

**Testimony of
Jessica Tisch, Commissioner
New York City Department of Sanitation**

**Hearing before the New York City Council
Committees on Sanitation & Solid Waste Management and Finance**

**Thursday, March 14, 2024
1:00 P.M.**

**New York City Department of Sanitation's FY2025 Preliminary Budget and Preliminary
Mayor's Management Report**

Good morning Chair Abreu and members of the City Council Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management. I am Jessica Tisch, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Sanitation. I am joined today by First Deputy Commissioner Javier Lojan, Deputy Commissioner, Management and Budget Joseph Antonelli, and Deputy Commissioner, External Affairs Ryan Merola. It is my honor to be here today to bring you the latest news from the front lines of the Trash Revolution.

Under Mayor Adams and with the partnership of this Council, the 10,000 members of the Department of Sanitation are making huge, generational changes to the way 44 million pounds of trash are set at the curb, collected, and processed. It is hard to imagine the scope of this undertaking and what it will mean for our streetscape – an end to the primacy of the black bags, a reclamation of our curbs, and a permanent, meaningful strike against the rats.

These initiatives will allow our City to finally shed the longstanding “Trash City” moniker, and New York City Sanitation Workers are well on their way to bringing dignity back to our neighborhoods.

CONTAINERIZATION

The first and most visible front in the Trash Revolution is the War on the Black Bags and their biggest supporters, the rats. Just under one year ago, we set out to do what other cities around the world have done over the last several decades – to get the trash bags off the curb and into secure, rodent-resistant containers, once and for all.

In April 2023, we changed the set-out times for trash, drastically limiting the number of hours the bags can sit on the streets – and heavily incentivizing the use of containers, by effectively requiring them for any business that closes before 8pm and for residents who prefer an earlier set-out time. At the same time, we made significant changes to our operations, to get more of the trash earlier, eliminating an old paradigm that had purposefully scheduled up to 20% of trash to sit out for up to 24 hours. Now, thanks to New York's Strongest, much of the trash is collected within four hours or less of being set out.

In August, we began requiring secure, lidded containers for all food-related businesses. Restaurants, delis, bodegas, grocery stores, caterers – human food is rat food, and these

businesses produce an outsized amount of the waste that attracts our City's most intolerable inhabitants. In September, that rule extended to all *chain* businesses with five or more locations in the City, the kind of businesses that often produce the largest total volume of trash.

Just two weeks ago, on March 1st, these rules came to cover all 200,000 businesses in the City – and their seven billion pounds of annual trash, meaning that one half of all trash in the City has been containerized in less than a year.

And our residential containerization plans are well underway. Last week, we released an RFP to procure stationary on-street containers, like the kind found in Barcelona, Madrid, Buenos Aires, and other places around the world – but virtually unknown in the United States – for use by larger residential buildings. These containers will be serviced by an all-new automated side-loading truck, our superweapon in the fight against filth, which is suitable for collection within the specific confines of both the US regulatory system and New York City's dense urban streetscape.

The use of this new truck – developed four years faster than industry experts thought possible – is quicker and cleaner than manual collection of loose bags, and far safer for our Sanitation Workers. A full half of Sanitation Worker line of duty injuries are sprains and strains related to the manual collection of trash bags; the Strongest deserve a solution that protects their bodies just as much as every New Yorker deserves a solution that cleans their streets. Uniformed Sanitation Workers Association Local 831 has been a partner every step of the way in the development and implementation of this new strategy and equipment, and I want to thank Harry Nespoli and union leadership for their thoughtfulness and support.

We are building approximately a dozen of these trucks now, for use in the first fully containerized district in Spring/Summer 2025 – right in your backyard, Mister Chair.

To containerize that full district, Manhattan Community Board 9, we will use the following framework, developed through a detailed volumetric analysis:

- Buildings with 31 or more residential units will be the first in the United States to use European-style stationary on-street containers, serviced by the automated side-loading truck. Unlike in many global cities and because of our unique density, the stationary on-street containers will not be “shared” between buildings, but rather assigned to a specific building for use only by residents of that building.
- Buildings with 1-9 residential units will be required to put their trash in individual wheelie bins starting this fall, serviced by the traditional rear-loading Sanitation truck, some of which will be equipped with mechanical tippers.
- Buildings with 10-30 residential units will be given a choice between the two containerization models.

The requirement for lower-density buildings with 1-9 residential units will not be confined to this first district; that requirement will cover ALL buildings of that size citywide this fall, approximately 95% of New York City residential buildings. If a building already has bins, they may continue to use them for approximately two more years; however, official NYC bins will be

available for purchase, and will be the cheapest bin of this quality available. In 2026, we will require everyone to transition over to the official bin, but anyone will be able to purchase it well before the outset of the mandate if they prefer to containerize their trash only once. I can today announce that we have selected a vendor to produce and sell these bins, and are in the process of finalizing the contract.

Developing the technology, model, and timeline for mass-scale containerization of trash in New York City – and having the will to get it done – had long been derided as impossible by the cynical supporters of the old system under which smelly, leaky, rat-attracting bags of trash have sat directly on New York City’s curbs.

And on the other side, there were those who said it would be easy – that we could just copy/paste from models in place elsewhere and hope for the best.

These groups were both wrong.

It has taken substantial effort, but the work is underway, and it is getting results. In the portion of 2023 after the Trash Revolution began in earnest in April, calls to 311 regarding rat sightings saw their largest year-over-year decrease since 2010. And in the 10 blocks where residential containerization is being piloted, that same metric declined by an incredible 68% between when the pilot began and the end of the year, compared to the same period the year prior.

Bins work, and I am truly convinced that once we containerize the trash, people will look back at the old way of doing things – at keeping 44 million pounds of trash on our curbs each day – and think, “how did we live that way?”

COMPOSTING

But bins and containers are not the only component of the Trash Revolution – far from it. We are also getting all of the food and yard waste – the kind that attracts rats – out of the trash entirely, implementing universal curbside composting service that WORKS for all New Yorkers.

While curbside composting programs have existed in New York City for the last decade, none have ever served more than approximately 40 percent of the city. The largest and easiest curbside composting program ever, currently running in Brooklyn and Queens and coming to the other three boroughs this fall, will be the first to reach 100 percent coverage citywide, providing residents with simple, universal weekly collection of leaf and yard waste, food scraps, and food-soiled paper products on their recycling day.

The development and implementation of this program was no small feat, but after many years of stops and starts, Mayor Adams committed to make it happen, and we are getting it done.

DSNY distributed tens of thousands of bins, sent hundreds of thousands of mailers, and purchased 158 net-new collection trucks as part of a historic investment in making this program work.

The most important thing about this program is its simplicity. There's no need for sign-ups, special dates to remember, or specific locations to visit within limited hours. Simply place your

materials out on recycling day, your Sanitation Workers will collect it from your home, and we'll ensure it's put to good use. This is a composting program for all New Yorkers.

Make the separation of compostable material easy, and people will do it. And we have numbers to back this up: in fiscal year 2023, DSNY diverted a record 211 million pounds of compostable material from landfill, an incredible increase from just over 150 million pounds the year before. This is a testament to the value of simple, universal programs, especially given that it includes only a part of our ongoing Citywide roll-out.

These kinds of programs not only improve the customer experience – they are MORE efficient than smaller programs because of economies of scale. We are now collecting more compostable material with fewer truck routes than in old programs.

The ease-of-use principle holds true for our network of nearly 400 Smart Composting Bins across the five boroughs, where residents can drop off their compostable material 24/7 through an easy-to-use smartphone app. These bins are serviced six days per week and have proven to be very popular.

We are also on track to make good on a promise to bring curbside compost collection to every Department of Education school by next week, giving the next generation of composters familiarity with the ease and importance of this program.

Material collected through each of these initiatives – curbside residential collection, smart bins, and schools – is put to beneficial use, either through composting or through anaerobic digestion. The Department produces tens of millions of pounds of finished compost every year at the Staten Island Compost Facility, where in January Mayor Adams and I cut the ribbon on a major expansion. That 33-acre site is now permitted to take up to 165 million pounds of compostable material per year and, as a result of new technology on site, can process it in half the time it used to take – weeks rather than months.

While the City has sufficient permitted and contracted capacity to process compostable material from a citywide program, we are currently engaged in a procurement to distribute that capacity more evenly across the region. City procurement rules limit the extent to which we can talk about future status of processing infrastructure for putrescible waste, but beneficial use and waste equity are both key to our long-term planning.

DSNY would also like to raise the issue of commercial organics separation. Local Law 146 of 2013 requires certain commercial establishments to separate their compostable material, but this law is now substantially out of step with the City's commitment to diversion of compostable waste. The Commercial Waste Zone system will improve commercial diversion, in that DSNY is requiring carters to charge businesses less to collect recyclables and compost than to collect trash, but we also urge the Council to consider an update that would allow DSNY to require source separation at all commercial establishments, in line with the progress made in residential diversion.

Taken together, reform of commercial organics and the Citywide wraparound residential services will make our streets AND our air cleaner.

STRATEGIC CLEANLINESS ENFORCEMENT

But cleanliness is a shared responsibility, and a Department of 10,000 people – even 10,000 of the Strongest – cannot keep the City clean without 8.5 million New Yorkers doing their part, and effecting that behavioral change requires enforcement. While DSNY will never enforce for its own sake, we are not afraid to do what needs to be done to get the streets clean.

Our enforcement of general cleanliness violations – improper set-out, dirty area, failure to clean 18 inches into the street – the kinds of things you all see each day, and that your constituents are concerned about, has increased significantly. In the last two years, DSNY has entirely rethought our enforcement around quality of life issues, putting a greater focus on getting stuff done for New Yorkers when it comes to the very basic rules around cleanliness.

At the same time, as part of the Adams administration’s “Small Business Forward” initiative, DSNY has lowered or eliminated some fines, particularly administrative requirements for businesses to post signage. We have also formally added a “warnings first” approach to a number of violations around commercial organics separation and processing.

That said, there are several bills before this Council that will empower DSNY to provide more meaningful enforcement of these most basic rules around cleanliness. Int-97, sponsored by Councilmember Ung, Int-11, sponsored by Councilmember Bottcher, and Int-57, sponsored by Councilmember Osse, will allow this Department to hold the worst offenders against cleanliness accountable on behalf of your constituents, and we strongly support their passage.

And we continue to pioneer new strategies to address New Yorkers’ concerns faster and more efficiently – our cameras to capture illegal dumpers and our interagency task force with the NYPD to remove abandoned vehicles, to give just two examples.

Since last year’s budget hearing, DSNY has also become the home of the New York City Office of Street Vendor Enforcement. We do not enforce on Parks property or certain areas like the Brooklyn Bridge, but DSNY has posted or written thousands of warnings focused on cleanliness – failure to remove trash, grease poured down drains – and has seen substantial compliance by street vendors, enforcing only when compliance is not forthcoming.

COMMERCIAL WASTE ZONES

There is also another much larger way in which DSNY is bringing safety, sustainability, and cleanliness to the commercial sector. In January, we announced the contract awards for the Commercial Waste Zone program described in Local Law 199 of 2019. This law was designed to reform the commercial waste hauling system by establishing new safety standards for workers in the commercial carting industry, improving service for businesses, increasing diversion rates, and reducing vehicle miles traveled as well as harmful emissions from waste hauling vehicles.

The first of New York City’s 20 non-exclusive Commercial Waste Zones will come online in the second half of this year in Corona, Elmhurst, and Jackson Heights.

This program will add legal safeguards to the commercial carting industry that will protect workers, business owners, and our environment. We are talking about 12 million miles fewer

traveled by commercial carting vehicles. And, making good on a promise from when this program was created, businesses will pay less for the collection of recyclables and compostable material than they do for trash – a citywide average of 32% less for recycling and 18% less for compostable material. That means businesses will have a meaningful financial incentive to separate their waste properly.

SNOW

Of course, even as we talk about the Trash Revolution and the strategic initiatives that are guiding the future of this Department, we have also continued to work to modernize the core DSNY functions New Yorkers have come to expect, including a swift, equitable response to snow. For the first time in two years, NYC experienced significant snow fall, and we were able to deliver snow equity for the first time ever. Thanks to historic investments in this Department, the days of primary, secondary, and tertiary streets are long gone. Every street is on a route, and every route can be dispatched at once.

Our strong response to this winter's storms involved the first deployments of our new BladeRunner 2.0 tech platform, which allows the Department to track every plow and every salt spreader, pivoting resources in real time and delivering for every part of the City.

But no technology, no matter how innovative, will ever be a replacement for the real heroes of New York City winters: the Sanitation Workers. Thousands of people worked 12 hour shifts for a week or more to get the job done. Their work is incredible. It almost seems like they catch it before it falls.

FY2025 PRELIMINARY BUDGET

This tidal wave of change to the collection, processing, and regulation of New York City's 44 million daily pounds of residential and commercial trash is coming amid an extremely challenging fiscal climate. While Mayor Adams was able to announce that thanks to sound management, there will not be a need for an April round of PEGs, DSNY did find savings in order to meet this crisis.

We were gratified and relieved that litter basket funding has been restored, and we continue to replace the old mesh baskets – which give the rats direct access to the trash – with the new Litter Basket of the Future, which is larger, easier to service, harder to misuse, and, if I may say so, a beautiful shade of gray.

This is an example of how our strategic initiatives are able to continue through this difficult time; another is the ongoing roll-out of the largest, easiest curbside composting program ever, despite the necessary elimination of City funding for community composting – although I was glad to hear that private philanthropy has stepped in to keep this program running.

