chair Nurse and the Sanitation  
16 Committee.

17 COUNSEL LYNN: Thank you for your testimony.  
18 Next we will hear from Justin Green, who will be  
19 followed by Carlos Castell Croke and Claire Miflin.  
20 Justin?

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

22 MR. GREEN: Hi, I'm Justin Green. I'm the  
23 Executive Director of Degrees. Degrees is a  
24 nonprofit that the Department of Sanitation mentioned  
25 earlier. We're performing outreach for the city for

2 the opt-in curbside program. We've also been  
3 involved in the city's composting programs for the  
4 last decade. We've run community composting sites in  
5 Brooklyn and Queens that we established and then  
6 partnered with the city on to continue running those  
7 curbside composting sites. We receive food scraps  
8 from 74 food scrap drop off sites around the city,  
9 compost the food scraps and provide them to community  
10 groups to create park, street tree care, and other  
11 sites. We compost almost 2 million pounds of food  
12 scraps every year in partnership with these community  
13 groups. We've also been doing the outreach, as  
14 mentioned, for the opt-in... the curbside opt in  
15 program. We were knocking on thousands, literally...  
16 literally thousands of doors across the city. In the  
17 opt-in communities. We're running hundreds events,  
18 training volunteers, during street tree care,  
19 anything we can think of to engage the community in  
20 composting and participation in the curbside  
21 composting.

22 What we see, really, is that there are a lot...  
23 there's a lot of enthusiasm for the program, and a  
24 lot of enthusiasm for composting. But really, unless  
25 we make it mandatory, as everyone said, to reiterate,

2 as someone who's been on the ground doing this work  
3 for over a decade, unless we make it mandatory we're  
4 not going to have the participation we need to make  
5 it a cost-efficient program. It's just there are  
6 too... New Yorkers have too many things on their  
7 minds, too many things to... you know, we all know  
8 all the different obstacles as a New Yorker we have  
9 to handle, and as a native Brooklynite, I know, to  
10 get New Yorkers' attention, we need to just make it  
11 mandatory. There's no other way.

12 You know, and this is something we obviously need  
13 to do... to reiterate what everyone else said it's...  
14 you know, climate change is happening. It's  
15 happening now. And we need to act now. We know all  
16 the... talking about costs, or don't take into  
17 account the impact from the methane that our waste  
18 produces as we've landfill it. It doesn't take into  
19 account the cost of asthma caused in children from  
20 burning our waste in Newark. This is something we  
21 need to take care of right now. And mandate right  
22 now. Also testifying in support of the two zero  
23 waste bills, 274 and 275, Zero Waste is doable. You  
24 know, I've talked to over the years, like  
25 implementing a plastic bag ban seemed impossible.

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2 Some... Brad Lander, I think, said it was one of the  
3 hardest political battles of his life. Now we've  
4 done it and it's just it, so it can happen. We can  
5 do it. And appreciate your time and... and City  
6 Council and the Department of Sanitation's leadership  
7 on these sustainability measures. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you, Justin. Next,  
9 we're going to go to Carlos Castell Croke, from the  
10 New York League of Conservation Voters.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

12 MR. CASTELL CROKE: Good afternoon, everybody.  
13 Sorry I can't be there in person. I was feeling a  
14 little under the weather today, so I decided not to  
15 come in, but gladly I can testify virtually. I am  
16 the Associate for New York City Programs at the New  
17 York League of Conservation Voters. And I'm here  
18 today because waste diversion and progressive  
19 recycling programs are integral to fighting climate  
20 change. Establishing a comprehensive composting  
21 collection system for New York City will help us  
22 reduce the waste we send to landfills by third,  
23 reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transporting  
24 waste and from decomposition landfills, and fight  
25 pests like rats and roaches or thrive on our food

2 waste. Furthermore, diverting as much waste as  
3 possible from landfills to recycling programs and  
4 waste reduction policies will further our state and  
5 city wide climate goals. We're excited... so excited  
6 that these bills are finally at a committee hearing.  
7 I want to wholeheartedly thank Councilmembers Hanif  
8 and Powers for their visionary work to introduce  
9 these bills, even more so to commend Chair Nurse for  
10 bringing these bills to a hearing and ensure that we  
11 are actually making progress in waste reduction in  
12 our current climate emergency.

13 While the prospect of implementing these pieces  
14 of legislation is enticing and long overdue, I'd like  
15 to bring attention to the feasibility of the  
16 aggressive timelines before some of them. As I  
17 mentioned previously, the goal of zero waste to  
18 landfills by 2030 was first brought forth in 2015,  
19 seven years ago, and since then we've only made minor  
20 progress to the 90% diversion goal, increasing from  
21 15% to 18% and 2020. Reaching the 90% milestone is  
22 just eight... in just eight more years would be a  
23 phenomenal feat, and successful implantation will  
24 require bans on current... currently allowed food  
25 items, extended producer responsibility programs in a

2 number of sectors that likely require state  
3 legislation, a large increase in regional organic  
4 waste recycling capacity, much higher compliance with  
5 existing recycling programs and new or expanded  
6 recycling programs for items like textiles, so we  
7 really need to do a lot of work outside of just  
8 setting a goal to make sure that this is actually  
9 achievable.

10       Additionally, the curbside composting pilot which  
11 would essentially be expanding the... the pilot  
12 program, which has lost funding and grants over the  
13 past years due to budget cuts, we already know that  
14 through the experience of trying to restore the  
15 curbside organic waste program, and the difficulty  
16 city has in restoring metal, glass, and plastic  
17 recycling rates after the program was spent in 2002,  
18 it's incredibly difficult to educate and re-educate  
19 residents about how to participate in these programs,  
20 and a full education campaign will take time and  
21 resources to implement. Participation is going to be  
22 key to success of a composting program and a longer  
23 timeframe may be necessary to ensure a productive  
24 program. After years of inaction this hearing is  
25 finally moving us towards zero waste and climate

2 goals, so we're really excited about it. NYLCV  
3 strongly supports the goals of these bills, and we  
4 are looking forward to working with DSNY to determine  
5 feasible timelines and make sure that we are  
6 successful in our work. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you, Carlos. Next up  
8 is Claire Mifflin from the center for zero waste  
9 design.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

11 MS. MIFLIN: Hi, I'm here online. Can you hear  
12 me?

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Yes.

14 MS. MIFLIN: Great. Thank you. I'm Claire  
15 Mifflin, Executive Director of the Center for Zero  
16 Waste Design. I fully support the council's desire  
17 for a real Zero Waste Plan, equitable access to drop  
18 off organics and the E waste and mandatory organics  
19 curbside collection as soon as possible. But I have  
20 some real concerns about passing bills which are too  
21 prescriptive about how this is achieved. Developing  
22 the city's Zero Waste Plan should be a transparent  
23 analytical process with an advisory committee and  
24 coordination by the mayor's climate and equity team  
25 to ensure the full collaboration needed across

2 agencies. It should be the upcoming solid waste  
3 management plan and consider the whole integrated  
4 system from disposal and buildings to set out on  
5 streets collection, transfer, transport and  
6 processing for reuse or disposal. Last year, we  
7 outlined the design planning and logistics strategies  
8 we believe are necessary in our Put Waste To Work for  
9 vibrant streetscapes, green jobs, and Healthy  
10 Neighborhoods Vision Plan.

11 The city has put out an RFP for a study to  
12 develop a comprehensive and equitable plan for  
13 organics with an advisory committee, stakeholder  
14 workshops, and an analytical framework to review  
15 various integrated scenarios. We hope the 4 million  
16 study announced on containerizing waste leads to a  
17 similar comprehensive study that considers more than  
18 clean curbs, but solutions that will work in high  
19 density neighborhoods, such as adding lifts to the  
20 back of the semi-trucks to pick up two or four  
21 wheeled bins which can be brought by pelt building  
22 stuff direct to the truck and tipped in into it in  
23 the existing trucks with no impact to streetscapes.  
24 This would make implementation of Save-As-You-Throw  
25 easier, make labor better and safer for the SMI

2 workers and allow larger organics bins to be used,  
3 reducing building labor, which is really especially  
4 important and under-resourced buildings. All these  
5 studies should be coordinated into this one, and  
6 there should be a publicly visible quantitative model  
7 which evaluates a full range of feasible components  
8 integrated into the full range of potential  
9 solutions.

10 In the meantime, the city can support and expand  
11 current successful food scrap, drop off, and  
12 composting programs, secure their leases on park  
13 lands, and start innovative pilots to support the  
14 studies.

15 So in closing, we support the goals of the bills,  
16 we understand the urgency, and know it's hard to wait  
17 for studies which should have been done years ago to  
18 be done now. But we understand just how complex the  
19 management of waste is in our incredibly diverse and  
20 dense city. And know that the only way to make sure  
21 organics collection curbside is successful, and that  
22 the city reaches zero waste as soon as possible is to  
23 develop an integrated equitable plan. The Zero Waste  
24 Bill can ensure that this happens and we're happy to  
25 support in any way we can. Thank you so much.

2 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you, Claire. Next up  
3 is Debbie Lee Cohen from Cafeteria Culture.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

5 MS. COHEN: Good afternoon, Chair Nurse and  
6 committee members. Thank you so much for this  
7 opportunity to testify. I'm Debbie Lee Cohen,  
8 Executive Director and Founder of Cafeteria Culture,  
9 an environmental organization. I'm also the co  
10 director and producer of the award-winning movie  
11 Microplastic Madness, a parent, and an educator.

12 And my team and I are deeply concerned about the  
13 dangerous impacts of overlapping climate and garbage  
14 crises on our students, especially our most  
15 vulnerable children from black, brown, NYCHA,  
16 immigrant and environmental justice communities in  
17 New York City, Newark, New Jersey, and beyond.

18 Cafeteria Culture works with youth to creatively  
19 achieve zero waste climate smart school communities  
20 and a plastic-free biosphere. We catalyzed the  
21 complete elimination of Styrofoam from New York City  
22 schools and now other cities across the US. And we  
23 are ready to catalyze the elimination of the  
24 remaining single use plastics from school cafeterias  
25 and to revive reuse and refill models and to pilot

2 new methods for dramatically reducing wasted food in  
3 school cafeterias.

4 I'm testifying today in support of this full  
5 legislative package. Thank you Chair Nurse and  
6 committee members for all your great work on this,  
7 with a focus on Intro 244, the bill to mandate  
8 universal organics collection, which accounts for 1/3  
9 of the waste stream in the city but actually a much  
10 higher percentage in New York City schools. We do a  
11 lot of very detailed waste audits with students, and  
12 that's what we find.

13 To ensure the success of the rollout of universal  
14 composting and other waste reduction policies in  
15 schools, I urge the council to increase funding to  
16 small nonprofit education organizations like  
17 Cafeteria Culture that are working in the cafeteria  
18 and the classrooms, and to support the innovation of  
19 timely interdisciplinary pre K through 12, zero Waste  
20 climate education, low cost scalable pilot programs.  
21 Funding should prioritize NYCHA and environmental  
22 justice communities. Reducing single use plastics  
23 from the school food service is an excellent strategy  
24 for reducing the decontamination... or reducing the  
25 contamination of school organic bins and potentially

2 reducing costs, a connection that is not always  
3 widely understood. On May 16 2022, our organization  
4 in partnership with OFNS the Office of Sustainability  
5 School Food, students and school staff led the first  
6 New York city-wide plastic free lunch day. It was a  
7 concept originated by fifth graders in our program  
8 where over... and over 750 New York City elementary  
9 schools were served lunch prepared without plastic on  
10 this day, providing a glimpse of what a plastic free  
11 school cafeteria future could look like. And guess  
12 what? The brown bins actually looked beautiful.  
13 There was only wasted food inside. No plastic. You  
14 can watch our video about this on  
15 PlasticFreeLunch.org. At PS 15 on that day, school  
16 plastic was reduced... school lunch plastic was  
17 reduced by 72%, or more than two pieces of plastic  
18 per meal. So imagine that multiplied... that  
19 reduction multiplied across the city for the whole  
20 school year.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

22 MS. COHEN: The negative environmental and health  
23 consequences of our city's plastic procurement cannot  
24 be understated. We need to reduce the production use  
25 and disposal of plastic to advance our climate goals.

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2 And it will also reduce the toxins that migrate from  
3 plastic food where in packaging into food and  
4 beverages, which is something very commonplace and  
5 also not widely understood.