Our core commitments to cleanliness, timely collection, and snow removal are unwavering.

The Preliminary Budget includes \$1.998 billion in expense funds in Fiscal Year 2024 and \$1.88 billion in Fiscal Year 2025, reflecting increases of \$96.7 million and \$20.7 million, respectively, from the budget adopted last June.

The Fiscal Year 2025 budget includes \$1.13 billion for personal services to support a total budgeted headcount of 9,459 full-time positions, including 7,832 uniformed positions and 1,627 civilian positions, and \$756.5 million for other than personal services, or OTPS.

DSNY's Fiscal Year 2025 Preliminary Budget includes \$3.36 billion in capital funding in the 10-year plan, \$1.18 billion of which is for garages and facilities, \$2.1 billion for equipment, \$64.9 million for IT, and \$49.2 million for solid waste management infrastructure.

The Capital Budget includes funding for several major facilities projects, including:

- \$487 million in funding for the construction of a new garage for Bronx Districts 9, 10, and 11, with demolition;
- \$283 million in additional funding for the construction of a new garage for Queens District 1, which is slated to begin next year;
- Upgrades to the facility that serves as the home for the Bronx District 12 Garage, which has an overall budget of \$55.5 million and will begin construction next year;
- And the \$20 million finishing touches of the \$213 million build out for the brand-new home for Staten Island District 3, which is slated to be completed next Spring.

On the topic of facilities, I also want to provide an update on a topic that has been of interest to this Council in the past. DSNY has completed the installation of women's restroom and locker rooms at all Department facilities citywide.

If you remember nothing else from today's hearing, remember this: despite deep fiscal challenges, 10,000 members of service of the New York City Department of Sanitation are working hard every day to provide New Yorkers with a higher level of service than ever before, to tackle problems the solutions to which have eluded the City for decades, and to run with the opportunities Mayor Adams has given us.

It is an honor to lead the Strongest in this effort; to helm an agency of people who, like me, refuse to accept the status quo when the status quo is mediocrity.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today about the work underway on our streets, and my staff and I look forward to answering your questions.

UNIFORMED SANITATIONMEN'S ASSOCIATION

LOCAL 831
AFFILIATED WITH
INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF TEAMSTERS



HARRY NESPOLI
PRESIDENT

Testimony of Harry Nespoli

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

**Before:
New York City Council Sanitation and Solid Waste
Management Committee Hearing
On**

FY2025 Preliminary Budget

**Hon. Shaun Abreu
Chairperson
March 14, 2024**

Good afternoon Chairperson Abreu and members of the committee. As always, thank you for the opportunity to be heard today.

As you know I have been president of the Uniformed Sanitationmen's Association for over 20 years. Over those years I have sometimes addressed this committee to thank it for its support, and other times I have thanked this committee for its support, but also asked for help. Today, I'm afraid I'm here to ask for your help.

Thankfully, the Adams Administration has announced that they will be canceling its proposed 5% in additional cuts to agencies that were slated for April or May. We are grateful that funding for the Litter Basket Service has been restored, along with the required 80 uniformed staff positions. As you can appreciate, the placement and maintenance of litter baskets throughout our commercial corridors and highways is crucial to the appearance of our city to both residents and visitors alike, not to mention to rat mitigation. We are also happy that funding remains for our JTP Street Cleaning program, a job training program.

Unfortunately, for my members, this is woefully insufficient, and we are asking that funding for many of the programs that keep this city clean be restored.

Though Litter Basket Service has been restored, that service at park perimeters, greenways, bridges and other pedestrian areas has not.

Most critically, 182 uniformed positions remain on the administration's chopping block – this includes 15 from our vacant LOT Cleaning Unit – this will mark the end of that unit.

This committee has heard me say it many times before, but we need to maintain a proper headcount year to year to do our job and keep our city healthy, safe and clean for both residents and visitors. We need to add more men and women to our workforce, not less.

Which is why it's so distressing to see a reduction in administrative and operational services, along with a civilian hiring freeze.

We see an elimination of funding for community composting programs, and the delay of residential curbside organics collection in the Bronx and Staten Island. And the planning for the development of a 2026 Solid Waste Management Plan has been halted.

Funding for e-waste curbside pick-up – this is old computers, televisions, and ion batteries – needs to be restored citywide. This program prevents illegal dumping and individuals putting products out on the curb they know should not be picked up.

However, if there is an overriding issue of concern, it is the condition of our many garages throughout the city. This is where many of my brother and sister members report for work each morning, return at the end of each shift, and shower. I have talked about this issue many times.

We are asking that the City Council strongly urge the Adams Administration to move the programs meant to address the numerous issues at our garages at pace, access the Hurricane Sandy Funding meant for this work, and please address these critically needed renovations, construction, repairs and fire safety measures that have been long outstanding.

I can point to over 30 DSNY garages with critical needs – planned work that has not started or been completed. I am talking about roofs that need to be replaced. Proper locker rooms and showers for my sister members –which I have been talking about for years. Boilers, HVAC and water heaters need to be replaced.

Fire alarm replacements and sprinkler system upgrades. There is needed electrical work, and hazard mitigation. There is much more – I could go on and on.

As the committee knows, our members work very hard. The work we do is visible on the City’s sidewalks and streets, and integral to the health and safety of residents and visitors.

But our mission of collecting, recycling, disposing of waste, cleaning city streets and vacant lots, and clearing snow and ice becomes much more difficult without the proper headcount, a cut in essential programs, and if the maintenance of our garages continues to lag.

This council has recognized when my members needed help in the past and answered the bell, we ask that you do so again.

My thanks again to Chairperson Abreu and other members of the committee for this opportunity to address you.

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OFFICE OF THE BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

ANTONIO REYNOSO

Brooklyn Borough President

City Council Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management Hearing on the FY25 Preliminary Budget 3.14.24

Thank you Chair Abreu and members of the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management for holding this hearing today. As former Chair of this committee from 2014-2021, I remain deeply invested in a comprehensive approach to waste management that centers sustainability and environmental justice and engages all New Yorkers in doing their part. I am therefore concerned about this administration's approach to the FY 2025 DSNY budget, and want to discuss the implications of cuts both proposed and already implemented.

Administrative Staffing, Outreach and Communications: I am very disappointed by the cuts to DSNY's budget for outreach and communications, as well as the unexplained cut of 321 civilian administrative positions in FY 2025. This year, DSNY will begin to implement one of its most transformative programs, Commercial Waste Zones (CWZ). It will also rollout curbside organics collection to Manhattan, and begin requiring residential building owners to containerize their trash. All of these programs are complicated, and require significant planning, oversight, and – most critically – public engagement in order to be successful. They represent major shifts in how NYC collects its waste, and examples from other cities show us that messy rollouts can threaten programs long-term. Additionally, according to the MMR, the city's curbside and containerized recycling diversion rate actually went down this year to just over 16%, short of DSNY's goal of 23%, which itself is lower than that of many other major cities. Education and outreach are critical to getting this number up. Given all this, cutting outreach, education, and staffing for implementation seems short-sighted and particularly unnecessary given recent re-estimates that predict a budget surplus of over \$3 billion in the next fiscal year.

Solid Waste Management Plan: All of this applies also to another important project: creation of the 2026 Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP). This critical plan will guide solid waste management in New York City for the next 20 years. The 2006 plan included transformative measures, such as creating a metal/glass/plastic recycling facility in the city (now operating in Sunset Park), and developing the City-operated Marine Transfer Stations (MTSS), which ship residential waste out by barge rather than long-haul truck, a major win for environmental justice advocates who participated in shaping the plan. One of the November PEGs cancelled a planned consultant contract for support in developing the 2026 plan, and my understanding is DSNY intends to bring this in-house. How can we expect another transformative plan that

incorporates input from our communities, given the staffing and outreach cuts to the agency outlined above? City Council must insist that more attention and funding be allocated to creation of this critical plan.

Community composting: I have already been on record multiple times expressing my disappointment with the administration's decision to end community composting programs, and asking for restoration of the cuts imposed in November. To summarize, community composting is not "inefficient," as DSNY has implied; rather, these organizations provide an important resource for our communities by:

- diverting millions of pounds of food waste from landfills every year;
- providing free compost to the Parks Department, community organizations, street tree maintenance, school gardens, Botanical Gardens, and community gardens;
- creating jobs; and
- playing a critical role in educating youth and the public about the value and mechanics of composting.

As my colleagues and I said in a letter we sent to Mayor Adams in December, in the scale of the City's budget, \$3 million is a drop in a very large bucket, yet it has an outsized impact on our zero waste goals and our ability to educate New Yorkers about sustainable practices. Not only are these cuts unnecessary, but pushing local groups off of public lands, even after they located bridge funding to temporarily sustain operations, seems particularly cruel. While it's not my borough, even I know that BIG Reuse's site at Queensbridge is a beloved local resource, and a much better use of space than a parking lot. Leaving the Lower East Side Ecology Center with no home after almost four decades of operation in NYC is unacceptable. I join my colleagues, including Speaker Adams and Finance Chair Brannan, in calling for restoration of the cuts to these vital organizations.

Brooklyn District 13/15 Garage: Finally, on DSNY's capital plan, I want to again express my disappointment that Brooklyn's District 13/15 garage is once again not being considered for capital upgrades. These garages are still operating from among the worst physical plants in DSNY's inventory, with BK 13 located in a dilapidated building and parking its trucks on an HPD-owned site slated for affordable housing development, and BK 15 using trailers in an area plagued by flooding. City Council approved site selection for a new garage to be located on Coney Island Creek in 2006, but the project was never funded, and National Grid recently [sold the site](#) to a real estate company for \$51 million. Now we must go back to the drawing board to find these garages a new, long-term home.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today. I stand ready to support this Council in reinstating funding for the programs outlined above and look forward to working with you all to continue transforming waste collection in New York City.

Dear Chair Abreu, Members of the Sanitation and Solid Waste Committee, and former Chair Nurse:

It is a great honor to be speaking with you all. I'm Samantha MacBride, professor at Baruch and former DSNY manager and analyst. I am speaking to you today with two goals: (1) to encourage a realistic, clear-eyed assessment of where residential curbside organics stands today, so that it does not follow the wasteful, expensive, and failing path that befell the prior version of this program; and (2) to advocate for good governance through transparent and responsible reporting and analytics.

In today's hearing, the DSNY Commissioner mentioned an FY23 organics diversion total of 211 million pounds. This equals 105,000 tons, as reported in the FY23 Mayor's Management Report (MMR, see Figure 1 below). In a February 27, 2024, Council oversight hearing on the City's infrastructure to handle and process organic waste, a DSNY spokesperson referred to that same tonnage as "record breaking". And in fact, the FY2023 MMR does report a total organics diversion of **105,600 tons, up from 48,500 tons in FY20**, as shown below.

However, this tonnage is neither record breaking, nor is it an accurate way to monitor DSNY's progress in its new approach to organics.

Figure 1. Mayors Management Report FY2023 Goal 4

SERVICE 4 Collect organic material and compost it.

Goal 4a Increase composting.

In Fiscal 2023, the Department created the nation's largest curbside composting program by offering weekly collection service of leaf and yard waste, food waste, and food-soiled paper to every Queens resident. DSNY is also working with the NYC Department of Education to expand composting to every school over the next two years. The expanded service diverted more than 105,000 tons of organic material, representing a 36 percent increase compared to Fiscal 2022, and the highest rate of composting in the City's recent history. There were 419 Smart Composting Bins deployed by DSNY, which yielded 303,500 individual uses.

Performance Indicators	Actual					Target		Trend	
	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY23	FY24	5-Year	Desired Direction
★ Total tons of organics diverted (000)	NA	48.5	76.3	77.4	105.6	↑	↑	NA	Up
Total Number of Smart Composting Bins Deployed	NA	NA	NA	NA	419	*	*	NA	*
Number of Smart Composting Bin Unlocks	NA	NA	NA	NA	303,500	*	*	NA	*

★ Critical Indicator ● Equity Indicator "NA" Not Available ↑↓ Directional Target * None

Please compare the total tons of organics diverted for FY19 to FY23, reported above, to the totals I have compiled from a different set of DSNY reports, called "Total Annual DSNY & Non-DSNY Collection & Diversion" (available at: <https://www.nyc.gov/site/dsny/resources/statistics/total-annual-collection-diversion.page>), for FY18 through FY23. Note that for FY21 and prior, I have used a 312 workday/year multiplier.

Figure 2. Categories of Organics Collected and Diverted, as reported annually by DSNY.

DSNY Category	DSNY Description	FY23	FY22	FY21	FY20	FY19	FY18	FY17
Curbside Organics	In FY13, DSNY began curbside collection of organic material including food scraps, food-soiled paper, and yard waste from selected schools, institutions, multi-unit apartment buildings, and pilot neighborhoods. In addition, DSNY collects Christmas Trees citywide every January for composting. DSNY collects food scraps from selected Green Markets. Budget permitting, DSNY collects Leaves and Yard Waste seasonally in all boroughs but	32,773	13,967	2,059	38,501	48,142	43,992	25,397
Private Landscaper Leaf and Yard Waste	DSNY accepts private landscaper waste for composting at its Fresh Kills compost site. In addition, DSNY accepts Christmas Trees and Wood Chips at its compost sites.	26,509	28,128	25,646	23,431	24,929	25,771	21,746
Other Organics Collections	This includes food scraps and other organics collected from Green Markets and other NYC Compost Project locations that are funded, but not collected by DSNY.	4,949	3,422	1,966	2,090	2,527	2,059	1,716
Rescued Food Donations	Food donations collected for redistribution, as reported by partners in DSNY's DonateNYC program. Does not represent all food donations in NYC.	39,203	29,600	70,886	44,366	32,573	31,481	not tracked
Rikers	Organic Waste from the kitchens and cafeterias at Rikers Island Correctional Facility are composted on-site by DSNY.	2,181	2,188	2,028	2,028	1,716	1,498	1,560
Reported in FY23 and FY22 MMR: Grand total		105,615	77,305	102,586	110,417	109,886	104,801	50,419
Reported in FY20 MMR:subset: Rescued Food donations + Other Organics Collections +Rikers		46,333	35,210	74,880	48,485	36,816	35,038	3,557
Reported in FY21 MMR; subset: Curbside Organics + Other Organics Collections+Rikers+Rescued Food		79,106	49,177	76,939	86,986	84,958	79,030	28,673

For FY23 and FY22, the totals are very nearly identical to those reported in the MMR. In FY21, the total, counting similar categories, would have been just over 102,000 tons, with totals going back to FY18 in the same ballpark. However, for the FY21 MMR total, it would appear (although this should be confirmed with DSNY) that only a portion of this 102K total was reported. A similar omission appears for FY20's MMR total. For the years FY18, the data in the MMR is listed as N/A, although totals are available in the Total "Annual DSNY & Non-DSNY Collection & Diversion" reports.

Total diverted organics across time – not a record.

Drawing from DSNY's own data, it would seem that with the addition of rescued food donations, and private landscaper wastes, total organics diverted have summed to a little over 100,000 tons going back to FY18, with the exception of FY22.

Curbside organics totals across time – not a record

Looking at tonnages above, we see that a record total for curbside organics tonnages was 48,142 in FY19, vs. 32,773 in FY23. No one would fault DSNY for this decline, because they are restarting a halted program. But the new curbside program is most certainly not breaking records as of FY23.

Moreover, when the new program expands into the Bronx, Manhattan, and Staten Island, this simple expansion may boost tonnages beyond FY19 records. But because prior years did not offer collection citywide (only to twenty-five of the City's 59) districts, claiming to break records based on broader collection service will be empty without actual attention to performance in terms of capture rate or average pounds per household per year.

Figure 3. FY2023 Curbside Tonnages as reported on Open Data. As of FY23 that new, simpler curbside program only had started in Queens as of Oct 22. Tonnages from Brooklyn, the Bronx and Manhattan are from the discredited, prior opt in program in the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Manhattan.

FY 2023 DSNY-collected curbside organics tons					
BOROUGH	curbside residential*	school organics tons (may included SmartBin)	leaves	Xmas Trees	Grand Total
Bronx	470	3,141	206	106	3,923
Brooklyn	2,826	3,271	683	246	7,026
Manhattan	744	1,493	43	340	2,620
Queens	10,604	5,029		306	15,940
Staten Island		534	1,417	72	2,023
Grand Total	14,644	13,468	2,350	1,070	31,532

* new program Queens 11/22-6/23; legacy opt in tonnages for other boroughs

** total tonnage does not match that reported in "Total Annual DSNY & Non-DSNY Collection & Diversion" by roughly 1,000 tons. This may reflect Greenmarket drop off collected by DSNY, not reported in Open Data.

Why this is important.

Why point out these discrepancies? Why highlight that the categories “Rescued Food Donations” and “Private Landscaper Yard Waste” account for a lot of reported diversion? After all, these tonnages do represent tons of organics kept from landfill via DSNY efforts. The same goes for “Other Organics Collections,” ironically representing the work of community composters that have recently been defunded. Similarly, it’s true that food scraps from DSNY’s Riker’s Island jail complex are in fact composted in an indoor aerobic facility on the Island. Braggadocio aside, what is wrong with counting every possible ton and summing it up into a big, impressive total to report to the City Council and in public statements to the press?

The problem is that these programs are not DSNY collections. They are not additive with curbside organics as summaries of annual achievement. This is for the obvious reason that residential curbside organics collection – as opposed to the other categories -- requires DSNY routing, vehicles, labor, and all associated costs. Curbside organics collection is integrated with curbside refuse and recycling collection. It is weekly, it covers entire areas block by block. Other diversion programs don’t. Most collection of *any kind* (refuse, recycling, or organics) is curbside residential. In contrast, containerized collections, school collections, Smart Bins, or other special collections are smaller. To show real gains in organics diversion, you *have to* show gains in residential curbside collection – that’s where the tonnage is going to come from. You can’t just add in other tonnages to make up the difference.

Furthermore, the anticipated simplicity of the new curbside program leads DSNY to envision tonnage increases as the program rolls out in other boroughs 2024, obviating the need for community composting involvement. DSNY’s own education and outreach, as today’s testimony showed, will be invested in very lightly. And as today’s testimony suggests, the current leadership at DSNY appears to be novice at residential outreach and education. Does DSNY think that one round of door knocking for 1–9-unit buildings in the Bronx, Manhattan and Staten Island will be enough to introduce the program and build program success? Does current DSNY leadership know that entrance to 10+ unit buildings by

outreach workers is easy to gain when one rings the superintendent? Are they aware that civilian staff have been conducting recycling-related site visits to go over receptacles, signage, storage space and best practice for educating tenants – and that 10+ buildings are not “impossible to access”? Does leadership know that introducing organics to school children is very important, but not an immediate effective way to prepare homeowners and tenants for maximum participation in the new curbside program? Today’s testimony suggests not.

DSNY expects big curbside tonnages as it rolls out to the rest of the City this year, based on the simplicity of the new program. A reasonable request is that they report these tonnages to the City Council as a standalone category. Another easy request is for DSNY’s analytic team to calculate basic metrics that account for different months of program coverage for different boroughs and districts, different numbers of households, varying numbers of Zallo weeks per month, and seasonal variation. This is curbside organics performance analysis 101.

The only way that curbside organics collection will be affordable in the long term is to collect substantial tonnages that grow annually on a per district and per household basis, not just because of program expansion to new areas. If DSNY’s new approach to curbside organics collection aims to do just that – fantastic. They should report performance metrics transparently and at a minimum quarterly. Most important, they **should be developing and sharing reasonable estimates of per ton collection costs from knowledge of collection operations and tonnages**. Per ton, let me repeat this – they need to share **dollars per ton collection costs for curbside organics with members of this committee** and the public, just as these costs are reported for curbside refuse and recycling. This would be the minimum in transparency required for good governance and responsible environmental stewardship of our city and surrounding region.

Let me close by saying that the cutting of funding to the NYC Compost Project is another dimension of the same institutional problem that has given rise to inadvertent obfuscation in organics diversion reporting. I ask you to ask tough questions of DSNY as the curbside program continues to expand, and I stand ready to assist with the formulation of those questions.

Respectfully submitted,



Samantha MacBride, PhD



March 14, 2024

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**Testimony of WE ACT for Environmental Justice
to the New York City Council Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste
Management, on March 13, 2024 regarding Fiscal Year 25 Preliminary
Budget.**

Dear Chair Shuan Abreu and Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste
Management,

WE ACT for Environmental Justice is a community-based organization in Harlem, New York City. We recognize and advocate for community-driven solutions that can remedy the institutionalized harms associated with unjust urban planning policies that have plagued communities of color for generations. WE ACT is also a member of the Save Our Compost NYC coalition – a coalition of New York City organizations working to support and expand community composting to uplift environmental and climate justice.

WE ACT is urging the City Council to support and fight for the reinstating \$7 million per year in funding for community composting operations, including the 115 green jobs that facilitate the profound impact of community composting on both environmental sustainability and community engagement. In addition, the Save Our Compost coalition demands that the City provides the previously promised \$4 million for building out additional community composting sites to increase local composting capacity.

The mayor claims he wants green jobs, he wants a cleaner city, a healthier city. He wants to invest in the youth – the future of our city. He has talked about sustainability, combating the climate crisis and reducing the city's emissions. Community composting programs do all of those things and more. There is no other program within the Department of Sanitation's (DSNY) budget that positively impacts multiple dimensions of the quality of life of New Yorkers.

We need the City Council to hold Mayor Adams accountable and push back on these shortsighted budget cuts. You cannot accept an adopted budget that does not include funding for community composting.

Additionally, curbside organics collection, and smart bins cannot be the only aspects of our expanding organic waste diversion infrastructure. New



York City is undergoing a cultural shift when it comes to how households, buildings and the City handle organic waste. Community composting operators are vital to increased participation in all composting related programs because of their valued outreach and education efforts.

After reviewing the [Committee Report](#) it is WE ACT's recommendation that DSNY look into the reappropriation of the approximately \$10 million in unexpended funds from this year's snow removal budget to community composting operations.

Street Litter Basket Collection

WE ACT supports full funding to restore and expand street litter basket collections and illegal dumping camera enforcement. Street cleanliness and appearance make a difference in the quality of life of all New Yorkers. We urge the Council to provide sufficient funding to ensure that all neighborhoods, regardless of income level, receive the benefits of enhanced litter basket placement and service – something that has not always been the case in the past. For example, according to [NYC Open Data](#), there are approximately 260 litter baskets on the Upper East Side (population 60,000) and 69 litter baskets in East Harlem (population 76,000).

Commercial Waste Zones

Regarding commercial waste zone implementation, WE ACT supports full funding for implementation of all 20 zones by the end of 2025, at the latest. This includes money for implementation, enforcement and reporting. Transparency is especially important here. The Council and the public need assurances that the contracts being awarded are consistent with and supportive of the environmental, labor protection and environmental justice goals that led the Council to enact the commercial waste zone statute – Local Law 199 of 2019 – in the first place.

We look forward to further working with Chair Abreu and this committee to ensure proper funding for all of the aforementioned items.

Sincerely,

Lonnie J. Portis

NYC Policy and Advocacy Manager

lonnie@weact.org

646-866-8720



Contact: Clare Miflin
clare@centerforzerowastedesign.org
917 254 7453

Testimony for March 13th, 2024 Sanitation and Solid Waste Budget Hearing

I am Clare Miflin, Executive Director of the Center for Zero Waste Design (CfZWD) and a member of the Save our Compost Coalition. I participated in the panel [What Happens to NYC's Organic Waste?](#), and the [Community Compost Teach-Ins](#). I am grateful to the Department of Sanitation (DSNY) for their decisions to collect organic waste citywide, and to containerize waste, and we have suggestions to improve both.

Since 1993 DSNY has supported the growth of the largest most successful community composting program in the country. In the hearing I heard how valuable DSNY think community composting has been, and how painful it was for them to cut it. DSNY also stated that they have the highest headcount of workers in years, just spent half a billion dollars on new trucks and 80 million dollars on overtime. So it is just not believable that they couldn't find \$7 million to continue this amazing community resource which educates the public and provides tangible experience of the benefits of composting, and which city council members, community boards and the public also love.

Community Composters work is not done. Their continued existence and thriving is necessary for both the curbside organics program to succeed and to maintain the billions of dollars put into green infrastructure – street trees, rain gardens and parks. Please see my opinion article in Bloomberg CityLab for more: [Don't Kill Community Composting in NYC](#)

Community Composting also plays a role in improving New Yorkers health – mental and physical – from supporting healthy eating habits to bringing people together and supporting community and school gardens, to bringing tangible hope in a very uncertain future, see this [video](#) to hear what participants say.

If we think about the big picture, DSNY, even in their Queens rollout, claimed as a huge success, is only collecting under 5% of the food scraps the residents generate – so we need to change behavior and change hearts and minds. You can change behavior with fines and rules, but a much better way to do it is to engage, empower and inspire people. Then the change will not be limited to separating food scraps but will inspire people to live in a healthier, more socially connected, civically responsible and mindful way. DSNY should be transparent on the actual performance of the Queens rollout – see article in [Biocycle](#) to read about the declining capture rates.

Waste containerization is something CfZWD has been advocating for since 2017, and we have studied methods used in cities across the world. It could be done more affordably, and be better for building labor, in ways that don't clutter our sidewalks with bins or jeopardize our zero waste goals by prioritizing trash.

During the hearing the Commissioner noted two options for containerizing large buildings – 4 cubic yard stationary or wheeled bins. There is a third option for large buildings, used in Great Britain, Denmark, Netherlands and the Middle East, which is much better for building labor, and takes no permanent parking spaces, by taking bins straight to trucks or staging them in a loading zone that can be used for deliveries and passenger pick up and other curbside uses later in the day, see [link](#).

We are concerned about DSNY's plan to only containerize trash – this will reduce the declining diversion rate, already low at 17%. See articles in [Vital City](#) and [NY Times](#).

In rules for commercial businesses, allowing trash bins on sidewalks is eroding the quality of the public realm. Instead the city should help businesses separate organics waste with guidelines and education, incentivize it by prioritizing organics bins over trash bins, and work with Commercial Waste Zoning to allow waste bins which don't fit inside to be placed in secure locations on streets, rather than chained to trees, bike racks and light poles on sidewalks.