6 We encourage a middle school student  
7 sustainability leadership certificate certification  
8 and an official DOE High School community service  
9 hours, or Climate Leadership recognition similar to  
10 what the Harbor School students were suggesting. And  
11 we applaud Sanitation's announcement for the  
12 expansion of school organics collection program to  
13 all 1800 schools. We urge the funding for education  
14 for students as well as school staff and especially  
15 custodial staff be included. And we urge DSNY to  
16 update school cafeteria signage to include a quote  
17 "Reduce Reuse" sign within their suites for the  
18 cafeteria, their science suites that encourages share  
19 tables and connects plastic and wasted food to the  
20 climate crisis. It's a really low cost simple way of  
21 educating 1.1 million students.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

23 MS. COHEN: Further, we ask the Council for  
24 support on a regular plastic free menu day and the  
25 acceleration of the reduction of single use plastics

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2 in school food service, and a reusable support on  
3 reusable and refillable pilots so we can collect more  
4 data and envision what's zero waste cafeterias should  
5 actually look like. And last but not least, a  
6 revision of DOE contract requirements so that we are  
7 rewarding vendors who offer products with minimal  
8 packaging and positive sustainable practices.

9 Thank you so much for all that you do and thank  
10 you for your time.

11 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you Debbie. We know  
12 you're very passionate.

13 Next up, we're going to call Marisa from Earth  
14 Matter.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

16 MS. DEDOMINICIS: Good afternoon, Chair Sandy  
17 Nurse, Speaker Adrienne Adams, Co-Sponsors and City  
18 Councilmembers, supporters for your work on promoting  
19 residential compost legislation. My name is Marisa  
20 DeDominicis, and I'm Co-Founder in the ED of Earth  
21 Matter New York, a nonprofit, dedicated to reducing  
22 the organic (inaudible) misdirected into garbage and  
23 incinerator streams by encouraging neighbor  
24 participation and leadership in composting.

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2 I fully support Intro number 244, 274, 275, 280,  
3 and 281. We hope that the city can wholeheartedly  
4 embrace support and implement as many educational and  
5 infrastructure development initiatives as possible to  
6 provide the support needed to work hand in glove to  
7 increase the success rates of the mandatory  
8 composting we have dreamed of for decades. Thank you  
9 all for your time and work on developing and  
10 advocating for these efforts, which will help New  
11 Yorkers, young and old, be in a position for the  
12 first time to participate in composting a basic way  
13 that we can all support climate change mitigation.  
14 Thank you for this opportunity to support these  
15 visionary Intro bills.

16 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you so much, Martha.  
17 Next up is Jane Selden from 350 New York City.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

19 MS. SELDEN: I'd like to thank Chairperson Nurse  
20 and the committee members for giving me the  
21 opportunity to speak today. My name is Jane Selden,  
22 and I'm testifying today on behalf of the grassroots  
23 climate activist group 350NYC.

24 Our group recognizes the critical role of waste  
25 reduction plays in meeting the city's and state's

2 greenhouse gas reduction goals, as well as the  
3 harmful impact waste disposal facilities have on  
4 frontline communities. For these reasons, we fully  
5 endorse the package of zero waste bills under  
6 discussion today as well as the soon-to-be-  
7 reintroduced skip-the-stuff bill. Seven years ago,  
8 the city made a pledge to send zero waste to landfill  
9 by 2030, citing expansion of organics collection as  
10 its priority. However, little progress has been made  
11 towards achieving that goal. Intros 274 and 275  
12 sponsored by Chairperson Nurse will strengthen this  
13 pledge by codifying this pledge into law and  
14 requiring the DSNY to present data... data  
15 demonstrating evidence of its progress. However,  
16 we're concerned that the bill doesn't also preclude  
17 incineration, including waste to energy and waste to  
18 fuel plants which emit air pollution and not only  
19 poisons local communities, but it's toxic to the  
20 planet as incinerators generate more co2 per unit of  
21 energy than coal fired plants.

22       The drastic reductions in waste mandated by Intro  
23 274 can't be accomplished if organic waste comprising  
24 over 1/3 of the city's waste stream continues to end  
25 up mostly in landfill, where it generates methane, a

2 greenhouse gas with more than 80 times the global  
3 warming potential as CO2. Passing Councilmember  
4 Hanif's universal residential composting bill will  
5 for the first time make organics recycling equitable,  
6 convenient, and most importantly mandatory. We  
7 shouldn't expect to see instant success. This didn't  
8 happen when we passed other recycling bills. It  
9 takes time and a robust and well-crafted educational  
10 campaign to change people's habits, but the  
11 independent budget office according to the  
12 independent budget office in five years as  
13 participation rates climb, instead of spending  
14 exorbitant fees on exporting organic waste, the city  
15 could see a cost savings of \$133 million. If  
16 processed locally. This compost can not only be used  
17 to enrich the soil of local parks, community gardens,  
18 urban farms and street trees, but create good green  
19 jobs for young people in underserved communities.  
20 And as the city faces the threat of rising sea levels  
21 and more frequent torrential downpours, compost can  
22 play an important role in flood mitigation because of  
23 its ability to retain many times its weight in water.  
24 listening to the testimony of young people today, I'm

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2 reminded again of the urgency of taking strong  
3 action...

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 MS. SELDEN: ...to mitigate the most disruptive  
6 effects of the climate crisis in order to ensure that  
7 the next generation and future generations have a  
8 livable, have a livable planet. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you, Jane. Next is  
10 Ryan Castalia from Sure We Can.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

12 MR. CASTALIA: Thank you so much for the  
13 opportunity to testify. My name is Ryan Castalia.  
14 I'm the Executive Director of sure we can, New York's  
15 only nonprofit serving canners, the folks who collect  
16 and redeem bottles and cans to earn income. I'm here  
17 to applaud Chair Nurse and the other sponsors of this  
18 council's Zero Waste legislation package for their  
19 commitment to building a more sustainable New York  
20 City. I credit them for their pursuit of  
21 accountability for recognizing that goals are empty,  
22 unless they're tracked and meaningfully pursued. And  
23 above all, I'd like to commend their acknowledgement  
24 through the proposed CORE Act, that for our  
25 communities to be truly sustainable issues of

2 accessibility inclusivity and environmental justice  
3 must be brought to the fore.

4       The maligned specters of power, control, and  
5 injustice haunt our waste systems just as they do our  
6 educational systems, our policing, and our  
7 infrastructure, and those who profit from consumption  
8 culture, and who stands to be burned by the light of  
9 accountability for the monstrous blight of waste in  
10 our society, are deeply invested in maintaining a  
11 system that is obscure and exclusive, both out of  
12 sight and out of mind. Massive swathes of Brooklyn,  
13 Queens, and the Bronx are designated as environmental  
14 justice zones, underserved, and overburdened with  
15 waste.

16       This package of bills takes great strides in  
17 ensuring that not only will essential services like  
18 composting and capture of hard-to-recycle materials  
19 exist, but the mechanisms will be in place to make  
20 sure those services are genuinely accessible to the  
21 people who need them. In order for us to achieve  
22 real sustainability as a society, it's critical that  
23 the culture of sustainable practice actually reaches  
24 people, especially those who have been historically  
25 excluded. And hopefully, these initiatives are just

2 the beginning. The waste crisis is huge and an  
3 unavoidable issue. It's an all-hands-on-deck  
4 situation, and every solution needs to be considered,  
5 and every person or group that wants to contribute  
6 should have a pathway to do so. Container deposit  
7 redemption, the work that our canners do, has  
8 tremendous benefits in terms of recycling outcomes  
9 and economic empowerment. Each year our redemption  
10 center diverts around 500 tons of waste and  
11 distributes around \$700,000 into our community of  
12 around 1000 canners, and that's the result of the  
13 work of just a fraction of the estimated 10,000  
14 canners working and living in New York City. That  
15 community is overwhelmingly made up of severely  
16 underserved demographics, including new immigrants,  
17 non-English speakers, undocumented folks, people  
18 experiencing disabilities, and the elderly. And  
19 they're all working to make our communities better.  
20 Canning is environmental justice in action and this  
21 work costs the city nothing. Yet we still struggle  
22 for recognition and support, as redemption centers  
23 are priced out of neighborhood after neighborhood,  
24 even entire boroughs, we may see changes soon at the  
25 state level, including the raising of the bottle

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2 deposit, and that'll be amazing. But it won't bring  
3 the holistic change that we need to combat these  
4 crises, unless it's backed up with infrastructure,  
5 accessibility, education, and critically for any  
6 system like this...

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

8 MR. CASTALIA: ...community input and empowerment  
9 of community organizations, whether it's bottles and  
10 cans or organics, the city should be placing trust in  
11 communities and the groups that live and work with  
12 them to guide the way forward. I'm so grateful to  
13 the Council for recognizing these issues and for  
14 stepping up to tackle them. To those elected leaders  
15 swimming upstream against the forces of the status  
16 quo, again, thank you for your courage. And I hope  
17 we're just getting started. Thanks.

18 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you, Ryan. Next up is  
19 Oliver Wright from Brooklyn SWAB.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

21 MR. WRIGHT: Hi there. Can you all see and hear  
22 me?

23 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Yes.

24 MR. WRIGHT: Great. Thank you. Good afternoon  
25 Chair Nurse and members of the committee, the

2 Brooklyn SWAB... The Solid Waste Advisory Board is  
3 pleased to present testimony relating to the package  
4 of recently introduced Zero Waste bills. We thank  
5 the New York City Council's committee on sanitation  
6 and solid waste management for holding this hearing  
7 and relevant Councilmembers for their leadership in  
8 introducing and reintroducing these important pieces  
9 of legislation. As a reminder, the SWABs exist to  
10 advise city agencies and elected officials on matters  
11 related to effective management of solid waste.

12 With regards to Intro 244 mandating citywide  
13 curbside organics collections, were cautiously  
14 welcoming a very long-awaited piece of legislation  
15 that would add an important and equitable approach to  
16 tackling the organic component of the city's  
17 residential waste. The council has already  
18 established a similar commitment with respect to  
19 organics generated by the commercial sector. A  
20 comprehensive organics program should include a  
21 curbside collection component. While committing to  
22 this is an important step, we offer a number of  
23 concerns for your consideration.

24 Firstly, the proposed implemented implementation  
25 timeline is very tight occurring within the coming

2 fiscal year. Considering the number of aborted  
3 expansions of the brown-burn program we've already  
4 experienced, rushing to implement this legislation  
5 risks another expensive and discouraging failure. We  
6 therefore urge DSNY to allow time and multiple  
7 approaches to increase participation, while this vast  
8 behavior change takes hold in this diverse city.

9       Second, the legislation does not consider the  
10 interaction with or impact on other methods of  
11 organic waste management, including food waste  
12 prevention and reduction (which sits at the very top  
13 of the food waste hierarchy yet receives very little  
14 attention), redistribution programs and community  
15 composting initiatives. The rollout of the curbside  
16 collection should come as an addition to other  
17 initiatives and not at their expense.

18       And finally, the budgetary requirements for  
19 implementation would be huge. Given the recent  
20 struggles to adequately finance the food scrap drop  
21 offs and community composting, it's essential that a  
22 multi-year commitment to this investment accompany  
23 any mandate. It's also vital that expansion of the  
24 curbside collection does not come at the expense of  
25 other zero waste initiatives, or other essential

2 services such as street cleaning. In the longer  
3 term, we hope that a reduction in organic waste to  
4 landfill should result in a commensurate reduction in  
5 the city's waste export budget. A robust planning  
6 process that makes a long term business case for  
7 diverting organics will therefore be crucial to  
8 securing and retaining sufficient funding.

9 Just briefly on the other bills, Intros 275 and  
10 274 would establish a target of diverting 100% of  
11 city-wide generated waste from landfill by 2030,  
12 create plans for achieving this and reporting on  
13 progress annually, as they're largely unchanged from  
14 Intro 2250 of 2021, our prior comments on this stand.  
15 We support a planning process toward zero waste that  
16 is properly resourced and leverages cross-  
17 departmental cooperation and ties in with existing  
18 works such as the new waste characterization study,  
19 the state's...

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

21 MR. WRIGHT: ...climate action plan and the solid  
22 waste management plan.

23 At the moment, the planning process outlined in  
24 Intro 275 is too limited in scope, prioritizes  
25 recycling over waste reduction and reuse, and also

2 doesn't seek to limit incineration as a method of  
3 disposal. And the CORE Act is also broadly similar  
4 to how it was in 2020. It's an important step  
5 towards equity of access to the city's growing array  
6 of waste initiatives, and it retains our overall  
7 support. As with Intro 244, the timescales are very  
8 ambitious and may benefit from a more phased approach  
9 in order to make sure that each site complements each  
10 community's existing organizations, projects and  
11 infrastructure.