I am very happy to expand on any of these ideas,
Respectfully,

Clare Miflin,
Executive Director, Center for Zero Waste Design



February 26, 2024

Hello committee members,

I'm writing to request that city funding be restored to community composting. While there are undoubtedly many competing areas for funding, ensuring a growing, robust community composting program is essential if we want to combat climate change, enhance and improve city waste disposal and landfill, and empower NYC citizens to take care of their city through more effective, green disposal of organic waste matter. Cutting edge cities around the globe practice robust composting—it's built into their ethos of care and responsibility. We can train New Yorkers to similarly take care of their city through collection of organic waste and composting. I hope you'll restore and even increase funding of these programs.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

With best wishes,

Amy Bentley

Amy Bentley
Professor of Food Studies
Co-Founder, NYU Urban Farm Lab
Co-Editor, [*Food in Modern History: Traditions and Innovations*](#) (Bloomsbury)



To Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management Chair, Hon. Sean Abreu and Committee Members:

Civics United for Railroad Environmental Solutions asks the New York City Council to fund Community Composting and all of its 115 green jobs, and to prioritize composting of the city's curbside organics. NYC's organics exports are harming communities by NYC transfer stations, and by railyards, railroad tracks, landfills, and burners across NYS and in other states. Meanwhile corporations engaged in waste export benefit financially from keeping NYC's export tonnage up and turning organics into bioslurry, additional toxic sewage sludge, and climate-altering methane that has been routinely flared off into NYC's air. We ask the NYC Council to act based on consideration of the impacts of New York City's waste exports on Climate Change, soil, water, and communities where municipal solid waste is processed, transported, landfilled, and burned. We ask you to fund the more just and sustainable waste management you envisioned in the Zero Waste Legislation you have passed, and include Community Composting and city composting for all boroughs in your budget.

At the December 7, 2023 Rat Hearing DSNY Deputy Commissioner Joshua Goodman affirmed that DSNY eliminated Community Composting and initiated a procurement for back-end processing of Brooklyn's and Queens' organics without OMB climate budgeting guidance and sustainability and city resiliency evaluation tools, contrary to what the city council was told to expect. DSNY's chosen technocratic model lacks foundational climate, sustainability, and resiliency standards, while the city is spending almost 10 times as many taxpayer dollars for export to disposal vs. zero waste initiatives.

According to US EPA DSNY is employing three of the worst ways for New York City to manage organics: landfilling, incinerating, and co-digesting sewage with organics. At the Rat Hearing Joshua Goodman said that DSNY's criteria were "beneficial use of organics "and "keeping organics out of landfills". However, EPA's October 2023 Wasted Food scale shows that DSNY's criteria are too crude.

In contrast, Community Composting increases DSNY's compliance with the city's Zero Waste policies, US EPA standards, and NYS's Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act.



Wasted Food Scale

How to reduce the environmental impacts of wasted food

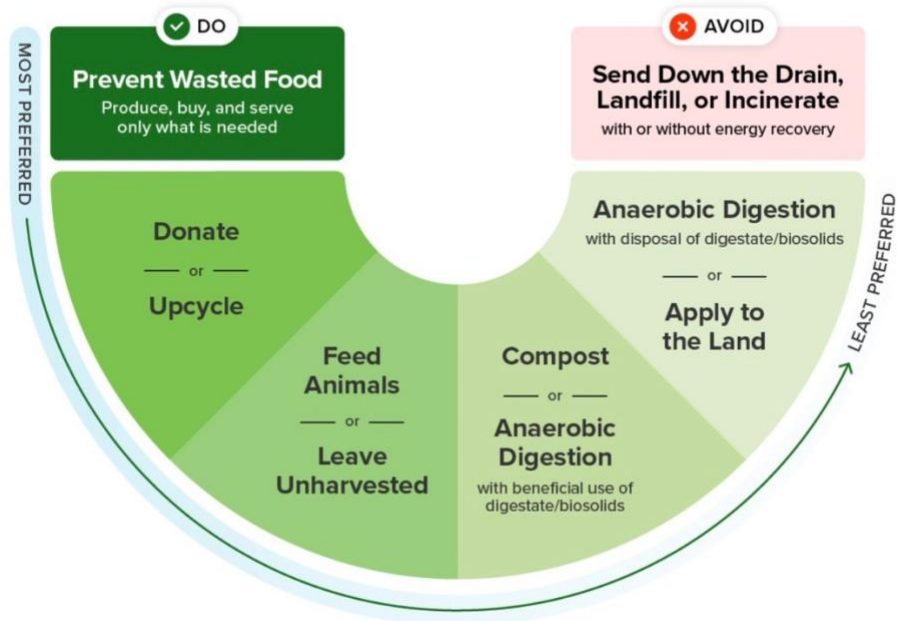
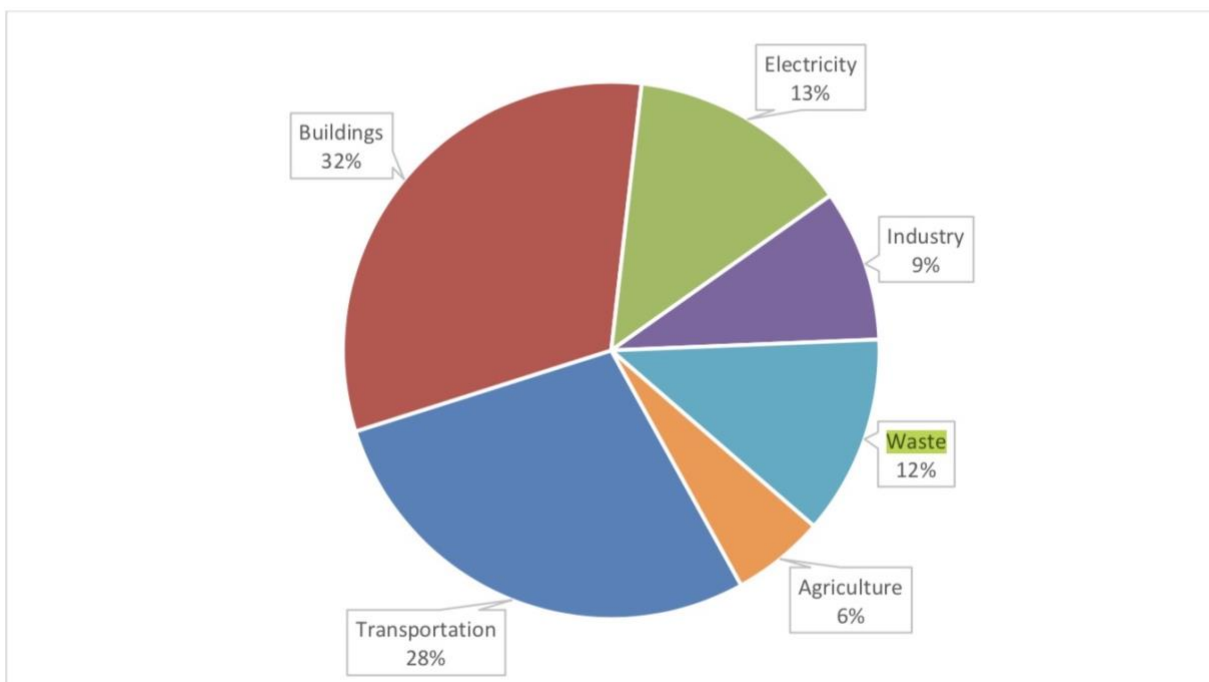


Figure 2. 2019 New York State GHG Emissions by Scoping Plan Sector



Everyone who lives with the misery of waste-by-rail is counting on you to remove the 40%+ of organics from rail cars of MSW that originate in NYC through public engagement in organics diversion. NYC's persistently low recycling rates over three decades show that it takes more than a DSNY mandate and enforcement to induce public participation. You have seen from the outpouring of support for Community Composting that your best chance of educating and engaging the public in organics diversion is to build on what Community Composting is already doing. Please support restoration and an ongoing source of funding for Community Composting and all of its 115 workers. Please make composting that returns NYC's organics to NYC's parks, gardens, tree pits, yards, and rain gardens NYC's #1 method of managing organics from curbside pickup. Thank you.

Mary Arnold
civicsunited@gmail.com
3-14-24



March 16, 2024

Dear City Council Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management, and Chair Nurse,

The East River Alliance writes today to share our objections to the elimination of community composting.

Our home park, East River Park, is currently undergoing the multi-billion dollar East Side Coastal Resiliency project - work necessitated by the impacts of climate change. The choice is simple. We can tackle the climate crisis or we can continue an endless cycle of profoundly expensive defensive measures. Cutting the community composting programs, which cost only a tiny fraction of what we're spending on ESCR, is foolish. These programs divert more than 8.3 million pounds of organic waste from landfills each year, a volume the curbside composting program is not prepared to handle.

While we understand that the city's curbside orange bin program is intended to collect food scraps in lieu of community composting, the orange bin food scraps are not converted to compost that can replenish the city's soil. Soil that can support green space and bioswales/rain gardens is even more critical now that climate-change-related rainfall is flooding our city regularly. Continuing and expanding the creation of finished compost that is shared with the city makes our soil more permeable and our neighborhoods more resilient to stormwater flooding.

We are proud that East River Park is the home of the Lower East Side Ecology Center, a pioneer of NYC community composting, and a working compost yard. They provide compost outreach and education to thousands of New Yorkers annually, making them aware of food waste's contributions to the climate crisis while providing the opportunity to address this critical issue. They also produce and distribute finished compost to local community groups, parks, street tree care events, and individuals each year. We recently heard from a neighbor at Baruch Houses, next to the construction zone, whose first ESCR question was: "When will the compost program be back?" New York City should be investing in, not canceling, this kind of community engagement with the fight against the climate crisis.

We demand growing investment in, not cuts, to the community composting program. Finished compost can play a major role in combating the effects of the climate crisis in New York City.

Sincerely,

East River Alliance

Dianne Lake, President



Testimony Submitted by
Allison Marino, MSW
Director of Public Affairs
Edible Schoolyard NYC

For the Preliminary Budget Hearing of the NYC Council Committee on Committee on
Sanitation and Solid Waste Management
March 14th, 2024

Thank you to Council Member Abreu for holding this hearing, and to the Committee for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Edible Schoolyard NYC (ESYNYC) is on a mission to make edible education accessible for every child in New York City. We believe edible education—where kids experience hands-on cooking and gardening—helps kids gain the skills to contribute to a healthy and sustainable food system for us all. By building fundamental social, emotional, academic, and physical skills, kids learn how they can lead the way to community wellbeing and equity. We envision a future where access to hands-on cooking and gardening experiences for every child promotes a NYC of healthy, sustainable communities. Together with public school communities across the city, we're building spaces for kids to flourish.

Last school year, we reached nearly 4,000 students and taught nearly 2,200 hands-on cooking and gardening lessons across 16 public schools in Upper Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, and The Bronx. This year, we are serving schools in Councilmember Nurse's district at Evergreen Middle School for Urban Exploration, and Councilmember Banks' district at Brooklyn Gardens Elementary School. We are also providing professional development, technical assistance, and grant funding to support the development of school gardens, kitchen classrooms, and edible education programming at CS 61 in Councilmember Rafael Salamanca Jr.'s district through a USDA-funded year-long fellowship.

As members of our city's educational community, we take our responsibility to provide New York City's students with access to everything they need to learn, thrive, and build foundations for future success seriously. Our work gives us firsthand experience of the impact that access to hands-on educational opportunities can have on students' understanding of, and agency to, practice environmental stewardship. Data from our 2022-23 school year program surveys show that nearly 85% of New York City Public School teachers and staff agree that Edible Schoolyard NYC's programming increased students' sense of stewardship towards the earth, and increased students' understanding of their capacity to advocate for the environment. At all



of the schools we serve, we support school composting initiatives, and even coordinate energetic and enthusiastic Green Teams and Sustainability Clubs that help their fellow students sort their food waste accurately in the cafeteria, turn compost in our schoolyard compost bins, and spread compost throughout school garden beds. We partner closely with the NYC Public Schools Office of Sustainability, and during the 2022-23 school year, we worked with GrowNYC and the Department of Sanitation to support implementation of the City's mandatory school-wide composting efforts across our Bronx partner school sites - P.S. 109 and colocated P.S. 311 and P.S. 294. We anchored partnership and fostered collaboration between city agencies, teachers, administrators, and custodians to incorporate the science, logistics, and physical components of composting across the curriculum, student body, and school building to great success. Our program evaluations from the 2022-23 school year showed that all of our elementary school grade levels in our Bronx partner schools were sorting their food waste accurately about 90% of the time by the end of the school year.

Unfortunately, Edible Schoolyard NYC, the school communities we serve, and organizations like us cannot continue to build additional support for this great progress toward our city's zero waste and climate action goals in the face of cuts to community composting. Simply put, organizations like Edible Schoolyard NYC and the school communities we serve do not have the capacity to absorb the additional burden of receiving and processing each school community's entire share of organic waste. We are thrilled to see the proliferation of the orange organics collection bins across the city, and these can indeed be an integral piece of a responsible waste management system that helps us reach our climate goals. However, as they function currently, waste placed in these bins is not being composted, but instead being anaerobically digested and in part, producing methane, a greenhouse gas that is directly antithetical to our climate and resiliency goals as a city.

We need the full breadth of the city's resources and partnerships to channel the knowledge, skills, and enthusiasm for composting that we have already made great progress in promoting within our communities. Without full defense of the right of New Yorkers and those who serve them to conduct community composting on NYC parklands, we cannot ensure that the benefits of organic waste management are distributed equitably among all New Yorkers. However, adequate funding for community composting at scale can transform organic waste management into a catalyst for positive change - concurrently enhancing environmental, social, and economic outcomes for our city and all of its residents. Integration of community composting into the Department of Sanitation organics strategy through required upcoming updates to the City's Solid Waste Management Plan would ensure its seamless alignment with broader waste management, climate, and equity goals.



The FY25 City budget represents a unique opportunity for city government and communities to work together to amplify the steps that schools and environmental organizations have already taken to acclimate New Yorker City students and families to the importance of and steps to composting. In support of the Save Our Compost 2024 Coalition and their 2024 priorities, Edible Schoolyard NYC urges City Council to reinstate and preserve City funding for community composting programs. We further urge the City Council to Ensure that city management of organic waste prioritizes community composting solutions which bring the greatest positive social and climate impacts to our city and its residents.