12 We're providing more detailed feedback on the  
13 bills in our written testimony as soon as we've  
14 finished writing it. So thank you for your time and  
15 consideration.

16 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you Oliver. We will  
17 now hear from Matthew Civello from Manhattan SWAB.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

19 Can you all hear me?

20 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Yes.

21 MR. CIVELLO: Okay. Thank you. Good morning...  
22 Sorry... Good afternoon Chair Nurse and members of  
23 the committee on sanitation and solid waste  
24 management. I am Matthew Civello, Chair of the  
25 Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board, and on behalf

2 of our members, I thank you for holding today's  
3 hearing and for the opportunity to provide testimony  
4 before this committee today. The Manhattan Solid  
5 Waste Advisory Board fully supports the bills under  
6 discussion today. They are collectively an important  
7 step in New York City's goal to zero waste by 2030,  
8 and we believe that that goal is still possible to  
9 achieve zero waste by 2030.

10 I have just a few comments regarding Intros 244  
11 and 275. Starting with 244: Mandatory. That bill  
12 must include mandatory. We recommend making organics  
13 collection in the seven community boards that  
14 currently have voluntary curbside collection  
15 mandatory as soon as possible. It is a fundamental  
16 requirement to achieve participation and materials  
17 recovery to make the program sufficiently efficient  
18 to justify its continued and expanded existence in  
19 the city.

20 Intro 244 needs to be equitable and relevant as a  
21 solution city wide by including NYCHA campuses in the  
22 seven districts where curbside organics is currently  
23 available. Turning our attention to Intro 275, we  
24 would request that we include the word incineration,  
25 making zero the goal of zero waste to landfill and

2 incineration. And include a section requiring the  
3 implementation of the Zero Waste Plan under  
4 consideration.

5 Just to be brief, throughout today's hearing, you  
6 will hear testimony from Chairs of our boards,  
7 organics, textiles, NYCHA and long range planning  
8 committees, who will provide more specific detail on  
9 these bills. Once again, I really do appreciate the  
10 opportunity to provide testimony today. And thank  
11 you for you and to you and all your committee members  
12 for all the great work you do. And again, thank you  
13 very much.

14 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you, Matthew. We'll  
15 now hear from Allison also from Manhattan SWAB.  
16 Allison Allen.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

18 MS. ALLEN: Good afternoon. I'm Allison Allen,  
19 member of the Manhattan solid waste advisory board  
20 and Chair of the organics committee. We do support  
21 all these Zero Waste bills and thank all the  
22 Councilmembers that have again solidified New York  
23 City's commitment to zero waste by 2030. As we've  
24 fallen so far behind, we've separately provided  
25 suggested amendments for these bills that outline

2 ideas for how best to advance towards the city wide  
3 mandatory organics collection and zero waste goals,  
4 and also for what we could do immediately to raise  
5 awareness and participation in the program. As Matt  
6 said, we suggest that organics collection be made  
7 mandatory immediately in the seven districts that  
8 currently receive organics collection services.  
9 These districts could be redefined as pilots to test  
10 and tweak a variety of marketing messages and  
11 outreach tactics to determine what works best to  
12 maximize resident participation before a city-wide  
13 rollout. These districts should also be reconfigured  
14 to make them more representative of the overall city  
15 population as a current seven districts are 22% more  
16 white than the population. Anyone who's concerned  
17 about how New York taxpayers dollars are spent should  
18 be made aware that the cost of not having a mandatory  
19 organics program is actually greater than the cost of  
20 having it. The city is spending approximately \$193  
21 million this year paying waste haulers to transport  
22 just the organic portion of waste to bury in  
23 landfills and burn in incinerators that pollute their  
24 local communities, and that does not include this  
25 significant environmental, social, health and

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2 opportunity costs, which would bring those annual  
3 costs to discard organics alone almost up over a  
4 quarter billion dollars or more.

5 Over the last 10 years, New York City has spent  
6 approximately \$4 billion on waste export costs.  
7 After the close of the Fresh Kills Landfill. It's  
8 clear that waste export is not a sustainable long  
9 term waste management policy, so we want to pivot  
10 away from that, because if we start diverting more  
11 organic material immediately, we can gradually bring  
12 these export costs down going forward, earmarking  
13 those savings for investment in the infrastructure  
14 required to build and market a robust organics  
15 program locally.

16 And with all the recent interest in focus on  
17 containerized waste pilots, I urge all Councilmembers  
18 to include and amplify the message that we really  
19 already have a free waste containerization program  
20 available to residents who use DSNY's rat proof brown  
21 bin containers. I'm hoping that any talk about  
22 litter, rats, and containerizing waste can also  
23 include mention that the existing brown bin  
24 program...

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

2 MS. ALLEN: ...exists and is all interrelated.  
3 And we need the brown bin program to get the same  
4 amount of coverage as the rats.

5 I have much more... Oh, there's also some missed  
6 opportunities with the Department of Health Rat  
7 Portal and related programs, and we need to push the  
8 Department of Health also to do much more to promote  
9 the brown bin program in conjunction with 311  
10 complaints and on the rat portal. I will include  
11 more of that in my written testimony. But thank you  
12 for the opportunity to testify today.

13 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you, Allison. And just  
14 to note, there were some great rat bills that were  
15 introduced recently. So hopefully, we can bring  
16 those forward as well. In fact, actually on the 21st  
17 two will be heard at the joint sanitation and public  
18 housing hearing. I think one is on establishing  
19 rat... formally establishing rat mitigation zones.  
20 The other one is on reporting on it. There's a  
21 couple other ones around construction, mitigation  
22 plan... pre-construction mitigation plan on rats, so  
23 just plugging that some rat action is in the works.

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2       So next up, we will have Joyce Bialik from  
3 Manhattan SWAB. And again, I'm sorry if I'm  
4 butchering anyone's names.

5       SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

6       CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Joyce? We can hear you.

7       MS. BIALIK: Yeah. Hi. I keep pushing stored  
8 video and it's not working.

9       CHAIRPERSON NURSE: We can see you.

10       MS. BIALIK: There we go. Yes. So hello and  
11 thank you Chair Nurse for this opportunity to  
12 testify. I am Joyce Bialik. I'm commenting on Intro  
13 244 on behalf of the Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory  
14 Board. I'm Chair of the board's Residential  
15 Recycling and Reuse Committee. Now we wholeheartedly  
16 support a program of mandatory curbside composting  
17 for all residential buildings and including public  
18 housing under NYCHA. Voluntary option programs  
19 exclude residential buildings whose management has  
20 declined participation, even if the residents want  
21 it. As an example, district seven in Manhattan,  
22 recorded this February a total of 129,000 households  
23 interested in the program, but 49% of their building  
24 managers either did not successfully complete the  
25 application, or declined participation. In a

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2 mandatory program where all buildings in a district  
3 use round bins instead of trash bags for their food  
4 scraps, we'll see an increase in food scrap diversion  
5 rates and an end to DSNY organic trucks returning  
6 empty. As we divert more food waste from trash and  
7 come closer to the goal of zero waste, we'll see a  
8 significant drop of trash going to polluting  
9 incinerators and landfills. We also will see a  
10 reduction in rats from a building using trash bags  
11 for food scraps, invading the grounds and buildings  
12 that are using brown bins. As we know black plastic  
13 garbage bags with food attract rats as opposed to the  
14 hard plastic brown bins. But currently even  
15 buildings in the curbside composting program can be  
16 on the Department of Health's rat activity list, as  
17 in the case of my building, whose neighboring  
18 buildings are not in the program, and that includes  
19 the NYCHA's Campus Douglas Houses. Of course, we're  
20 concerned about NYCHA, not only because it's  
21 exclusion from curbside composting could promote rat  
22 infestation in neighboring buildings, but also  
23 because pests are one of the most serious problems  
24 for NYCHA residents. So to achieve the positive  
25 outcomes of a curbside composting program, universal

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2 mandatory participation must occur and must include  
3 NYCHA buildings. Thank you again for this  
4 opportunity to testify. Thanks. Bye.

5 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you so much. Next  
6 we'll hear Rosa Chang from 20 Pine Street.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

8 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Rosa? Okay, Rosa, we're  
9 going to come back...

10 MS. CHANG: Hello?

11 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Oh, okay. There you go,  
12 Rosa.

13 MS. CHANG: Hello, can you hear me?

14 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: We can. We can hear you.

15 MS. CHANG: Hi, I'm sorry. I'm in a little bit  
16 of flux. Hello, my name is Rosa Chang, and thank you  
17 very much for the opportunity to testify today. I'm  
18 here today as the Condominium Board President of 20  
19 Pine Street, a 408 unit residential building in  
20 downtown Manhattan. And within our building we  
21 currently participate in on site fabric and  
22 electronic recycling programs. Pre-pandemic, our  
23 building also participated in the composting program.  
24 Within our building itself, we purchased our own  
25 compost bins for each residential floor and we have

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2 34 floors, which our staff then collected and  
3 combined it to sanitation composting bins for  
4 curbside pickup. It took a while to train our  
5 residents to get into the habit of composting, but we  
6 built towards a lot of success and participation. I  
7 was personally shocked to discover that I was  
8 composting about 60% of our waste, recycling about  
9 30% and landfill was about 10%.

10       So we were so disappointed when the composting  
11 program was terminated during the pandemic. And  
12 while our building management has applied to  
13 participate in the building Pick Up program again  
14 now, we were told we do not fall The FBI as there's  
15 not enough interest in our neighborhood, which I  
16 frankly just don't believe. Our neighborhood is full  
17 of large buildings with hundreds of residential units  
18 in each, we must be a convenient and big bang-for-  
19 your-buck pick up neighborhood. So if we don't  
20 qualify, who does? Each block in the financial  
21 district would cover 1000s of households. So I am  
22 here to ask for your help to make it easier for  
23 buildings to enroll. Because the easier and closer  
24 it is to be able to compost the more participation  
25 you will have and people will need to rebuild their

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2 composting muscle memory. When it comes to something  
3 that leaks and smells disgusting, frankly, most  
4 people are not inclined to go out of their way to  
5 transport it to the local neighborhood to compost  
6 them. So I applaud your efforts and try to build the  
7 composting system back up again. And hopefully it  
8 never goes away. Thank you very much for your time.

9 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you so much. Matt  
10 Molina from New York City H2O.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

12 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay, we're going to move on  
13 to Aditi Varshneya. I'm so sorry.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

15 MS. VARSHNEYA: Hi, everyone. My name is Aditi  
16 Varshneya. I'm a resident of Washington Heights, a  
17 community organizer, an urban planning graduate  
18 student and a former member of the Manhattan Solid  
19 Waste Advisory Board. I'm here today in a personal  
20 capacity. But I work on wasted environmental justice  
21 issues at the Global Alliance of incinerator  
22 Alternatives, which is a network of grassroots  
23 organizations around the world, including here in New  
24 York that are fighting for a more just and  
25 sustainable waste system. And I'm testifying here

2 today in support of this zero waste legislative  
3 package.

4       It's particularly exciting to see Councilmembers  
5 working to strengthen the composting program. 40% of  
6 the US food supply is thrown out every year that's  
7 about \$165 billion of food getting wasted which is  
8 insane when you consider the fact that a third of  
9 households here in Washington Heights are eligible  
10 for food stamps. Decomposing organic waste in  
11 landfills produces methane, a greenhouse gas that is  
12 84 times more potent than CO2. And so implementing a  
13 mandatory city wide composting program with clear  
14 timelines, public education, and consequences for  
15 landlord noncompliance is necessary to meeting our  
16 city's climate goals.

17       And as discussed before voluntary programs just  
18 don't cut it. In my building, as in much of the  
19 city, tenants struggle to get our landlord to make  
20 basic repairs let alone implement a whole organics  
21 collection program, and I've talked to several people  
22 in compost eligible zip codes whose requests for  
23 brown bins have been denied or outright ignored,  
24 which is more common by their landlords. While  
25 scaling up from detached and semi-detached units to

2 multifamily apartment buildings can be an  
3 implementation challenge, this has been successfully  
4 implemented in high density cities around the world  
5 like Seoul, Korea, Ljubljana, Slovenia, in addition  
6 to other US cities like San Francisco. There,  
7 extensive outreach, financial penalties for non-  
8 compliance, building waste audits, and technical  
9 assistance programs for large generators helps the  
10 success of organics collection in large multifamily  
11 buildings. So it can be done. In the meantime,  
12 community drop-off sites for recycling and compost  
13 should be set up in conjunction with culturally  
14 relevant canvassing and outreach in partnership with  
15 local groups in addition to hours of operation that  
16 actually work for working people with busy schedules,  
17 so outside of a nine-to-five.

18 Compost has a number of local green  
19 infrastructure applications as well and our city  
20 could utilize compost that we generate locally to  
21 reduce transportation emissions and enhance their  
22 resilience. So beyond enriching soil and  
23 sequestering carbon compost can also remediate land  
24 contaminated with lead and other toxics, and its  
25 application to soil has enormous storm water

2 filtration and retention potential. Much of this  
3 legislation's language makes reference to landfills.  
4 However, our city sends a good deal of its waste to  
5 incinerators. I live in the heights and like other  
6 people living uptown and on the west side of  
7 Manhattan, my waste gets sent to be burned in an  
8 incinerator right across the river in a predominantly  
9 black-and-brown community in the Ironbound  
10 neighborhood of Newark, and environmental justice  
11 organizers there can tell you more about the  
12 devastating health impacts that are burned waste has  
13 on their community. It's the dirtiest form of energy  
14 on the grid and it emits heavy metals, toxic  
15 chemicals, and PM2.5 into the air that cause heart  
16 and lung diseases, cancers, developmental disorders  
17 and so on.

18 New Yorkers on the East Side of Manhattan further  
19 out in Queens, Sunday residential waste to  
20 incinerators and Niagara Falls and Pennsylvania's  
21 Delaware Valley. Zero waste to landfill is a much  
22 needed goal, but simultaneously we do need to make  
23 sure that we He's just kept out of incinerators and  
24 other forms of expensive quote unquote "waste-to-

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2 energy technology" that's being greenwashed is good  
3 for the planet.

4 If we set a goal of zero waste to landfills, but  
5 including incinerators, we risk further poisoning  
6 environmental justice communities living here  
7 incinerators by sending them increasing volumes of  
8 our waste. Zero waste has an enormous job creation  
9 potential as the report...

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

11 MS. VARSHNEYA: ...that organization I worked for  
12 released last year. Dumping garbage in landfills or  
13 incinerators creates just under two jobs per 10,000  
14 tons of materials per year. Meanwhile, for the same  
15 volume of waste reuse, we have the potential to  
16 create over 50 jobs. Recycling creates up to 320  
17 jobs depending on the mechanization level of the  
18 equipment that is used, and composting creates six  
19 jobs. So the zero waste management strategies that  
20 create the most jobs also deliver the best  
21 environmental outcomes. So it is a win win.

22 I also appreciate the approach this legislation  
23 takes to disaggregating data by community district as  
24 a measure towards equity. Hiring for jobs created  
25 through this legislative package should prioritize

2 individuals and community districts that are bearing  
3 the brunt of environmental justice... environmental  
4 injustice in the city.

5 And yeah, thank you so much to this community for  
6 raising this important issue today.

7 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you so much. I really,  
8 really appreciate it. Alex Shapanka from REBNY.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

10 MR. SHAPANKA: Can you hear me? Great.

11 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Yeah, yes, we can hear you.

12 MR. SHAPANKA: Great. Good afternoon Chair Nurse  
13 and other members of City Council. My name is Alex  
14 Shapanka with the Real Estate Board of New York.

15 While written his testimony touches on all  
16 legislation being considered today, my comments now

17 are limited to Intro 244. REBNY appreciates the

18 intent of the legislation and supports the ultimate  
19 goal of mandatory diversion of waste from landfill.

20 Organic waste collection is an essential step in the  
21 fight against climate change as well as maintaining a  
22 livable and healthy city. However, to do so

23 effectively there needs to be sufficient lead time to  
24 ensure that the program can actually be success,

25 which the current proposal does not provide. It will

2 be concerted effort in education and outreach to  
3 ensure that New Yorkers are aware of organic waste  
4 program and how to comply. As part of the Make  
5 Compost Not Trash campaign, DSNY recruited 50  
6 volunteers to canvass 1200 homes and two community  
7 districts over two months. New York City has over 3  
8 million homes. It is not realistic to mandate city  
9 wide outreach in less than seven months. The scale  
10 of operation to inform residents of the program and  
11 ensure they understand how to comply would be  
12 monumental. We encourage City Council to work with  
13 DSNY and other stakeholders to determine a more  
14 pragmatic and achievable timeframe. Further, an  
15 indispensable step to reaching zero waste to landfill  
16 is stymying the initial production of waste. It is  
17 essential that the city have time to conduct this  
18 education and outreach prior to the effective date of  
19 organic waste collection program. Through education  
20 and outreach, DSNY will hopefully be able to mitigate  
21 the residential waste production in the first place,  
22 which will in turn impact the volume of waste the  
23 department will need to account for as it creates and  
24 implements any program. Furthermore, operationally  
25 the decent one needs more lead time to establish a

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2 residential organics waste program, ensuring that its  
3 staffing levels are adequate to administer such a  
4 program. And as the bill would also require DSNY to  
5 begin collecting several thousand tonnes of organic  
6 waste every day in less than seven months. For  
7 context, the city diverts only 6.6 tons of organic  
8 waste every day right now. DSNY will need time to  
9 determine how they will adjust this collection  
10 process, and more importantly, it's going to be time  
11 and resources to identify the space, develop the  
12 facilities and hire the staff necessary to process a  
13 level organic waste three times the magnitude of what  
14 is collected today. REBNY supports the intent of  
15 Intro 244 but we encourage the council to work with  
16 DSNY to develop a more pragmatic timeframe and ensure  
17 the department has the resources necessary to  
18 effectively implement organic waste collection.

19 Thanks.

20 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you now we're going to  
21 hear from Sandye Renz.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time

23 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Sandye, are you there? You  
24 might be muted. Sandye, why don't we wait for a  
25 second, maybe while we troubleshoot your technical

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2 difficulties, but Councilmember Richardson Jordan had  
3 a question for Alex from REBNY, if you can see if you  
4 can stay on for a second.

5 MR. SHAPANKA: Sure.

6 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay.

7 COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON JORDAN: Yeah, I just  
8 wanted to ask, because we've... we've heard testimony  
9 from different... from different members of the  
10 public that there has been a struggle in terms of the  
11 current voluntary programs sometimes getting building  
12 managers and landlords to provide the bins or to  
13 engage in that program. What can be done? What  
14 would you suggest, and what can be done from that  
15 standpoint, to get current... current landlords and  
16 current building members to participate?

17 MR. SHAPANKA: It's a bit of a chicken-and-egg  
18 situation. I think part of it needs to be more  
19 considered outreach from the DSNY, and also just the  
20 city more broadly. We're happy to share the  
21 information around with our membership. We've...  
22 We've met with our residential managers and owners, I  
23 think, several times and think during the initial  
24 shutdown of organic waste collection during the  
25 pandemic, we received a lot of agita from some of the

2 board members. And they wanted to know what was  
3 going to be reimplemented, because a lot of co-op  
4 board members, condo board members, and... as well as  
5 some rental units that really care about organic  
6 waste collection. I think it's really a matter of  
7 making sure that you can reach the individuals and  
8 the renters and the owners of individual properties  
9 of the dwelling units, not the owner of... the  
10 building owners, because I think it's not... There's  
11 a difference and a disconnect between what a building  
12 manager and an owner, and what you would think of as  
13 real estate can do to educate their... their tenants.  
14 But is it really a matter of making sure that there's  
15 concerted effort to educate the public more broadly.

16 CHAIR NURSE: Thank you so much, Alex. We're  
17 going to try back again for Sandye.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

19 Now does it work?

20 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: It does. You're live.

21 Okay. You're live. Okay. Hi, my name is Sandye  
22 Renz, and I live in Gowanus, Brooklyn. I'm  
23 testifying today in total support of the five pieces  
24 of legislation in front of the committee. I've  
25 always thought that the destruction of our

2 environment was bad. I have been composting most of  
3 my life. I volunteer at the Big Reuse compost  
4 facility at the salt lot and Gowanus. Despite my  
5 composting credentials, it was an eye opener when I  
6 learned that putting organic waste in landfills is  
7 not in any way related to composting. Putting  
8 organic waste in landfills creates super destructive  
9 methane gas, one of the biggest causes of our climate  
10 disaster. Composting stops this from happening  
11 completely. It's shocking how many people don't know  
12 this. The fact... This fact alone should be enough  
13 to ensure the implementation of these five bills. I  
14 have convinced many friends and neighbors to compost  
15 just by mentioning this fact. I started volunteering  
16 at the salt lot when the city stopped brown bin  
17 collection because of COVID. This facility is off  
18 the beaten path, it's on a street that dead ends at  
19 the toxic Gowanus canal, and it doesn't have mass  
20 transit very close, and I was continually surprised  
21 and delighted by the support this drop off spot got,  
22 an end in all kinds of weather. I truly believe that  
23 there will be enthusiastic support for composting and  
24 all zero waste initiative, once there is good  
25 education, accessibility, and ease to participate.

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2 It's not that hard to do, and I'm happy to help.

3 Thank you so much for proposing these bills and for  
4 letting me speak.

5 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you so much. Next,  
6 we're going to hear Georgi Page starting time.

7 MS. PAGE: Hello, sorry. Having technical  
8 difficulties here.

9 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: We can hear you.

10 MS. PAGE: All right, I think I'm ready. Thank  
11 you Chair Nurse and members of the Committee on  
12 Sanitation and Solid Waste Management for holding  
13 this hearing. And thank you Councilmembers Hanif and  
14 Powers for fighting for the bold, green vision for  
15 our city. My name is Georgi Page, and I'm a senior  
16 organizer with 350 Brooklyn City Action Committee. I  
17 was introduced to composting some 30 years ago as a  
18 student in Seattle, but stopped when I moved to New  
19 York. When I started again, it was due less to  
20 muscle memory that a stark reminder of my  
21 responsibility to our planet. While I'm somewhat  
22 late to the public conversation around compost and  
23 zero waste, I do know that the broader 350 Brooklyn  
24 Community wholeheartedly supports all five of these  
25 bills because they will ultimately reduce greenhouse

2 gas emissions, and that is our core focus. Yes, zero  
3 waste is a bold goal, but we must began to work  
4 towards it now. If South Korea, a country 52 million  
5 people can recycle 95% of their food waste, up from  
6 2% in 1995, we know that it is possible to evolve New  
7 Yorkers attitudes towards waste. Our job becomes  
8 doing everything we can to help make the case.  
9 According to 2019's Composting In America report,  
10 ensuring the success of a composting program comes  
11 down to four principles: affordability, education,  
12 convenience, and frequency. Requiring residential  
13 composting will force New York City to address these  
14 challenges. And it should be easy, because one  
15 interesting thing about New Yorkers... about New  
16 Yorkers reported hesitancy and resistance to  
17 universal composting, for example, is that we are not  
18 asking people to sacrifice anything. We're just  
19 asking them to do things differently. Better. In my  
20 little corner of Crown Heights, a local citizen  
21 revived community garden that was established by  
22 previous residents many decades before. This garden  
23 has become a hub for educating and engaging local  
24 residents about compost and its connection to more  
25 bountiful harvests, which are then given away to the

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2 community for free, you only need to see the results  
3 of composting and all of the difference until the  
4 private citizen managing the garden and paying for it  
5 out of his own pocket, really exhausted and depleted  
6 (inaudible). In the meantime, though, this group of  
7 20 to 30 citizens learned that foodstuff separation  
8 makes garbage less smelly, and helps transform trash  
9 back into treasure, a revolutionary concept that has  
10 actually been around for about 12,000 years. But  
11 most citizens have no idea...

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

13 MS. PAGE: ...that these changes will make their  
14 lives better. So again, it is up to us to explain.  
15 It's our jobs. We can't just say folks don't get it  
16 or they're not ready. We must do what's needed to  
17 make it so. It's up to us to explain as many times  
18 as it takes in as many ways as it takes that food  
19 scrap collection is not an attempt to provide an open  
20 air buffet for the city's rodent population. We must  
21 not just tell but show how a zero waste culture  
22 works. At the same time finding ways to empower our  
23 fellow citizens explaining not just what they must  
24 do, and how sharing how... but sharing exactly why,

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2 so that they can feel proud to be a part of the  
3 solution.