Save Our Compost Coalition NYC 2024 Priority #1:

Preserve City funding for community composting programs.

By forging a holistic and inclusive approach, we can transform organic waste management into a catalyst for positive change, concurrently enhancing environmental, social, and economic outcomes for our city. In accordance with the Save our Compost NYC Coalition 2024 Priorities, Edible schoolyard NYC requests:

- Reinstatement of the \$7 million per year in funding for community composting operations, including the 115 green jobs that facilitate the profound impact of community composting across the city, that were cut from the FY24 budget through the Mayor’s PEG.
- Additional allocation of the previously promised \$4 million for building out additional community composting sites to increase local composting capacity.
- The integration of community composting into the Department of Sanitation (DSNY) organics strategy and the City's forthcoming update to the Solid Waste Management Plan, ensuring its seamless alignment with broader waste management, climate, and equity goals.
- Continuation of funding and implementation of the Master Composter Training program, which empowers New Yorkers to take an active role in sustainable waste management practices.

Save Our Compost Coalition NYC 2024 Priority #2:

Ensure that city management of organic waste prioritizes community composting solutions which bring the greatest positive social and climate impact.

Together, we can transform organic waste management into a catalyst for positive change, concurrently enhancing environmental, social, and economic outcomes for our city. In support of the Save our Compost NYC Coalition 2024 Priorities, Edible schoolyard NYC requests:

- City commitment to ensure that organic waste is composted by community based organizations, managed by the NYC Compost Project and funded by the City, to yield profound positive impacts on both social wellbeing and climate resilience.



- City commitment to addressing waste equity, ensuring that the benefits of organic waste management are distributed equitably among all citizens.

Save Our Compost Coalition NYC 2024 Priority #3:

Increase participation in composting programs and compliance with composting laws through education and outreach provided by workers at partner nonprofits and volunteer-led sites.

We remain united in the pursuit of increased composting program participation and compliance with composting laws through robust education and outreach efforts. By cultivating informed and involved citizens, we envision a city where sustainable waste management is a shared responsibility, contributing to a greener and more resilient urban environment. To this end, Edible schoolyard NYC requests:

- City commitment to allocating and sustaining funding for the organizations that administer composting outreach and engagement to provide robust, engaging services to New Yorkers citywide.

We appreciate the City’s commitments to building spaces for all of our city’s students to thrive, and this Committee’s consideration of our recommendations on community composting. Edible Schoolyard NYC appreciates your dedication to ensuring the benefits of progress towards our city’s climate goals reach New Yorkers equitably. We are grateful for your consideration of our recommendations.

Respectfully submitted,

Allison Marino, MSW
Director of Public Affairs
Edible Schoolyard NYC

E | ajm@esynyc.org
C | 646.327.1308
edibleschoolyardnyc.org



Testimony Submitted by
Iyeshima Harris-Ouedraogo, Policy Manager, Equity Advocates
For the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management Hearing on the FY25 NYC
Budget

March 14, 2024

My name is **Iyeshima Harris-Ouedraogo, Policy Manager, Equity Advocates**. Thank you to Council Member Abreu for holding today's budget hearing and the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Equity Advocates builds the capacity of nonprofit organizations to address the underlying causes of food inequity through policy and systems change. We partner with New York-based organizations working to alleviate hunger and poverty, providing them with the tools they need to be more civically engaged—including policy education, advocacy training and coalition leadership, such as convening the NY Food Policy Alliance since March 2020.

[NYC Food Policy Alliance](#) is a multi-sector group of 75+ food system stakeholders from across New York, including frontline CBOs directly impacted by food insecurity. The Alliance's mission is to identify and advocate for public policies and funding that not only respond to our current economic and hunger crises, but also address the ongoing vulnerabilities and injustices of the food system. Collectively, we approach this work through an anti-racism lens to ensure communities of color and other systemically under-resourced communities benefit from public policies and funding.

It is crucial to acknowledge the challenging fiscal landscape shaped by Mayor Eric Adams' proposed 15% budget cuts across New York City's agencies and those proposed in the FY25 Preliminary Budget. The proposed \$60 million cut to the Department of Education's Office of Food and Nutrition Services (OFNS) threatens the progress made over the years to ensure healthier, more nutritious school meals. The \$3 million budget reduction for the NYC Compost initiative has led to over 100 layoffs, effectively dismantling the city's local composting programs for residents¹. Rather than cutting critical community programs, the City should invest in and enhance essential services that are integral to the health and welfare of the city and its residents—including the thousands of new arrivals who are in need of services and support.

Our platform, advocating for enhanced economic development and support for marginalized communities, becomes more crucial in this context. As we navigate these challenging times, our commitment to advocating for equitable policies and funding in the food system is unwavering, ensuring that the most vulnerable New Yorkers are not disproportionately impacted by these fiscal adjustments.

¹ [Composting's 'True Believers' Jilted as N.Y.C. Curbside Program Grows](#)

Amidst these challenging budgetary constraints, our platform is more committed than ever to fostering equitable economic development and ensuring that vulnerable communities, already disproportionately affected by economic disparities, do not face further marginalization. We seek a FY25 City Budget that will ensure all New York City families have access to healthy, affordable food, strengthen urban agriculture and support the next generation of farmers, and foster long-term resilience and economic opportunity in the City's food system.

We respectfully request your support for the inclusion of the following budget recommendations in the FY25 New York City Budget:

Strengthen Urban Agriculture & Support the Next Generation of Farmers

- **Restore \$2.6 million in funding for GreenThumb** to support the hiring of additional Community Engagement Coordinators, seasonal staff members and to increase the distribution of resources, including the delivery of compost, topsoil, and lumber, for community gardeners. Community gardens serve as vital green spaces that promote growth, unity, and environmental awareness. They also address critical challenges such as food security, environmental sustainability, and community well-being.
- **Allocate funding for the new Office of Urban Agriculture** housed within the Office of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability (OLTPS) to maintain appropriate levels of staffing and increase transparency about Office goals and activities among the community of urban agriculture practitioners. Use funding to create a position dedicated to ongoing, intentional community engagement to inform the urban agriculture advisory's development of a set of recommendations as outlined in Local Law 123.
- **Maintain the investment of \$206.5 million in baseline funding for the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) and \$20 million for the school-year Work Learn Grow (WLG) program.** Address current barriers in DYCD regulations hindering urban agriculture worksites from providing meaningful youth experiences. The city should establish a youth focus pilot program that meets the needs of local urban agriculture organizations. This program will focus on youth leadership and development in urban agriculture.
- **Restore \$7 million in NYC Community Composting program funding,** with a focus on engaging Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) in the brown bin rollout initiative. This initiative creates local jobs, reduces landfill waste, and fosters community engagement and helps move the City towards its Zero Waste goals.
- **Maintain \$10.3 million in baseline funding to support youth in urban agriculture careers,** including expanding the DOE's Career and Technical Education Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources program. Allocate substantial funding from the CTE program to support the growth of

urban agriculture initiatives and create a seamless pathway from the DOE's expansion of Food and Nutrition Education for PreK-8th Grade to Career and Technical Education programs.

Foster Long-Term Resilience And Economic Opportunity In The City's Food System

- **Increase Funding to \$4.9 million for Worker Cooperative Business Development Initiative**, up from \$3.7 million in FY24. We support the [NYC Network of Worker Cooperatives](#)' call for increased investment in the initiative that supports 15 worker cooperative support organizations, offering education, training, and assistance for new and existing cooperative small businesses. We urge that this increase in allocation help put worker cooperative support organizations that prioritize food businesses—such as RiseBoro Community Partnerships' [Worker Coop Development Program](#)—on the path to partnership within WCBDI. By prioritizing BIPOC and new groups focused on food systems businesses, which may not have had historic advantages and access to capital, we are promoting greater equity in our local food system and supporting the City's goals and values under the [Good Food Purchasing Program](#). Worker cooperatives stimulate a value-based workforce, fostering collaboration, shared prosperity, and a more inclusive economy. With this funding, we aim for specific outcomes, such as empowering marginalized communities, enhancing economic sustainability, and strengthening the local food ecosystem.
- **Fully Fund the Citywide Community Land Trust Initiative at \$3 million**. We prioritize the notion that moving public land with insecure tenure to trust land will strengthen land security and sovereignty and prioritize access to lands for people who have deep and historic community connections, especially BIPOC farmers, growers and community gardens. Launched in FY2020, the citywide CLT discretionary funding initiative has helped catalyze CLT organizing, education, training and technical assistance. We support the [NYC Community Land Initiative \(NYCCLI\)](#) in its call for full funding to support 20 organizations working to develop and preserve deeply-affordable housing, community and commercial spaces, and advance a just recovery in Black and brown NYC communities. Public land must be used for public good, and be reserved for CLTs that provide for meaningful community control. It is also critical to raise awareness that CLTs can be utilized for commercial urban agriculture. We believe that this embodies the ability to balance local land control and long-term, stewarded development that addresses changing community needs. Supporting both Community-owned businesses and Community-controlled land together is part of an effort to democratize economic development in NYC's food system.

- **Create a new Food Justice Fund to allocate \$5 million towards community-led projects to grow food justice and build wealth in BIPOC and low-income communities.** In *Food Forward NYC*, the Mayor’s Office of Food Policy calls for the establishment of a Food Justice Fund. We urge the City to invest in this program at \$5 Million and offer grants of at least \$500K to each grantee for both planning and implementation projects serving high need areas identified by Racial Equity Task Force. Funding would be allocated directly to community food organizations historically serving NYC residents with a demonstrated history of meeting the cultural and food needs of their communities. As this field of work requires long term investments, the fund should prioritize 2 year grant cycles and allow for flexibility on spending deadlines upon receiving grants. We also ask that the City explore a private-public partnership and leverage its convening power to secure matching investment from local philanthropic foundations. Types of projects funded under this pilot could include, but not be limited to:

- Worker Ownership: activities may include establishing or providing technical assistance for worker cooperatives, Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) and other employee-ownership models within the food system. Providing access to capital for employee ownership models in the food systems is a key strategy to build community ownership within the local food system, especially in BIPOC communities that have historically had low rates of business establishment by residents.
- Strengthen Food Systems and Supply Chain Infrastructure: activities may include creating or expanding community kitchen programs, affordable kitchen and processing space, improving efficiency in food distribution; technical assistance to support MWBE from participating in the City’s procurement contracts; local or climate-friendly food production or procurement; food recovery and waste management; support for support community food hub models, and community-owned food retail to leverage existing and growing community-owned food, health, farming and retail infrastructures; and data/technology projects.
- Growing Food System Career Pathways: activities may include community based culinary training and workforce development opportunities to support regional rural and urban agriculture enterprises, especially for youth and BIPOC farmers, to create a pipeline of urban farming and food systems career opportunities.

Ensure All New York City Families Have Access To Healthy, Affordable Food

- **Increase and baseline funding to a total of \$60 Million for the Community Food Connection (CFC), formerly known as the Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP).** We are concerned about the apparent reappropriation of funds from last year’s budget to this incredibly impactful program that addresses the ongoing hunger crises. Given rising levels of inflation and increased demand at emergency food providers across the state, we call on the Administration not to cut CFC, but rather to increase and baseline program funding for a total of \$60 million. New data from the New York Department of Health reported that nearly one in four (24.9%) New York adults experienced food insecurity within the past 12 months. Meanwhile, according to the 2023

New York City True Cost of Living Report, published by United Way of New York City, 50% of working age New Yorkers are struggling to cover their basic needs. Families struggling to make ends meet live in every NYC neighborhood but across family composition, work status, and education, the report finds that people of color are disproportionately likely to lack adequate income. Further, 80% of households below the True Cost of Living had at least one working adult and the presence of children in the household almost doubles the likelihood that a household will have inadequate income. This alarming data aligns with testimonials from food banks and food pantries across the state, the majority of whom observed a major uptick in households served last year.

A moderate increase in funding for the CFC would accommodate the increased costs of adding fresh food into the program, rising cost of produce, and continued need, including the continuing influx of asylum seekers and other migrants seeking refuge in New York City. This increase will also help to address the inefficiencies found in using third-party vendors particularly in the procurement of kosher and halal items. Kosher- and halal-observant New Yorkers make up 21% of enrollees in GetFoodNYC and so it is critical the City's food assistance programs need to have sufficient kosher and/or halal certified product available and allocate funding to agencies that can effectively store and distribute that food in a culturally competent way. In addition to increased funding, we also request that HRA work with the Administration and Comptroller's Office to speed up payments to CFC providers, ensuring they have money up front to cover the administrative costs of implementing the program and are not required to obtain reimbursement for program services. Awaiting reimbursement is especially burdensome for new and small emergency food providers that may not have a line of credit or enough cash on hand to cover up front costs of implementing the CFC program. Finally, we urge HRA to engage in an outreach and education campaign to ensure smaller, community-based providers, especially those who have begun operating since the onset of the pandemic, are able to participate in the program, and adequately supported so that they are able to continue serving their communities.