4 We should also draw a clear line between the  
5 mandates of the CLC EPA, or climate mobilization act,  
6 and our city's declaration of climate emergency. We  
7 must be clear that these bold plans are necessary as  
8 a means to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and  
9 prevent more tragedy and loss of life. And we should  
10 explain how these systems will save... over time save  
11 our taxpayer money, with costs leveling out in the  
12 fifth year and saving our city an estimated \$33  
13 million thereafter.

14 So along with calling for a swift vote in the  
15 passage of these bills, we look forward to seeing and  
16 being a part of a mass mobilization. We need  
17 determined outreach, education and collaboration,  
18 maybe even financial incentives or finance to create  
19 the commitment that will create the change.

20 Thank you for believing in New Yorkers and I look  
21 forward to continuing the fight for a better future  
22 and a greener planet with you.

23 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you so much. Next  
24 we'll hear from Eva Dean Welchman.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

2 MS. WELCHMAN: Hi, everyone. I am also from 350  
3 Brooklyn. And Georgi Page who just went ahead of me  
4 said quite well. I live in District 39, and I want  
5 to thank Shahana Hanif for introducing Intro 244.  
6 And I wholeheartedly support the... all of the Zero  
7 Waste Intros that are before the committee today.

8 I'm going to talk more... I'm not going to be...  
9 be able to be as eloquent as Georgi Page. But I'm  
10 going to talk more about being a neighbor, a person  
11 who's lived on the same... on my same street since  
12 1988. I've been in this neighborhood a long time.  
13 I've seen some beautiful things happen. My block is  
14 one of the most diverse blocks in Park Slope. And  
15 years ago, a woman named Annie took the initiative to  
16 plant trees on our block. And now because of Annie,  
17 we have a Green Street, and composting... All the  
18 points that people have been saying: That it will  
19 help decrease methane, it will help when we use the  
20 compost to nourish our trees, to nourish our  
21 community gardens, it will help our... what green we  
22 have in New York City to thrive, which will help our  
23 air to... the air that... literally the air that we  
24 breathe. The trees will be healthier. And it also  
25 is a climate justice issue in terms of... There has

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2 been talk about it not being financially feasible.  
3 Yet in terms of climate justice, the trucking would  
4 increase the methane. Yes. So let's get electric  
5 trucks. But that's not what this is about today.  
6 The somebody mentioned it, that the offset from the  
7 composting well outweighs the sanitation trucks. And  
8 another thing I really want to address that I believe  
9 it was Power who said this does not need to be  
10 punitive. There is no need for the sanitation  
11 department to be punitive. Mandatory? Yes, let's  
12 focus on education. Let's focus on community groups.  
13 I for one would welcome being able... I've just  
14 started to go out and talk with my neighbors about  
15 composting. Let's empower the people. We the people  
16 who live on the streets...

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

18 MS. WELCHMAN: ... and I want to say another  
19 thing. I'm kind of all over the place. But I'm  
20 talking about quality of life. I was so happy when I  
21 saw those brown bins and that I could be rest assured  
22 that when I started composting when it first went  
23 into place, that the rats on my street -- I'm a  
24 street that has rats -- could not get into my  
25 composting. And, and so I no longer had to have my

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2 bags ripped open by rats, and it spilling out on the  
3 ground. So I thank... I thank Speaker Sandy Nurse  
4 for bringing this to the table. I'm in full support  
5 of all three Intros. And let me make sure I said...  
6 Yeah, I'm... Oh, and also what our Brooklyn Borough  
7 President's Representative said... Oh, where is  
8 that... (crosstalk)

9 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you. You can also  
10 submit written testimony. Can you wrap up your  
11 thought real quick?

12 MS. WELCHMAN: Oh, from our Brooklyn Borough  
13 Reynoso: that a decrease in methane from organics  
14 program will more than offset the truck fuel. That's  
15 where I heard it today. I just want that to be heard  
16 loud, loudly and clearly. And lastly, I spoke with  
17 Ceci Penita[sp?] from Brooklyn Rocks. And she said,  
18 "My community didn't have the privilege of  
19 composting." And making it mandatory giving everyone  
20 the chance to have a bin is in my mind, giving  
21 everybody equal access. And I think it's so  
22 important. Thank you for your time.

23 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you. Thank you so  
24 much. Next we're going to hear from Nicholas

25

2 Shearman, followed by Anita Chan, followed by  
3 Michelle Greenberg.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 MR. SHEARMAN: Yes, thank you. Thank you,  
6 Speaker Adams, Chair Nurse, committee members and  
7 staff. I'm walking to a bench, so sorry for this  
8 moving video. My name is Nicholas Shearman. I'm a  
9 resident of Astoria at 20th Avenue. I'm proud to  
10 live in Queens for four years now. And I'm a  
11 lifelong member of New York State from Long Island  
12 and the Hudson Valley. Today I testify in support of  
13 all five Intros on the committee's agenda and thank  
14 the committee for the opportunity to testify.

15 I applaud the Council for embracing universal  
16 composting, zero waste by 2030, a goal of zero waste  
17 to landfill, community recycling centers and organic  
18 waste drop off sites. I think you can see the park  
19 leaf behind me. I do want to disclose I am a parks  
20 employee, but today I'm testifying as a resident of  
21 New York City and I'm taking a break for... for this  
22 call.

23 I urge the council to swiftly pass these bills  
24 into law to help clean our city and recover from the  
25 pandemic. In addition to supporting this legislation

2 I would like to share my support for additional  
3 legislative action by the council due to the dire  
4 state of the city streets since the start of  
5 pandemic, and I believe this additional action will  
6 complement the goals of these bills to reach zero  
7 waste. When I moved to Astoria in 2019, I was  
8 impressed by how clean the streets were. Yes, there  
9 were some problem areas on commercial avenues, but  
10 most of the streets were clean, allowing community  
11 members to enjoy the beauty of Astoria's buildings,  
12 street trees, and front gardens. We of course know  
13 that the public realm, including our streets, changed  
14 drastically in 2020.

15       Once it was safe to leave our homes and go  
16 outside, I increased my usual habit of walking in the  
17 neighborhood, to be outside every day for fresh air,  
18 and to keep my mind healthy. I think a lot of us did  
19 this. I was saddened however, by how filthy many of  
20 the streets have become with debris from residential  
21 garbage bags. I knew this was related to sanitation  
22 budget cuts, but it also became clear the city's  
23 archaic system of not containerizing its waste is not  
24 working. We of course need to make composting  
25 universal, and I believe mandate it as has been

2 discussed today. But we're not going to reach our  
3 zero waste goals and anti-disposable plastic goals  
4 without containerizing.

5 On my walks where I was trying to clear my head  
6 and survive the pandemic, I encountered trash not  
7 picked up, trash bags ripped open by rats with trash  
8 strewn on the sidewalks and trash in the street  
9 gutter. This was especially bad after garbage or  
10 recycling days because the bags of waste such had  
11 just been left on the street until pick up. I've  
12 learned from reporting on WNYC and Streetsblog that  
13 our current plastic-bag-on-the-sidewalk system goes  
14 back to the chemical industry's...

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

16 MR. SHEARMAN: ...donation of bags to the city  
17 during the sanitation workers strike in the 60s.  
18 This system is not working. Also every last one of  
19 the city's old school wire litter baskets with no top  
20 need to be eliminated across the city and replaced  
21 with along the way to better bin... rat proof bin. I  
22 really think this needs to be a law passed by the  
23 council. The wire baskets continue to let waste fly  
24 as they have always done. New York is a windy city  
25 despite being the Big Apple, but their choices and

2 litter baskets on commercial streets don't reflect  
3 that reality. Waste piles up and flies out of these  
4 baskets, or sometimes the wind pulls the entire  
5 plastic bag out of the basket all together.

6 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you Nicolas.

7 MR. SHEARMAN: I'm embarrassed to bring friends  
8 and family over to my apartment building because our  
9 avenue is so often dirty with trash. Every time I  
10 have a friend over, I clean the front of our building  
11 and our whole block around span of 10 blocks. So it  
12 doesn't look like we're living in filth. No New  
13 Yorker in any neighborhood of this city should be  
14 living like this. New Yorkers pay thousands every  
15 month to afford living the city. And I've invested  
16 years here and some generations. The bare minimum we  
17 should get from our government is clean streets. I'm  
18 tired of the culture we have in New York City that  
19 our city is too big and greedy to be clean. We just  
20 need to be smart about program development,  
21 implementation, partnership building, and sufficient  
22 investment.

23 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you Nicolas.

24 MR. SHEARMAN: I urge the City Council to expand  
25 and pass additional sanitation bills to reduce or ban

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2 the sale of certain single use plastics in the city,  
3 launch a citywide anti anti-littering campaign to go  
4 with the Zero Waste bills and encourage use of  
5 reusable products. We have the power to New York...  
6 (crosstalk)

7 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you, Nichoals. I  
8 really encourage you to submit written testimony.  
9 Thank you so much. We just... We have a still quite  
10 significant long list. I'm so sorry. Trying to be a  
11 little bit generous with a couple extra minutes every  
12 time. Next we're going to hear from Anita Chan,  
13 followed by Michelle Greenberg, followed by Maggie  
14 Clarke.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

16 MS. CHAN: Hi, good afternoon. My name is Anita  
17 Chan, and I'm testifying in support of this  
18 legislative package. I've lived in New York City all  
19 my life and although I've seen great improvements in  
20 many aspects, the pace doesn't match the urgency of  
21 tackling the climate crisis and improving quality  
22 life for all. I believe these bills will help pave  
23 the road to more solid impactful action. We  
24 absolutely need universal mandatory residential  
25 composting now. The current system with some

2 neighborhoods having curbside composting and others  
3 having food scrap drop off sites, many of which have  
4 set hours is not equitable enough. Many  
5 neighborhoods are underserved, and even if there is a  
6 food scrap drop off right around the corner the  
7 feasibility of a household of two dropping off food  
8 scraps versus a household of six is very different.  
9 It should not be so easy to throw things into the  
10 trash, and instead of having two trash days one  
11 should be for organics. Education, enforcement and  
12 convenience is key. DSNY already allows plastic bags  
13 for use. Another idea can be to make browns more  
14 widely available to residents to manage odors. In  
15 addition, all the organics collected should not be  
16 trucked far away, but instead processed locally where  
17 compost is given back to the community to use in  
18 public spaces and private. This absolutely cannot be  
19 delayed. Having voluntary program lacks the urgency  
20 we need. Ensuring that every community district gets  
21 three foods waste drop off sites and three recycling  
22 centers will allow more people to participate no  
23 matter what neighborhood they live in. I know... I  
24 want to know how the capacity of these sites and  
25 exact locations will be determined since every

2 neighborhood has different population density and may  
3 call for varying levels of services.

4 I also think that the food scrap drop offs should  
5 be located right next to recycling sites so that  
6 people can go to one stop instead of having to visit  
7 two different sites to do their part in recycling.  
8 This will complement the recycling... the curbside  
9 recycling program, capturing the organic waste eaten  
10 on the from food eaten on the go at workplaces,  
11 recreational areas, et cetera.

12 Lastly, we absolutely need to have clearly  
13 defined Zero Waste goals and actually work towards  
14 them. We need to ensure that we are setting goals  
15 and taking action upstream and downstream. Skip The  
16 Stuff Bill, extended producer responsibility, and  
17 setting up infrastructure for usables composting.  
18 These are all crucial aspects and making zero waste  
19 future possible. So passing these bills and pushing  
20 for real effective change is really instrumental in  
21 creating local green jobs, turning organic waste, a  
22 valuable resource into compost to help enrich our  
23 soils, divert waste from landfill and incineration to  
24 cut down on the greenhouse gas emissions from  
25 transportation burning and from being in a landfill

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2 saving the city money from sending heavy bulky waste  
3 to landfill, helping mitigate the city's rat problems  
4 and guaranteeing a livable and thriving city.

5 Thank you for this opportunity.

6 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you, Anita. Next up is  
7 Michele Greenberg, followed by Maggie Clarke,  
8 followed by Ronald Weilss.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

10 MS. GREENBERG: Hi, my name is Michelle Greenberg  
11 and I'm testifying from Winter Terrace in Brooklyn.  
12 I'm here today to testify in support of the five  
13 pieces of legislation being heard at today's  
14 committee hearing. The Zero Waste package led by  
15 Councilmember Hanif, Harris, and Nurse are essential  
16 to meeting our city's goal of zero waste by 2030.  
17 Every year our city generates 3.2 million tons of  
18 trash, the most of any city in the United States.  
19 The vast majority of this waste is sent to landfills  
20 up and down the East Coast where it sits and rots.  
21 Many of these landfills are located near communities  
22 of color and have for decades caused chronic health  
23 problems in those communities. Furthermore, a third  
24 of that waste is organic material, that when it  
25 decomposes, releases methane, a greenhouse gas that's

2 more than 25 times more destructive than carbon  
3 dioxide. By passing the Zero Waste package in front  
4 of the committee today, our city can take real and  
5 meaningful steps to reduce our carbon footprint and  
6 get our city on track to set... to send zero waste to  
7 landfills by 2030.

8       We're a family... I'm... I'm in a family who've  
9 participated in composting for many years in the  
10 local community garden, put out our organic waste in  
11 brown bins when the selective curbside composting  
12 program began because our community was included, and  
13 then brought our waste to a local drop off site when  
14 the program was put on put on pause. We went from  
15 having stinky bags of garbage that filled up and  
16 needed to be put out twice a week to putting out our  
17 trash once every two weeks, sometimes even less. But  
18 most of all, I'm motivated to compost by the desire  
19 to do my part to help turn around the climate crisis  
20 we're currently experiencing here and throughout the  
21 world. I'm very excited by these bills becoming law  
22 because New York City, which is... which I hadn't  
23 known but it is the biggest city in the country by  
24 twice. Los Angeles is number two and New York City  
25 is twice as big as LA. And we'll have the chance to

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2 make a huge and positive impact on slowing down  
3 climate change just by the fact that we are the  
4 biggest city.

5       In 1996, San Francisco became the first US city  
6 to establish a citywide food composting program and  
7 achieved the state's goal of 50% landfill diversion  
8 just four years later. Right now that city  
9 composting recycles about 80% of its waste. Granted,  
10 San Francisco is different from New York City, but if  
11 you translate that recycling and composting  
12 percentage to York City numbers, it would mean that  
13 we would be able to divert 2.56 million tons of trash  
14 from landfills each year. That would reduce the  
15 amount of methane the city's trash releases by an  
16 astronomical amount. We'd be able to do this by  
17 investing primarily in education and people power  
18 rather than costly trucking and shipping too  
19 expensive landfills.

20       And finally, we'd have the chance to lead as a  
21 world class city that transition from sending more  
22 trash to landfills than any other US... than any  
23 other city in the US, thereby contributing massively  
24 to the current climate crisis, to diverting more  
25 trash from landfills in any other city, thereby...

2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

3 MS. GREENBERG: ...becoming a role model for the  
4 country and the world. And I think this is  
5 incredibly exciting that we could be a role model  
6 that... that this city has potentially so much impact  
7 and we are impacting negatively now by not yet having  
8 a real recycling... We have recycling but composting  
9 program that includes everybody in the city.

10 So it will allow us to positively impact not only  
11 the climate crisis, but the health and well-being of  
12 many communities of color. Expanding our composting  
13 program will also create 1000s of good paying green  
14 union jobs for our city.

15 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you, Michele.

16 MS. GREENBERG: With mandatory residential  
17 composting and the CORE Act, we can ensure that New  
18 Yorkers have every opportunity to effectively dispose  
19 of their organic waste. Composting will not just  
20 reduce greenhouse gases, it creates an amazing  
21 byproduct that strengthens our soil and helps farmers  
22 across our state. Additionally, the zero waste...

23 (crosstalk)

24

25

2 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you Michelle. I advise  
3 you to submit written testimony, just because we're  
4 running out of time.

5 Oh, was that us? Oh, okay.

6 Michelle, if you can hear us, you were muted.  
7 But just to say if you could submit the rest of your  
8 testimony in written, we still have quite a  
9 substantive time... I mean list to go through.  
10 Thank you.

11 Just for the rest of the folks. I'm going to try  
12 to be stricter on time. We've got a couple of...  
13 like pages here. Yeah. So I invite... I know you  
14 all are very passionate. I'm very passionate too.  
15 I'm listening to you all intently.

16 I'm going to invite Maggie Clarke, followed by  
17 Ronald Weilss, followed by Ben E Moff. Please try to  
18 keep your remarks to time. Thank you.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

20 DR. CLARK: Hi, thank you. I'm Maggie Clarke,  
21 PhD and Chair of the Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory  
22 Board's Long Range Planning, and its Waste Prevention  
23 and Reuse Committees. The SWAB was established as an  
24 advisory board to the city by Local Law 19 of 1989,  
25 mandatory recycling law. We've been urging the city

2 to implement a Zero Waste Plan since we wrote a 200-  
3 page plan for the city in 2004, and we're delighted  
4 that the New York City Council has proposed Zero  
5 Waste legislation early in its first year. But we  
6 have some suggestions on how to make these  
7 initiatives even better. The SWAB just drafted a  
8 comprehensive Zero Waste bill that builds on the  
9 original mandatory curbside recycling law from 1989,  
10 laying out a schedule to achieve zero waste with  
11 mandates every year for the next 10. We will include  
12 this in our written testimony, and there's much more  
13 to it than that. Our bill has provisions to move the  
14 city towards (1) universally available curbside  
15 organics collection, (2, and this is really  
16 important) 100% program participation using well  
17 tested-and-funded, targeted, multi-approach,  
18 consistently applied, motivational, educational  
19 materials, media and campaigns with effectively  
20 designed and implemented enforcement, and (3)  
21 instituting waste prevention initiatives and reuse  
22 infrastructure across the city.

23 Our bill directs the city to develop, tweak, and  
24 perfect pilot educational programs to maximize  
25 participation by all demographics and personality

2 types, including those who are ready to participate,  
3 and those who need special encouragement, incentives  
4 and increased fines for not participating. We hope  
5 the city does pilots as they did before the 1993  
6 curbside recycling program rollout.

7 Studying mandatory universal curbside pilots  
8 right away in the seven districts would be a good  
9 start. Every year add more pilot areas, covering a  
10 greater diversity of demographics, readiness to  
11 purchase to pay and housing densities. In the new  
12 waste characterization study that the city just  
13 mentioned, the city must also measure the types  
14 quantity, and condition of repairable and reusable  
15 goods left at the curb, and plan and build reuse  
16 infrastructure. The DSNY education programs need to  
17 be revamped and well-funded. Austin, Texas achieved  
18 85 to 95% participation after they spent \$1 per  
19 household per month. We spend 86 cents per person  
20 per year. Behavior science tells us...

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

22 DR. CLARKE: ...the universe of people is divided  
23 into five types based on readiness to participate in  
24 recycling programs. A simple brochure will convince  
25 an eager beaver. Others require convenience like

2 curbside with kitchen organic bins. Others need to  
3 know others in their neighborhood, family, or culture  
4 are participating. Others need incentives like Save  
5 As You Throw, and still others require heavier  
6 disincentives for not participating like bigger  
7 fines.

8 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you, Maggie.

9 DR. CLARKE: Save As You Throw has been used and  
10 many 1000s...

11 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you, Maggie, I invite  
12 you to submit written testimony. Thank you so much,  
13 and I'm very excited to that you... to know that you  
14 did write a plan for the city very, very great to  
15 know. Next up we have Ronald Weilss, followed by Ben  
16 Imoff, and followed by Sharon Silbermann.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

18 MR. WEILSS: Hello, Madam Chairman, members of  
19 the committee. My name is Ronald Weilss. I am a  
20 longtime resident of Park Slope, Brooklyn. While I'm  
21 here today in my individual capacity, I am also the  
22 Secretary and a Member of the Board of Trustees of  
23 the Park Slope Civic Council.

24 While the Civic Council does not yet have a  
25 formal position on mandatory curbside composting, in

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2 our fall 2021 newsletter we ran a front page article  
3 on the city's composting program and urged those to  
4 participate in it. Park Slope, as you know, and as  
5 Commissioner Tisch reported, is a neighborhood that  
6 is participating in the curbside collection program.  
7 My understanding is that it is one of the most  
8 active, and yet looking down my block on Sunday  
9 evenings when I put my brown bin out, I'm  
10 disappointed by the relatively small number of bins I  
11 see. Our collective goal should be to increase this.

12 For the last 22 years, I have been fortunate  
13 enough to live where I've had access to a small  
14 backyard. As I tried my hand at composting, I  
15 learned how poor the quality of the soil in Park  
16 Slope is. The glacier which came through here and  
17 produced in effect Park Slope was unkind. At about  
18 the same time I began these gardening endeavors, the  
19 city introduced a program which I believe was in  
20 conjunction with the Brooklyn Botanical Garden where  
21 for a small fee -- my recollection is \$25 -- one  
22 could purchase a bin. It was a it was made out of  
23 recycled plastic. It was in fact like a tinker toy,  
24 you put it together, it was pretty simple. And in  
25 fact, that's still the bin I use today. In

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2 encouraging more people to become backyard composting  
3 would not only be good for the gardens, but would  
4 also remove that much more waste from the city.  
5 Since you get the chicken bones, I keep the banana  
6 peels. You get things that have oil or dairy on  
7 them. I get the things that do not. Commissioner  
8 Tisch stated that more than 50% of New Yorkers have  
9 never engaged in organic recycling. I would posit  
10 that increasing the amount of those participating in  
11 backyard composting either through further education  
12 or perhaps reinstituting the bin program that was  
13 done so many years ago might increase that. People  
14 who used to engage in backyard composting, you know  
15 are often are asked, "Doesn't it smell?" Well, if  
16 you do it right -- and it's not hard to do it right -  
17 - it doesn't smell. In fact it smells like the  
18 forest I'm expires what you're doing is simply what  
19 the forest word does. But you do it a lot quicker.  
20 Also doing it correctly...

21 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you Ronald. Thank you,  
22 Ronald. Please submit written testimony. We've got  
23 a long list going today. Really thank you for  
24 joining us. Next up we're going to hear Ben Imoff

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2 followed by Sharon Silbermann, and followed by Anna  
3 Buning.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time

5 MR. IMOFF: Good afternoon and hello. Thank you  
6 Chairman Nurse and members of the City Council. My  
7 name is little changed up there that's part of my  
8 last name. My name is Alan Benimoff. I don't know  
9 how that happened. But... But anyway, I support this  
10 mandatory curbside Organic Program. This makes a lot  
11 of sense to reduce the amount of organic waste into  
12 the landfills. Composting makes sense, and we heard  
13 all about it. Now, I was participating in this  
14 program, filling up my brown bin every Tuesday until  
15 it was discontinued in 2020. So we need to reinstate  
16 this as soon as possible... this curbside organic  
17 program. So I thoroughly support Intro Bill 244.  
18 And as we all know, it makes physical sense to the  
19 city of New York. I thank you for your time.

20 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you. Model testimony.  
21 Thank you so much. Next up is Sharon Silbermann,  
22 followed by Anna Buning followed by Diana Blackwell.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

24 MS. SILBERMANN: Thank you all I'm Sharon  
25 Silbermann, Textile Committee Chair for the Manhattan

2 Solid Waste Advisory Board. I'm speaking in support  
3 of the entire package, concentrating here on textiles  
4 in the Intro 274 and 275 zero Waste plans. We likely  
5 change outfits two to three times today, but do you  
6 know where your clothes came from? The thousands of  
7 hands that had a part in making them? Their impact  
8 and complex supply chain? With 30 years as a fashion  
9 designer, I speak for the one in eight people  
10 globally whose job jobs connect to making your  
11 clothes that apparel and textiles are never trash.  
12 We are shockingly over-consumptive. It's  
13 embarrassing that New Yorkers in our global fashion  
14 capital throw 400 million pounds of apparel and  
15 textiles into our garbage annually. Our overrun  
16 charities resell all they can, and still huge amounts  
17 of leftovers get shipped back overseas to foreign  
18 markets too small to absorb this excess. In turn,  
19 it's dumped on their beaches and in their oceans and  
20 deserts. Our brands source virgin materials because  
21 they're deceptively cheap, and there's insufficient  
22 recycled fiber at scale to satisfy the demand to  
23 create new apparel. Production of virgin fiber into  
24 textiles accounts for the majority of greenhouse  
25 gases produced along with the huge quantity of water

2 and energy used in agricultural and manufacturing.  
3 Recycled fibers cut that by eliminating virtually all  
4 virgin fiber processing. Today's technology is  
5 capable of circular textile recycling. So why aren't  
6 we investing in and legislating for building a  
7 circular textile recycling and innovation industry  
8 infrastructure right here in the city? Apparel and  
9 textiles are responsible for 8% of global GHG  
10 emissions, equal to that of all maritime and  
11 commercial flights combined. Per Sanitation's 2017  
12 waste characterization. Textiles are 6% of our waste  
13 stream. Their collection, transportation, and  
14 disposal costs \$93 million. The fashion industry is  
15 forecasted to grow 63% by 2030, our deadline for  
16 lowering GHG emissions by 50%. Notably, textiles is  
17 the fastest growing of all waste streams. If  
18 unaddressed, this will increase textile waste cost to  
19 \$152 million in just eight years. This money should  
20 be spent on curbside collection and drop off,  
21 education sorting and building circular recycling  
22 infrastructure.