- **Maintain the Department of Education’s Office of Food and Nutrition Services (OFNS) to support school meal operations across the five boroughs.** During this administration, New York City has taken major leaps forward with unprecedented commitment on improving school nutrition programs and ending child hunger. Through creative menu development and service advancements, plant forward meals, the full expansion of Cafeteria Enhancement to all middle and high schools, and expansion of availability of halal and kosher meals, more children are eating nutritious school meals each and every day. Because of these advancements, meal participation is back up to pre-pandemic levels, even factoring in the drop in enrollment. The data backs up this progress - there was an 8% increase in meal participation in the first part of this school year. We were pleased to see the Administration restore the originally proposed \$60 million cut as it was a direct threat to that progress and impact. We strongly urge these funds to be maintained in the final budget. Now, more than ever, as pandemic era programs come to an end and hunger continues to rise, we must continue to take every step possible to make sure NYC’s school meals program is the best in the nation and connects more children with meals. New York City must continue to lead the nation in this work by investing resources in school meal programs.
- **Invest in a 5% COLA for Human Services Workers.** Government reliance on the nonprofit human services sector for a broad range of vital public services has steadily grown over at least the past three decades. During that time, total New York City employment in the core social assistance sector doubled, increasing more than two-and-a-half times as fast as total private sector employment. However, human service workers make between 20-35 percent less in median annual wages and benefits than workers in comparable positions in the public and private sector. As the sector has stretched to meet community needs, providers are met with chronic delays in payment, underfunding, and a lack of sincere collaboration to create meaningful and lasting interventions, which strips away limited resources. Therefore, we ask that the City includes a 5% COLA (\$150 million, with \$50 million already allocated from the Workforce Enhancement Initiative) in the FY25 budget and 3% COLAs for the next two years each year on the personal services line of all human services contracts is needed to ensure this vital workforce does not slip further into poverty.
- **Invest new funding to combat hunger among older adults.** Specifically, at least \$10.9 million is needed for inflation cost for raw foods, gas and other items for the NYC Aging home delivered meals program, at a per-meal reimbursement rate of at least \$15.31 per meal (above the current rate of \$12.78 per meal). This is especially urgent this year as NYC Aging has released a home delivered meals procurement that will sustain the program for the next three or more years.
- **Maintain funding for NYCBenefits, a new program that enables CBOs to conduct benefits outreach** and connect eligible New Yorkers to the billions of dollars of government benefits that are currently underutilized. This helps to ensure that New Yorkers are aware of the supports available, that accessing those supports is easy and efficient and that New Yorkers enroll and stay enrolled in these support programs. As a result of the OTPS freeze, the funding for this program

has only been released through June 30th, 2024. The original RFP was intended to run for three years and we are only in the second half of the first year. The program must continue so that CBOs can continue to do this work.

- **Increase HRA's budget baseline to ensure it can engage community based organizations (CBOs) in benefits outreach and streamline benefits applications.** Further, we recommend additional funding to facilitate a joint application system between the SNAP program (managed by NYC HRA) and the WIC program (managed by NYS DOH), aligning with Mayor Eric Adams' pledge to develop a MyCity portal for integrated applications. This system aims to simplify the application process, making it easier and more accessible for applicants to receive the benefits they need.
- **Maintain funding for and evaluate the Grocery to Go Program.** This program originally emerged in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic as food assistance for homebound New Yorkers and has since been redesigned to provide food insecure New Yorkers who also have hypertension and/or diabetes with monthly credit to purchase groceries through an online marketplace of local grocery stores. To make the program more impactful and ensure unspent credits do not go to waste we strongly recommend: 1) the monthly credits allotted to each participating household are increased to ensure that funds are reaching the individuals that the program is intended to serve, 2) expand the list for diet related conditions to widen the scale of the program, and 3) allow for the participation of young adults who meet the other eligibility criteria. Finally, we encourage the program to allow enrollees to have the freedom to use the credits on food items of their choosing that reflect need, cultural preference, dietary or medical requirements and personal taste. We strongly encourage the DOHMH not to apply additional limitations to eligible foods and to maintain that Grocery to Go credits can purchase SNAP approved items.
- **We also urge full funding for the following City Council initiatives:**
 - \$2.8 million for the Anti-Poverty Initiative
 - \$7.26 million in FY24 for food pantries
 - \$2.134 million for Access to Healthy Food and Nutritional Education, which funds farmers markets, urban farms, community gardens, and programs to expand the use of SNAP benefits
 - \$1.5 million for the Food Access and Benefits Initiative (HRA)

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Iyeshima Harris- Ouedraogo
Policy Manager at Equity Advocates
iyeshima@nyequityadvocates.org



Green Map System
175 Rivington #1D
New York, NY 10002
Tel: +1 212 674 1631

Wendy E Brawer
Director
web@greenmap.org

GreenMap.org
Think Global, Map Local!

Sanitation – Composting – 3/14/24 City Council Testimony

I'm testifying in writing although I was on City Hall steps in support of community composting yet again today.

How wasteful that these programs are being cut again. We need the soil these great programs create, not the greenwash GHGs of the bio-slurries made in the City's program, which is a world-class mockery of people doing the right thing.

What kind of a city closes down this incredibly beneficial program while simultaneously announcing mega green jobs development in the Brooklyn Army Terminal, Naval Yard & Governors Island - the [Green Economy Action Plan](#), which includes the Harbor Climate Collaborative with an investment of \$725 million from New York City.

City Council can set us on the right path. We need the public educated across the board and enabled to be climate smart citizens by the community compost network – every one of us can be part of the solution.

I'm Wendy Brawer and I have been mapping sustainability in NYC since 1992. Composting was one of the first things I mapped, and today, 32 years later, reducing food waste is #1 on the Project Drawdown [Table of Solutions](#) –

* Gigatons CO2 Equivalent Reduced / Sequestered (2020–2050)

SOLUTION	SECTOR(S)	SCENARIO 1*	SCENARIO 2*
Reduced Food Waste	Food, Agriculture, and Land Use / Land Sinks	88.50	102.20

Let's make it a priority for today and permanent for tomorrow.

Thank you from everyone at Green Map System,

Wendy Brawer
Founder and Director
212 674 1631



Testimony before the NYC Council Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management

Preliminary Sanitation Budget Hearing March 14, 2024

My name is Christine Datz-Romero, and I am the executive Director of the Lower East Side Ecology Center. The Ecology Center has pioneered community based models in urban sustainability since 1987 and have run at the longest running community based composting program in NYC. Since 1990 we have encouraged food scraps to be brought to our drop off locations, turned the collected organics into compost, which we use to green our neighborhood. The biggest value of this program is the educational aspect, showing New Yorkers how to participate and why.

We have been part of the New York City Compost Project which got started in 1993 under the leadership of DSNY, and brought together the four botanical gardens, Big Reuse, Earth Matter and Grownyc to create a vibrant network of drop off locations, processing sites and robust educational programs offered in all five boroughs. Throughout the entire food scrap collection, processing and compost distribution and application loop, local communities are engaged, educated and empowered about the value in both reducing organic waste and harnessing its transformative power to further community resiliency. Whether it is the weekly ritual of bringing food scraps to a drop-off site or using finished compost to nourish a community garden, the NYC Compost Project has become an essential piece of the City's green infrastructure as it tackles diverse challenges from climate change and food insecurity while creating green jobs.

The administration argues that community based programs, while laudable, and allowing that they paved the way for the roll out of universal compost collection in NYC, are no longer needed. Nothing could be further from the reality – for the curbside program to succeed further education and outreach are desperately needed, and community based organizations are a trusted source of information that can deliver cost effective and knowledgeable outreach to educate and inspire New Yorkers about participating with composting efforts. As we know from our 20 year old recycling program which is underperforming, compost collection will head down the same road. The evidence is in the data, as the just published article by Samantha McBride [“Is NYC Getting Curbside Organics Done ?”](#) illustrates.

We urge the Council to restore the full \$7 Mill budget for the New York City Compost Project which also includes Grownyc collection program, together with the \$2.1 Mill that were cut in the November PEG, under the heading, Community composting relocation.

The \$2.1 Mill were a promise made by the previous administration to create a compost operation for the LES Ecology Center because we needed to relocate out of East River Park. The City has in our estimate already spent over \$1.5 Mill in the planning of this facility. Last November we were weeks away from awarding a contract to a general contractor to break ground and start construction, when the budget cuts were announced and the project came to a halt.

We also urge the City Council to secure the compost processing location on public land, including park land. BIG Reuse, who has a facility under the Queensboro Bridge is being evicted by Parks, Earth Matter on Governors Island is facing an uncertain future because of development pressures on the island, and the development of the Compost Yard, which existed in East River Park from 1998 – 2021, the oldest and longest running compost site on park land, is not moving at a speed to be completed by the end of the East Side Coastal Resiliency Project in 2026.

We like to thank the Council for their leadership on these issues and look forward to making NYC universal compost program a success and a national model just like the vibrant community based compost program is a national model that has benefited from 30 years of dedicated work by non-profits and investment by the City – let's not trash that legacy.



**Testimony on behalf of the Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, and Bronx Solid Waste Advisory Boards
before the New York City Council
Preliminary Budget Hearing - Sanitation and Solid Waste Management
March 14, 2024**

Over thirty years ago, New York City implemented mandatory curbside recycling. In the 2006 Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP), the City committed to achieving a "25% diversion rate of recyclables." In 2015, the City of New York announced the "0x30" plan, aiming to eliminate sending waste to landfill by 2030. Most recently, the City enacted Local Law 85 of 2023, mandating residential curbside collection programs for source-separated organics. Additional recent initiatives include adjustments to collection schedules, containerized waste initiatives, and increased litter basket collections to mitigate rat activity and maintain clean streets and communities.

However, the efficacy of these initiatives is greatly enhanced when overall waste volumes are reduced through careful coordination. This coordination relies on a combination of commitments to incentives, legislative actions (at both state and city levels), economic measures, fiscal budgetary allocations, and effective outreach and education strategies. It's essential to emphasize that this coordination doesn't necessarily entail increasing budgets but rather reallocating existing resources to achieve the intended outcomes of our solid waste management initiatives effectively and efficiently.

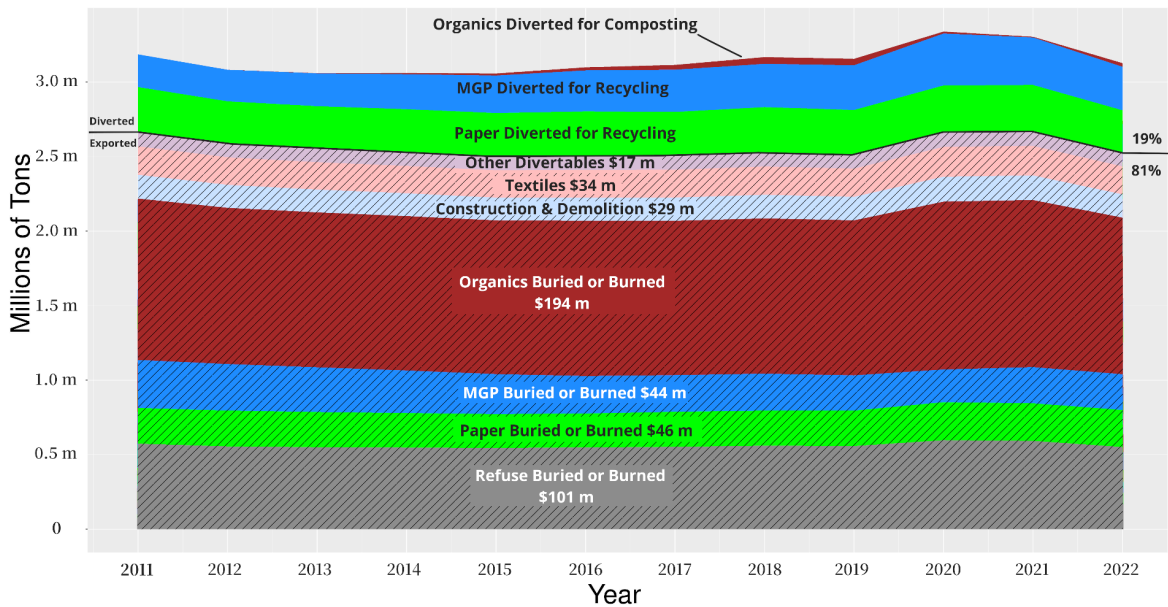
Analysis

Since the introduction of the 0x30 plan in 2015, the City has consistently exported over 80% of discards containing recyclables, organics, and reusable materials to landfills and incinerators both within and outside the region, while diverting the remaining 20% for recycling.