23       So we are telling you that you must take bold  
24 legislative and infrastructure building actions now.  
25 At scale, recycled content should cost no more than

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2 virgin, whose real cost is never realized and the  
3 environmental and health harms it causes. This is  
4 the basis for the need for effective textile EPR  
5 legislation.

6 If you don't act don't complain when cancer is  
7 caused by microplastics that make it into our  
8 waterways and food supply and up in your liver or  
9 kidneys or chest or disrupt your childbearing  
10 ability. Don't complain when irreversible climate  
11 change causes global food scarcity, unbridled  
12 inflation, and shortens your children's lives, all  
13 for the love of overpacked closets...

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

15 MS. SILBERMANN: ... and an industry whose  
16 history lacks any environmental and labor  
17 limitations.

18 You possess the facts and political power to  
19 change the scenario now. Use them to make the only  
20 choice that makes sense. And please let us help you  
21 create legislation and implement measures to achieve  
22 zero waste for apparel and textiles. Thank you so  
23 much.

24

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2 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you Sharon. Much  
3 appreciated. Next up, we have Anna Buning, followed  
4 by Diana Blackwell, followed by Laura Sewell.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time

6 MS. BUNING: Hi, everyone, my name is Anna  
7 Buning, and I'm joining from Manhattan today. And  
8 I'm here to support the whole package of bills that's  
9 being heard, but I'm going to focus my testimony on  
10 the universal composting bill. I am a German  
11 immigrant, a wife, and a mother of two small  
12 children: Oliver who's three, and Noella, who is one.  
13 And even before they entered my life, my kids, I  
14 enjoyed cooking at home, but now with the little ones  
15 seems like I'm serving up meals all day long. If  
16 you've ever been a parent to young children, you know  
17 what... that your food waste explodes, once you're  
18 feeding picky eaters. I often make a very healthy  
19 dinner, and then a toddler dinner that was you know,  
20 accepted after the healthy one was refused. And then  
21 two hours later, I make a dinner that's more  
22 appropriate for adult palates. Now our dog gets  
23 lucky sometimes, but overall, we generate... we still  
24 generate an incredible amount of food waste and food  
25 scraps.

2           Currently, we keep about a third of our freezer  
3 space reserved for compost. And once a week, I try  
4 to find time in my hectic schedule. And I forgot to  
5 mention that I also work full time as a CFO to a  
6 startup, and I bring our you know, 30 to 40 pounds of  
7 compost to our local bin. That's part of the  
8 downtown public compost pilot program in FiDi. You  
9 can imagine the logistics of all of this certainly  
10 takes away time that I don't really have. But  
11 composting and climate change in general is an issue  
12 that our family... family cares a lot about. It's an  
13 issue that we all care a lot about. Humans have been  
14 composting since the beginning of time. I mean, just  
15 Google it. It's something like 5000 or 2350 BC,  
16 depending on what source you want to trust. We don't  
17 have to create or wait for some new technology to  
18 help us combat climate change. Other cities like  
19 Seoul and San Francisco, Munich, my hometown, and  
20 Minneapolis are already doing this successfully. We  
21 know composting reduces greenhouse gases and creates  
22 amazing byproducts. By passing Zero Waste package in  
23 front of the committee today, our city can take real  
24 and meaningful steps to reduce our carbon footprint  
25 and get our city on track to send zero waste to

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2 landfills by 2030. Oliver will be in fifth grade  
3 them and Noey will be 10. It's hard to imagine that.  
4 But we only have eight short years left, to zero  
5 waste. Thank you for letting me testify today.  
6 Climate change is very real and demands immediate  
7 action. And I urge you to pass the Zero Waste  
8 package. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you so much, Anna. I  
10 very much appreciate your testimony here today. Next  
11 up, we'll have Diana Blackwell, followed by Laura  
12 Sewell, followed by Ella Ryan.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

14 MS. BLACKWELL: Good afternoon Chair Nurse and  
15 committee members. Thank you for holding this  
16 hearing. My name is Diana Blackwell, and I'm not  
17 only the Co-Chair of the Manhattan SWAB's NYCHA  
18 Recycling Committee, but a 20-plus year NYCHA  
19 resident.

20 Today I would like to remind City Council the  
21 importance of including NYCHA buildings in the city's  
22 plan for a residential curbside organics collection  
23 program. Waste equity in New York City means not  
24 only removing the unequal burden of pollution caused  
25 by waste removal, but providing equal access to waste

2 collections for all communities. While we were  
3 encouraged by Councilmember Hanif's mandatory city-  
4 wide connect organics collection bill, the Manhattan  
5 SWAB is concerned to see that the public housing  
6 has thus far been excluded from the bills proposed  
7 organics collection services. It is imperative that  
8 public housing and NYCHA apartments be included in  
9 any waste collection legislation from the beginning  
10 to ensure equitable access to waste services for  
11 residents and equitable development of city-backed  
12 sustainability programs. NYCHA's dismal recycling  
13 rate of just 1.5% is a testament to how a subsection  
14 of the city can fall behind when it is excluded from  
15 mandatory legislations for over 25 years. Including  
16 NYCHA in the decision-making and program design of  
17 organic collection rollouts avoids future challenges  
18 in the unequal infrastructure development and  
19 staffing procedures that NYCHA is currently  
20 navigating with recycling. Enhanced access to  
21 recycling and organic collection is also part of the  
22 NYCHA sustainability agenda, and including NYCHA  
23 buildings in Councilmember Hanif's bill would greatly  
24 support this goal. For the 1-in-15 New Yorkers who  
25 are NYCHA residents, inclusion in the mandatory

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2 organics program shows that they too, can help this  
3 city's battle in the climate crisis by composting  
4 their organics. Residents are ready and willing to  
5 learn and to participate. We urge City Council to  
6 revise the bill to include mandatory organics  
7 collection to all New Yorkers. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you so much. Next up,  
9 we have Laura Sewell, followed by Ella Ryan, followed  
10 by Mark Shiflett.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

12 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Oh, Laura, you're muted.

13 MS. SEWELL: Sorry. I think I'm good now. My  
14 apologies. I'm Laura Sewell. I'm the Director of  
15 the East Village Community Coalition and a community  
16 garden member. I want to thank the Councilmembers  
17 for their leadership today and the supportive that  
18 they've gotten from their colleagues. The East  
19 Village and the lower east side as well known for its  
20 activism and do-it-yourself spirit.

21 I'd like to share our experience with the  
22 voluntary program. We helped to get the word out  
23 about the sign up, which many of our neighbors  
24 enthusiastically did. And we were so disappointed  
25 when Community Board Three just could not get over

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2 the line. Then Councilmember Brewer... or then  
3 Borough President Brewer would come and say "You're  
4 almost there." But we just... We couldn't do it.  
5 And the reason is that our... our landlords and  
6 building managers, as some of our larger landlords  
7 have a lot of buildings, they just... they just  
8 wouldn't get on board. So we... it has to be... it  
9 has to be mandatory. It just isn't going to work.  
10 It worked for us in 2019 when it was. I appreciate  
11 people who might have be challenged in implementing  
12 it in their buildings. So I would suggest cure  
13 orders... you know, period before enforcement, cure  
14 orders, exempt buildings with less than four units or  
15 elderly, or people otherwise physically unable to  
16 comply. We have very few options in our neighborhood  
17 right now. We lost the Lower East Side Ecology  
18 Center's drop off site from the duration of the Esker  
19 Project. So our options now are Union Square or  
20 Tompkins Square Park on Sundays. Luckily... And we  
21 do it, we still do it, we keep it in the freezer,  
22 like other people have said. Luckily, we have a lot  
23 of community gardens and some of them process compost  
24 internally, either amended soil or compost. And we  
25 have one drop off site that I'd really like to

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2 highlight, which is Down To Earth. So in 2019, and  
3 this was when we had the regular curbside compost  
4 program, we processed Down To Earth 11 times in a  
5 year. Six of them were used internally with the  
6 gardens and four were picked up by DSNY. For people  
7 who don't think in tons, it's for brown bins three  
8 times a week. It adds up, we still have a long way  
9 to go to, you know, the amount of tonnage we need,  
10 but it adds up.

11 The idea of work... Of being able to drop off at  
12 one of our many neighborhood schools sounds amazing,  
13 but I share the concerns that schools themselves  
14 expressed that they just don't have the capacity to  
15 handle it. Down To Earth was overwhelmed when the  
16 regular program stopped, and we had to cut back to  
17 only... only accepting, you know, organic waste when  
18 garden members could be present. It's still going to  
19 have to be supervised. It has to be processed.  
20 But...

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

22 MS. SEWELL: we can do it. And the only... I'll  
23 say one more thing. My apologies. Three... three  
24 pickup sites for Community Board district is not

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2 enough. Other... Other than that, I love these  
3 bills. Thank you so much.

4 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you so much, Laura.  
5 Next up we have Ella Ryan, and then Mark Shiflett,  
6 and then Barbara Hurtle.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

8 MS. RYAN: Hi, my name is Ella Ryan, and I'm  
9 testifying from Brooklyn. I want to thank you... say  
10 thank you to the Councilmembers for introducing this  
11 important package of zero waste bills, and to the  
12 hard working staff and sanitation workers of DSNY. I  
13 fully support all of the bills being discussed today,  
14 bills we desperately need if we are to achieve our  
15 zero waste goals. But I want to share a little bit  
16 more of my experience with curbside composting today.  
17 When curbside composting was cut in 2020, we missed  
18 it immediately. We were filling up trash bags five  
19 times more quickly than when it was available, like a  
20 mom of two kids. And every time I was scraping food,  
21 my kids didn't finish into the trash or dropping in  
22 the millionth banana peel, I knew that it was going  
23 straight to landfill to release methane, methane that  
24 would contribute to the climate crisis that threatens  
25 us all. But especially my kids... everybody's kids.

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2 Sure, we have the option to trade or food scraps,  
3 some of them anyway to a local community garden. But  
4 really, who but the most dedicated has the time for  
5 that? Part of the beauty of curbside composting is  
6 that it made it so accessible. Every New Yorker  
7 should have the opportunity to compost, not just  
8 those with a backyard worm bin, the luxury of time,  
9 and a large freezer, or the ability to pay for a  
10 private composting service. We are lucky enough...  
11 My household is lucky enough to be in one of the only  
12 7 of 59 community boards that now benefits from the  
13 limited curbside composting program. But since it's  
14 optional, our landlord was reluctant for us to  
15 participate, believing it to attract rats. We had to  
16 advocate to be able to use the service and because  
17 it's optional and not an off-cycle, we manage the  
18 bins ourselves with supers who manage the trash and  
19 recycling do not and not pay to handle the compost.  
20 With a less open-minded landlord, we probably  
21 wouldn't have been able to participate in the program  
22 at all. That's why it's so important that New  
23 Yorkers should be given the opportunity to learn  
24 about composting, about how it actually keeps food  
25 away from pests, and how it returns nutrients to our

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2 soil instead of irretrievably burying those nutrients  
3 in landfill. Many don't even realize that putting  
4 food in the trash contributes to global warming.  
5 That's why I support Intro 244, for it's mandatory  
6 curbside composting, but also its educational  
7 components. Passing all the bills in the Zero Waste  
8 package will create green jobs, it will begin to  
9 address the inequalities suffered by communities  
10 situated near toxic landfills. It will bring us  
11 closer to our climate goals. It will be an  
12 investment that we will reap the rewards from far  
13 into the future. Thank you for the opportunity to  
14 testify today.

15 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you so much Ella. Next  
16 up is Mark Shifflett, then Barbara Hurtle, followed  
17 by Ella Mosca. Thank you.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

19 MR. SHIFFLETT: Hi, everyone, I thank you Chair  
20 Nurse for scheduling these hearings. I have a whole  
21 page of stuff I wrote. But I'm going to diverge a  
22 little bit and really talk about that I support these  
23 bills, but as we'll see this is like a chain in the  
24 process of essentially converting our waste streams  
25 to resource streams, and within resource streams,

2 there being repair and reuse. I'm... My name is Mark  
3 Shifflett. I live in Central Harlem. And I'm also a  
4 member of the Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board.  
5 One of the areas that is very near and dear to me is  
6 open data, which I think is... will be a huge role in  
7 analyzing our... our waste streams and converting  
8 them into resource streams. Other things are like  
9 extended producer responsibility laws, and expanded  
10 bottle bill, which are currently at the state level.  
11 These again are another example of turning waste into  
12 resources and eliminating unrecyclable single-use  
13 plastics and packaging from our waste streams. But  
14 the one thing I really want to finish on is really  
15 recognizing the moral component to zero waste.

16 Each of us are essentially waste stewards, yet in  
17 our stewardship we ship our disposable wealth, e.g.,  
18 our toxic waste, to poor, underserved communities  
19 that are then left to contend with the environmental  
20 and health consequences associated with prolonged  
21 exposure to toxins. Newark's Ironbound is one of  
22 such communities, but there are others in New York  
23 and elsewhere around the United States. The threat  
24 our waste poses to global climate security has never  
25 been really more clear or unequivocal. This makes me

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2 both angry and sad. But the question I have to our  
3 city leaders is to share the same outreach. Thank  
4 you for allowing me to speak before the committee  
5 today and have a nice afternoon. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you. Next up we're  
7 going to hear from Barbara, and then Ella Mosca,  
8 followed by Rhonda Keyser, and then finally Anna  
9 Sacks.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time

11 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Barbara Hurtle? Okay, so  
12 we'll circle back to you, Barbara. Next up is Ella  
13 Mouka.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time

15 MS. MOSCA: Hi, good afternoon. My name is Ella  
16 Muscat, and I'm a student in NYC, and I live in lower  
17 Manhattan. I'm part of Triage, a youth-led climate  
18 justice organization based in New York City, and I'm  
19 urging you to pass the Zero Waste legislative  
20 package. Having gone to NYC Public Schools my whole  
21 life, I was taught a bit on how to recycle and  
22 dispose of my trash properly. But in my everyday  
23 life, the resources to do so we're lacking. In my  
24 schools, there weren't even enough resources to get  
25 rid of trash properly despite the fact that we were

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2 being taught on how about composting and recycling.

3 I was told that composting is very important to  
4 reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and that it would  
5 help reduce the methane in our atmosphere that is  
6 produced by food waste.

7       And I wanted to help by composting because I care  
8 about our environment. But with only a couple of  
9 composting locations in Manhattan, it was not a  
10 possibility for me and my family. Universal  
11 residential composting would allow me and over a  
12 million students and families across the city to  
13 compost and also reduce the environmental impact that  
14 we have as a city. By making composting more  
15 accessible, more green jobs will be created as well.  
16 This council has a responsibility to address the  
17 environmental issues of our city and to help combat  
18 climate change. Action on the citywide level  
19 regarding Zero Waste is crucial in helping the  
20 climate crisis. As a student and a New Yorker, I can  
21 see how impactful these bills will be once passed.  
22 There is no better time to act than right now. Thank  
23 you.

24

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you so much. We're  
3 going to try to circle back to Barbara if you're  
4 there?

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

6 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. Okay, so we're going  
7 to move on to Rhonda Keyser.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

9 MS. KEYSER: Hi, thank you, Chair Nurse and for  
10 the committee for this opportunity for all of us to  
11 speak. I'm Rhonda Keyser, I'm Legislative Committee  
12 Chair of the Brooklyn Solid Waste Advisory Board. My  
13 comments today are my personal comments. And I'm  
14 testifying of course in support of this exciting  
15 legislative package. I'm incredibly proud also to  
16 call Shahana Hanif my Councilwoman. Thank you and to  
17 the whole committee for your intelligent, insightful  
18 comments and questions at the top of the hearing.  
19 I'm delighted to see what comes from this talented  
20 group of legislators.

21 As an executive board member of Sure We Can, New  
22 York City's only nonprofit bottling and can  
23 redemption center. I'm proud to support the  
24 important work that our community of canners do every  
25 day, cleaning our streets at no expense to the city,

2 and diverting around 500 tons of waste in an  
3 inclusive and low barrier method of resource  
4 diversion. The bottle bill model shows its  
5 effectiveness through the 70% diversion rate of  
6 bottles and cans versus the less than 15% diversion  
7 rates of other single use containers. And this  
8 diversion rate again is achieved at no cost to the  
9 city. I'm also education director of Cafeteria  
10 Culture. I just want to echo and underscore Debbie  
11 Lee Cohen from cafeteria culture. Her comments about  
12 plastic free lunch day. The success of New York  
13 City's May 16th plastic-free lunch day cannot be  
14 denied. Through our pilot the Department of  
15 Education reduced the number of plastic items from  
16 school lunch by 72% or 362 items. That's more than  
17 two pieces of plastic per meal. That would be a  
18 reduction of 360 million pieces of plastic per year  
19 in New York City.

20 We teach our students that good data drives  
21 policy, and boy did they collect good data. Our  
22 students and the decision makers that they talked  
23 with learned through leading this pilot that  
24 eliminating plastic is totally possible. And now  
25 emboldened by their large systemic plastic reduction

2 success, our students reviewed the single use plastic  
3 that came into cafeterias from home lunch and put it  
4 on their problem solving hats. They concluded that  
5 simply asking families or delis in stores is not the  
6 way to curb single use plastic in a meaningful way.  
7 Even talking directly to creators of single use  
8 plastic pollution proved to be a daunting task, but  
9 they were delighted to learn about New York State  
10 Assemblymember Englebright's, EPR bill, A10185, and  
11 the Bigger Better Bottle Bill, A 10184, Senate S194.  
12 They believe that his bills are picking up where  
13 they're leaving off for the summer. So we hope that  
14 the City Council will recognize and endorse  
15 specifically these bills going forward.

16 And finally, I just want to say about  
17 containerization: I just want to say that New York  
18 City has already invested in the most effective  
19 containers for repelling pests and vermin, brown bins  
20 that should contain our organic waste. At Cafeteria  
21 Culture, we teach our students that there is no  
22 "away" with respect to our garbage and investing more  
23 money in hiding sidewalk garbage in containers only  
24 masks the need to reduce our garbage footprint. The  
25 quicker we can reduce and divert our waste from the

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2 waste stream... our resources from the waste stream,  
3 the more quickly we can actually tackle these  
4 environmental justice issues for folks in in the  
5 catchment areas. That's it. Thanks.

6 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Rhonda, really quickly.  
7 Councilmember Kristin Richardson Jordan had a  
8 question about the two bills. If you could say the  
9 bill numbers again that you... at the state level?

10 MS. KEYSER: The state... Englebright's bill is  
11 A10185... is the EPR bill, and the Bigger Better  
12 Bottle Bill is A10184. And it has a Senate sponsor,  
13 Senator May, senate S9146.

14 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you, Rhonda. And just  
15 to note that, I believe we introduced a resolution at  
16 the Council on the bottle bill, so hopefully we'll  
17 see some support. Okay, so I believe this is our  
18 last testimony. (inaudible) Okay, we'll check  
19 after. Anna Sacks, if you're there you are last but  
20 not least.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

22 MS. SACKS: Hi, thanks for having me. I wanted  
23 to comment today as an individual. I'm also a member  
24 of the Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board as  
25 Legislative Chair, and I'm a member of the Save Our

2 Compost Coalition. For organics, I want to suggest  
3 right-sizing the collection. So we know from the  
4 2017 DSNY Waste Characterization Study that a third  
5 of our... New York City's residential waste is  
6 recyclable, a third is organic, suitable for  
7 composting, and a third is other, and 6% of that  
8 total pie is textiles actually. So even within the  
9 other, there are other opportunities for diversion.  
10 But with the third-third-third, you could do one day  
11 of recycling pickup, one day of organics pickup, and  
12 one day of this other the trash pickup. And once you  
13 keep the labor constant, then it becomes an issue of  
14 tipping fees. And we know that landfill incinerators  
15 are more expensive than recycling and composting, as  
16 they should be. So I want to suggest that instead of  
17 having three days of trash pickup and maybe one day  
18 of recycling for most New York city neighborhoods, it  
19 depends on the neighborhood, that instead we do one  
20 day of recycling, one day of organics, and one day of  
21 trash. And that is another mechanism of getting  
22 people to comply with this program. So I think we  
23 need to study changing the... the pickup days.

24 We need it to be mandatory, and we need it to be  
25 universal. There's no zero waste without mandatory

2 universal organics, given that pie chart. But there  
3 is no zero waste without NYCHA, which is a city  
4 within the city the size of Atlanta. I think that  
5 the timeline, as we know is a little too ambitious  
6 for the start date, but I think it makes sense to do  
7 it all at once. So we have a one message, one  
8 rollout, a massive media campaign to get people on  
9 board, versus the confusing voluntary program that  
10 we've been doing under de Blasio and Bloomberg and  
11 Adams also.

12 We cannot start... also to start and stop. We  
13 have to commit to this and know that it's going to be  
14 more upfront costs at the beginning. And then  
15 eventually as the IBO reports stated, over time, you  
16 will start to see those cost savings, but we know  
17 that it's not going to be up front and we have to  
18 prepare for that and we can't back down even with  
19 those increased costs.

20 For the schools at one I echo that we need to  
21 eliminate single-use plastic and that will make the  
22 compost stream much more clean as a result of that  
23 and we need to focus on source reduction. So as an  
24 individual I go through the public school waste  
25 stream sometimes and I see entire trash bags filled

2 with unopened carrots for example, or unopened milk  
3 cartons. I think that schools need to invest in  
4 better inventory management system and track  
5 what's... what's wasted and find whatever patterns  
6 that they can find. Another easy thing is shared  
7 tables. It is totally allowed on the federal level.  
8 I've spoken to different public schools about this...

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

10 MS. SACKS: ... and they're afraid of losing their  
11 funding. So I think that if the City Council were to  
12 provide some clarity on shared tables that would be  
13 that would be helpful to them. And then also moving  
14 away from individual milk cartons to a milk fountain,  
15 that's another way of reducing waste.

16 I just... I don't know my time... but I'm going  
17 to say I think it's an opportunity to pair empty  
18 storefronts with community spaces and free stores  
19 swap spots and other things that can serve community  
20 and divert items from landfill and incineration. For  
21 fines, we spoke about briefly before, I want to  
22 suggest that DSNY would have to add a photo to the  
23 fine. That's something that my family has received,  
24 where we... it's becomes a he-said she-said thing,  
25 where because there is no photo evidence provided for

2 whatever the DSNY fine is. Zero Waste must include  
3 incinerators that cannot just be landfills.

4 And I want to also suggest regarding hazardous  
5 waste, that we have a volunteer enforcement corps,  
6 where maybe we take a course for citizens and then  
7 we're able to help enforce that. And that's  
8 something that as an individual, I have found  
9 electronics in residential waste and certain types of  
10 rechargeable batteries that can cause fires in the  
11 trucks or at the recycling centers. And it's kind of  
12 an awkward situation where I then try to give it back  
13 to the building where it came from, and I wish that I  
14 could have some authority on behalf of the city. And  
15 then I could also issue a warning on behalf of the  
16 city. And then paired with that we do need increased  
17 drop off opportunities for these hazardous items.

18 Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you so much, Anna. It  
20 looks like we didn't have anyone else. We went  
21 through the whole thing. Thank you, everyone who  
22 hung around and testified we really appreciate it.  
23 We would love to have your written testimony for the  
24 record. So please make sure you also email it or  
25 submit it online on the council's portal,

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2 testimony@council.nyc.gov. I want to thank  
3 Councilmember Kristin Richardson Jordan, for staying  
4 and hanging in the whole time. And my staff. Thank  
5 you all for being here. We're really excited for  
6 this bill. For those of you who are still online,  
7 hopefully we will, you know, announced some... some  
8 further opportunities to engage with this. And we  
9 really appreciate all your advocacy and attention to  
10 this. And I really encourage you to look on online  
11 at the Council's website. Any of your Councilmembers  
12 that are not co-sponsored on to this legislation. I  
13 encourage you to reach out to them and ask them to  
14 sign on. And we look forward to working with the  
15 Speaker's office to try to move this forward. So  
16 thank you all for being here.

17 And this concludes our committee on sanitation  
18 and solid waste management.

19 [GAVEL]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date 07/25/2022