The chart below, sourced from a Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board fact sheet, highlights the consistent patterns in how each component of the residential waste stream has been managed, depicting the proportion sent to landfill and incineration versus that diverted for recycling and composting from 2011 to 2022.¹

¹ Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board Fact Sheet "[New York City Has Not Made a Long Term Commitment to Zero Waste](#)"

The Composition of NYC's Waste from 2011 to 2022 and Estimated FY'22 Associated Export Costs

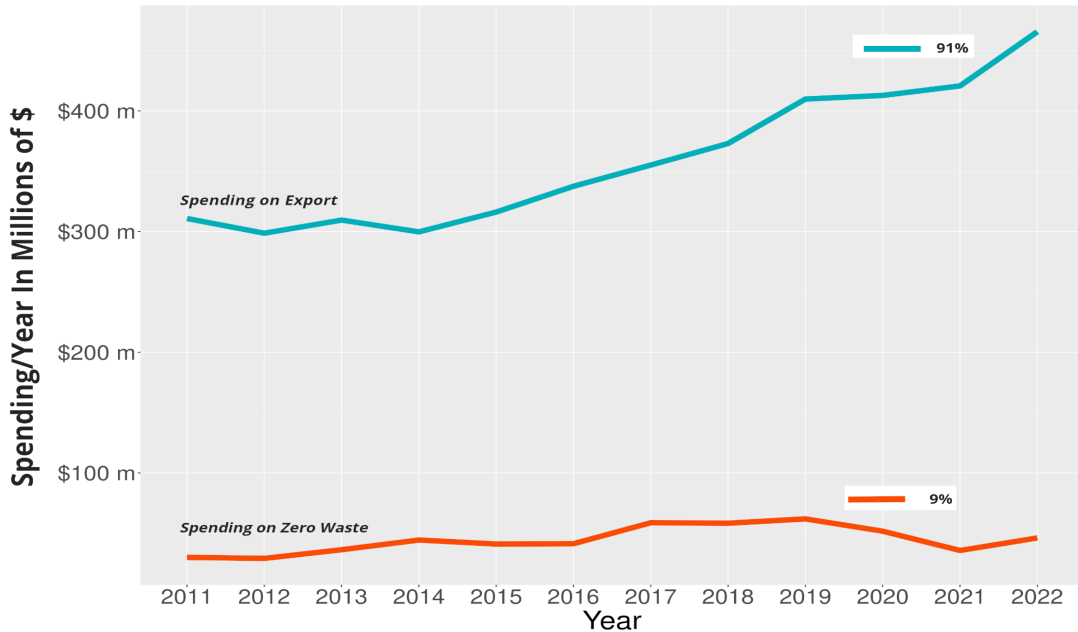


The low diversion rate depicted in the chart contrasts with the clear policy recognition outlined in New York City's 2006 SWMP, which remains in effect until 2027, when the next 20-year SWMP will supersede it. The 2006 SWMP acknowledged the reliance on a system of exporting waste managed by the Department of Sanitation (DSNY), utilizing a combination of local, land-based, private transfer stations, and disposal facilities in neighboring states to address the immediate needs of both commercial and residential waste streams. However, as stated in the SWMP, this approach was deemed unsustainable as a long-term disposal strategy and necessitated significant changes, including aggressive yet feasible recycling diversion goals, new recycling education initiatives, and the establishment of new in-city processing facilities.

While many of the goals outlined in the 2006 SWMP related to systems and infrastructure were accomplished leading to improvements in recycling collection, processing, and the maintenance of markets for source-separated recycling materials, the objective of achieving a 25% diversion of recyclables through the curbside program by 2007 remains unmet. Despite progress in enhancing stability and reducing the environmental impact of the waste export process, this particular target was not realized.

The chart below highlights the significant influence of budget allocations on policy outcomes, demonstrating a substantial investment in waste export compared to funding for zero waste and recycling initiatives in 2022, with the disparity widening over time.

Budgetary Commitment to 0x30



From a budgetary perspective, the City has committed to long-term waste export since the early 2000s, with projections extending well beyond 2024.²

Dollars in Thousands

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
	Actuals	Actuals	Actuals	Actuals	Actuals	Actuals	Actuals	Actuals	Plan	Plan
Long Term Waste Export	\$316,133	\$337,499	\$355,096	\$372,958	\$409,772	\$430,017	\$452,300	\$465,951	\$463,043	\$478,222

The materials follow this budgetary pattern closely.³

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Residential Refuse Exported in tons	2,498,990.80	2,503,022.10	2,504,633.60	2,528,012.30	2,513,397.10	2,664,571.90	2,689,758.10	2,526,985.90
Residential Recycling tons	557,767.50	595,163.40	609,621.10	638,789.70	643,669.20	673,635.60	636,628.30	598,770.50
Residential Curbside Aggregate Discards tons	3,056,758.30	3,098,185.50	3,114,254.70	3,166,802.00	3,157,066.30	3,338,207.50	3,326,386.40	3,125,756.40

² [MSWAB DSNY Budget and Tonnage Analysis 2011 - 2015](#), sheet "DSNY Budget Analysis"

³ [MSWAB DSNY Budget and Tonnage Analysis 2011 - 2015](#), sheet "Tonnage as of 2022"

The pattern established in the 30-year mandatory conventional recycling program, where funding primarily focused on collection, processing, and infrastructure without equal emphasis on efforts to encourage public participation, seems poised to be repeated with the residential source-separated organics diversion effort.

Recently, the City enacted Local Law 85 of 2023, signaling both a legislative and budgetary commitment to residential collection of source-separated organics, akin to the commitment made to conventional recycling in 2006. Although the curbside organics collection program is scheduled for full implementation by fall 2024, achieving fiscal success will require a capture rate of 35%, significantly higher than the current rate of approximately 5%⁴. The planned source-separated organics program primarily relies on a "user-friendly" system supported by planned enforcement measures, lacking a substantial commitment to community engagement, outreach, and education.⁵

Solutions

New York City's experiences spanning over thirty years of mandatory recycling for metal, glass, plastic, and paper/cardboard, along with the disparities between the diversion targets set in the 2006 SWMP and the abandonment of the 2015 goal of achieving "zero" waste to landfill by 2030, serve as cautionary examples. These examples are particularly pertinent as we consider setting diversion goals for the residential source-separated organics program, containerizing waste, effectively managing overflowing litter baskets, and making meaningful progress in metal, glass, and paper/cardboard recycling. It's evident that infrastructure spending, enforcement measures, policy changes, and mere hope are insufficient to attain desired outcomes.

Instead, a commitment to shifting budgets and materials streams must be combined with commitments to incentives – legislative, economic and fiscal (at the state and city level). Additionally, effective and efficient ongoing outreach and education initiatives are needed to increase and maintain public participation in programs as part of the solution to achieve our desired waste management policy outcomes.

⁴ [New York City Independent Budget Office, Fiscal Brief, October 2021](#) Going Green: Can The Organics Collection Program Be Fiscally & Environmentally Sustainable?

⁵City Council hearing, DSNY testimony 10:41: <https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/Calendar.aspx>

Recommended Initiatives

The following projects are inexpensive and ready to enact right now to make real progress in achieving New York City's waste management zero waste policy objectives instead of long-term waste export to landfill and incineration in perpetuity.

1. Support the expansion of the current New York State Bottle law to remove a significant amount of viably recyclable metal, glass, and plastic from the waste stream⁶ and integrate the expanded bill's solutions into our current metal, glass and plastic recycling infrastructure.

- The New York State Bottle law has a proven track record that includes:
 - An impressive 85% reduction in litter from discarded beverage containers,
 - Estimated annual recycling of 5.4 billion beverage containers, resulting in 258,000 more tons of high-value materials being recycled each year than would otherwise have been recycled (167,000 tons in New York City alone),
 - An additional \$852 million added to the state's economy annually,
 - A reduction in carbon emissions by an estimated 331,900 metric tons of CO₂ each year,
 - Additionally, by redirecting recyclables away from costly curbside collection systems, this legislation has already saved New York cities and towns significant resources.
- The proposed expansion would increase this law's reach to containers not currently covered by the law including:
 - Wine and liquor bottles
 - Non-carbonated beverage containers
- And other benefits to the system as a whole:
 - Funding for redemption centers
 - Increased incentives for redemption

Expansion of the bill would boost New York City's recycling and materials capture rate. It would boost the recovery rate for paper and plastic streams by removing more glass containers, thereby reducing contamination. It would boost the recovery rate for glass containers by removing more of them from the curbside recycling program and reducing contamination. The expanded coverage of previously-excluded containers and increased participation as a result of increased redemption incentives will also boost the recovery rate. These are proven strategies to mitigate the carbon associated with curbside resource recovery.

⁶ [Reloop | Reimagining the Bottle Bill](#)

2. Support Extended Producer Responsibility legislation, such as the Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act (PRRIA)

The Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act is one of the primary pieces of legislation providing a dual benefit of reducing waste volumes in recyclables like metal, glass and paper but also waste that is nearly impossible to effectively recycle such as plastics. These reductions will also serve to reduce upstream GHG emissions through the mechanisms that operate at the source of Municipal Solid Waste by applying eco-modulation, encouraging recyclability, reusability, and recycled content, and providing funding mechanisms for recycling infrastructure, including collection.

Further, the bill shifts some of the burden of packaging waste from the consumers and municipalities they live in to the producers of products that generate this waste. According to the DSNY's own testimony in Albany on October 24, 2023⁷, the packaging reduction proposed program:

would shift some responsibility for end-of-life recycling or disposal of such products, which make up more than 30% of New York City's waste stream, to their manufacturers and sellers. New York City currently spends more than \$150 million per year in direct costs to collect and process recyclables. This bill would provide substantial revenue for New York City – and for municipalities and counties around the state – to defray these costs and support ongoing recycling collection and waste diversion efforts. These policies are critical to achieving the State's climate goals under the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA).

Furthermore,

... The City recognizes the immense benefits of recycling and the opportunities it brings to communities in the forms of sustainability and jobs.

As a measure of caution against any bill modificationsAs a measure of caution against any bill modifications, it is important to reiterate the following 13 important criteria that define successful packaging reduction legislation and resulting programs previously articulated by the four SWABs⁸. These criteria are as follows:

1. Require that all bills on this topic mandate 50% reduction rate in all packaging over ten years;

⁷ DSNY [NYS EPR Hearing Testimony.pdf](#)

⁸ [Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Queens SWAB joint statement on Packaging Reduction Legislation in New York State - March 2023](#)

2. Ensure that any packaging reduction legislation disallow the 14 known toxics and provide a schedule to disallow any toxics discovered in the future⁹;
3. Establish eco-modulation fees to phase out problematic packaging at the source, rather than build more infrastructure to accommodate end-of-life management;
4. Adhere to the waste hierarchy according to New York State's December 2022 Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act Final Scoping document (CLCPA)¹⁰ that prioritizes waste reduction, refill, reuse, and recycling, over disposal;
5. Adhere to reduction targets currently in New York State statute and the CLCPA;
6. Establish a Packaging Use Reduction Institute to provide technical support to producers, especially small businesses, adequately funded by Packaging Reduction Act's funding source;
7. Require producers to register with a Packaging Reduction and Recycling Organization that is directed by individuals who have no stakes in any packaging company nor conflicts of interest to submit plans to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and not submit plans individually;
8. Prevent any waivers or loopholes, and provide sufficient resources for enforcement by the Department;
9. Prevent the inclusion of antitrust protections for Packaging Reduction and Recycling Organizations;
10. Expressly prohibit any form of Advanced Recycling, including chemical recycling, pyrolysis, solvolysis, gasification, waste to fuel, and waste to energy technologies;
11. Ensure that municipal reimbursement is not onerous or controlled by producers or Producer Reduction and Recycling Organizations.
12. Ensure that environmental justice communities be given priority funding and Minority and/or Women-owned Business Enterprises be supported.
13. Provide complete data transparency and public reporting on materials recovery rates and disposal by any and all entities involved in collection, sorting recycling and disposal of all covered materials.

3. Substitute Collection Days to Incentivise Recycling and Organics Diversion

Substituting trash collection days with organics and recycling collection days (as is being done in the Department of Education) will both increase convenience and encourage participation. As trash pickup days decrease, residents will rely on other

⁹ Ortho-phthalates, bisphenols, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), lead and lead compounds, hexavalent chromium and compounds, cadmium and cadmium compounds, mercury and mercury compounds, benzophenone and its derivatives, halogenated flame retardants, perchlorate, formaldehyde, toluene, polyvinyl chloride, polystyrene, or polycarbonate.

¹⁰ <https://climate.ny.gov/resources/draft-scoping-plan/>

streams for diversion. Similarly, as residents increase organics diversion from their trash bins, there will be a commensurate decrease in the amount of landfill- and incineration-bound trash.

Further, to ensure that residents participate in the organics separation, we recommend that DSNY provide at least one bin per 50 apartment units if there are at least two collection curbside collection days each week and one bin per 10 apartment units if there is only one curbside organics collection day each week. In addition, to ensure buildings have enough time to request bins, we recommend that DSNY allow buildings to order bins at any point during the organics rollout in each subsequent borough.¹¹

4. Continue to instate material bans like the Plastic Bag Ban, Polystyrene Ban, Skip the Stuff, and initiatives like Plastic Free Lunch Day

New York City has historically led the way in materials bans, including Foam and Plastic Bag Bans. These laws paved the way for State bans, extending the impact beyond NYC. Some examples include:

- Local Law 142 of 2013, aka the Polystyrene Ban, prohibited the use of single use foam and packing peanuts. As a large municipality, a ban on polystyrene in NYC rendered the product less economically viable across the board, facilitating the use of less polluting alternatives in New York City and beyond.
- New York City banned plastic bags in 2016 but was quickly preempted by the New York State legislature. After a lot of advocacy, a State ban on plastic bags was enacted in 2020 and NYC was finally able to put a bag ban in place. In the intervening years, Local Law 100 of 2019 was passed to include a five-cent fee on paper bags to be used to fund the distribution of reusable bags.
- Last year, The New York City Council passed Local Law 17 of 2023 which prohibits restaurants and food delivery services from including napkins, condiment packets, and extra containers in take-out orders unless customers expressly request these items.
- Through a partnership with Cafeteria Culture, Urban School Food Alliance, and the NYC Department of Education Office of Energy Sustainability, New York City schools have adopted a City-wide monthly Plastic Free Lunch Day where no single-use plastic packaging is served in school cafeterias. The highly scalable program meaningfully reduces plastic consumption and provides outreach and hands-on student-led education throughout the K-12 school system.

All four of these examples of materials bans resulted in a significant reduction in the consumption of single-use plastic in New York City and should be used to guide additional prohibitions and initiatives to further reduce single-use materials

¹¹ [Aug 2023 DSNY hearing - All-SWAB Testimony.pdf](#)

consumption. In the case of Plastic Free Lunch Day, the program should be expanded to every day in the school year and summer months and scaled to all schools throughout NYC.

5. Design User-Centered Outreach and Education Strategies and Provide Appropriate Funding

As DSNY embarks on this new chapter of universal curbside collection of organics, it is time to revisit outreach and education. New York City has had a recycling program for over 30 years but to date does not have a meaningful understanding of which outreach and education strategies improve program participation and how.

To develop a system that takes into account the needs of the end user, DSNY should design outreach and education with community involvement, including experienced organizers and educators in the Compost Project, to learn the true barriers to recycling and organics diversion and design solutions that account for the needs of New York City residents.

Further, New York City is not a one-size fits all system, necessitating the need to pilot multiple solutions to learn and understand the conditions in which outreach, education and social marketing solutions will be most effective. DSNY should ensure it collects data before and after the implementation of new strategies to assess and compare the success of the various strategies. This data should be made available to the public.

Once the appropriate outreach and education solutions are identified, the Agency should provide the appropriate level of staffing and resources to ensure the successful roll-out of these enhanced outreach and education strategies.

6. Reinstate the New York City Compost Project

In order to achieve a 35% diversion rate for organics, New York City needs the New York City Compost Project which operated with a mere seven-million dollar budget – 1/3 of one percent of the overall Department of Sanitation's nearly two billion dollar annual budget – in the anomalous year 2022, when DSNY engaged the Compost Project to provide Education and Outreach for the curbside collection rollout in Queens.

Historically, of every \$1 spent on the Compost Project's budget 63 cents was allocated to processing and collection (two activities that, by design of the Compost Project, heavily involve public participation) and administration. The remaining 37 cents was allocated to pure outreach and education.

In FY'22 the Compost Project touched at least 500,000 people. The Compost Project collected eight million pounds of food scraps and distributed as many pounds of

compost. Conceptually, though not all New York City residents participated in the food scrap drop off program, that represents one pound of food scraps and one pound of compost for nearly every NYC resident.

For the City to build residents' participation in its overall organics diversion program, it needs the New York City Compost Project because outreach, education and engagement is not a one time activity. It is an ongoing process of facilitating the eager beavers, and converting the skeptical, the indifferent, and the outright hostile NYC residents to participate in the overall organics program's success. The larger program will likely represent tens of millions of dollars of fiscal budgetary commitments now and in the future. The Compost Project is simply a small, effective, efficient but necessary, fiscal expense to ensure the success of a larger, more costly program. It is not just a program for the "true believers" when we look at it this way.

As stated earlier, it makes sense, then, to look at this small, effective and efficient program as an investment to make the larger organics program work.

Eliminating the very effective Compost Project to save its very tiny budget is not only bad budgeting but bad waste management policy. Over the 30 years the Compost Project has been in place, a very strong and vocal community of advocates and ambassadors has formed. To eliminate this program destroys this community and casts aside the strongest advocates and promoters of true composting, at a time where we need them more than ever. Finally, research shows that people respond to effective calls to action that are: specific, the action is known, and it is clear how the action contributes to solving the problem.¹² The call to action on curbside organics collection is clear, but outreach and education is lacking causing much confusion among residents. Furthermore, New York City has muddled the message on curbside organics by calling it all "compost." Many potential curbside organics participants have become disillusioned by the program after learning their food scraps are mixed with biosolids, turned into fuel and burned, instead of put to beneficial use, which we define as producing compost. Therefore, for this and other reasons, some mentioned above, the SWABs recommend that the City not only increase its education and outreach budget and reinstate Community Compost, but also prioritize the processing of NYC residential curbside collection as beneficial use, and to ensure that the public is made aware of this in order to increase and sustain participation in the program.

¹² https://ssir.org/articles/entry/the_science_of_what_makes_people_care#



Education & Outreach for Budget Testimony 2024
Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board
Long Range Planning Committee
ManhattanSWAB1@gmail.com
March 17, 2024

Why is effective education and outreach essential to reducing and eventually eliminating export and achieving zero waste?

Infrastructure supports zero waste goals but residents must use that infrastructure for zero waste goals to be achieved. The diversion of materials from the trash to the correct recycling, composting and, eventually, reuse bin is a behavior-based activity. Effective outreach and education are essential in cultivating the necessary behavioral changes among residents to actively participate in material diversion efforts. In order to reduce what is discarded as waste to the minimum possible, ALL discards must have at least one designated DSNY zero waste program and/or incentive.

DSNY lacks a fixed budget for education and outreach, as revealed in the Commissioner's last testimony. Funding is allocated campaign by campaign, often resulting in limited outreach efforts such as mailers and door-knocking, which may not yield optimal results. Moreover, utilizing civilians for outreach tasks instead of trained personnel may compromise effectiveness. The focus remains primarily on buildings with 1-9 units, with larger buildings often overlooked. For instance, only \$400k is allocated for Manhattan's outreach in FY24, with proposed budget cuts in subsequent years.

Education and outreach studies on rental and co-op buildings with 10 units or more and subsidized housing should be treated as pilot studies, and

- data should be collected, analyzed and presented, including content of outreach message (informational only, or including reasons to participate),
- response rate (how many open the doors),
- resulting changes in organics collection rate, and
- backreach results (to check back in to see if new behaviors have been adopted, (why/why not) or whether motivational messaging or incentives might be required)
- For fiscal understanding, it would be good to have an accounting if, in using civilians to do the door knocking, rather than their actual jobs, resulted in deficits elsewhere at DSNY.

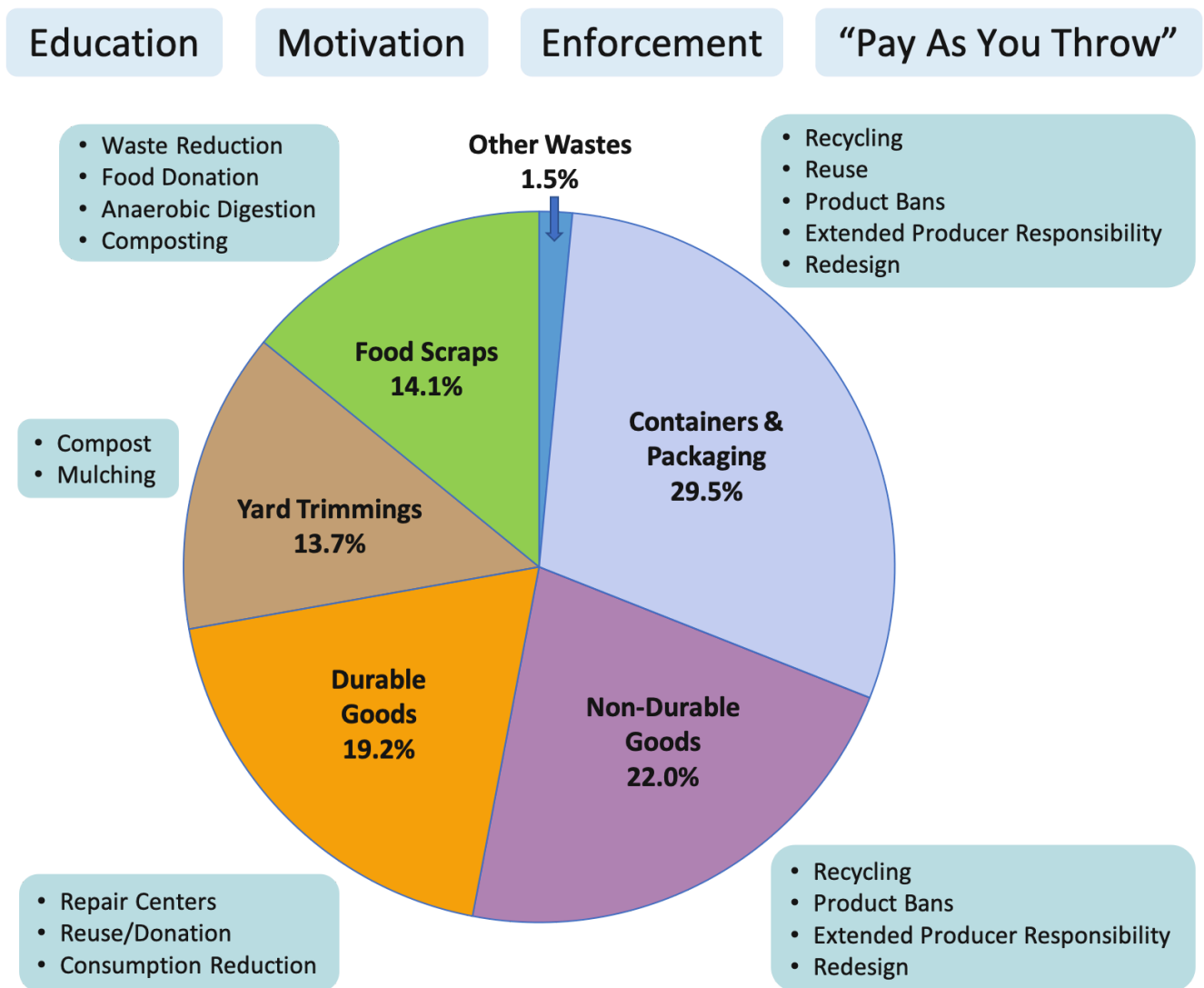
The fall 2023 PEG cuts to zero waste education and outreach were well above the 5% that the administration said would be applied across-the-board. The cut to DSNY education and outreach was \$4.1 Million out of a total \$10.5 Million for FY24 education and outreach budget, some of which is not zero waste education and outreach. Curbside compost collections in Brooklyn were \$1.75 M, composting outreach was \$1M of the education and outreach budget. These figures are not nearly enough to increase participation from its current lackluster levels, and not nearly as much as successful model cities spend. The reported unspent \$400,000 Outreach & Education allocated for Manhattan in FY24, which must be expended by June 30, begs the question as to how the rest of the \$2 Million grant received last fall from USEPA for outreach and education will be spent. Will any of it include messaging to reach all types of residents (described

below) or backreach to assess where there might be problems and need for future remedial funding? Adequate funding for outreach and education alone is not enough. The right kind of outreach and education initiatives must be funded.

How can the City achieve maximum diversion with its zero waste program? Pair every type of discard with a DSNY program and design optimal education and outreach to achieve universal participation?

Elements of successful diversion include infrastructure (waste, recycling, organics, reuse), operations personnel for these, and education and outreach to maximize participation. Waste prevention programs, incentives, and legislation is also necessary to achieve zero waste.

Zero Waste Solutions

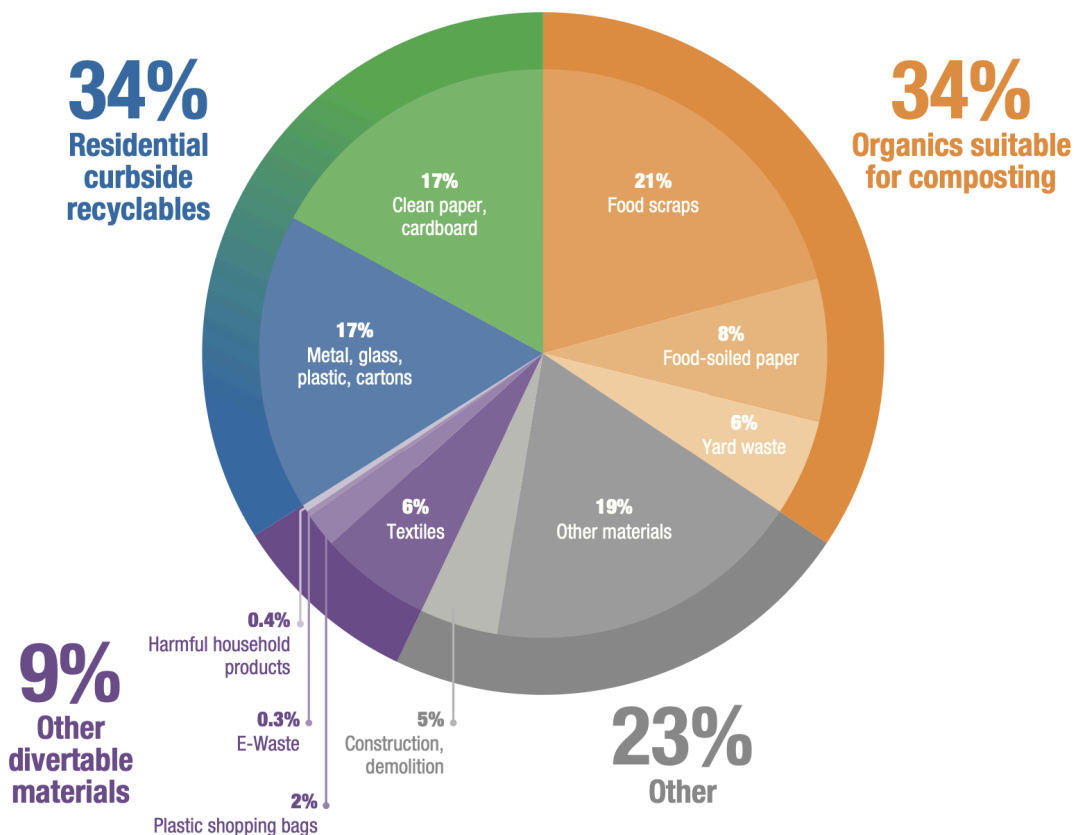


Source: Municipal Solid Waste in the United States, 2009 Facts and Figures, USEPA Office of Solid Waste, EPA530-R-10-012, December 2010. Re-expressed by Maggie Clarke and DeNeile Cooper, 2019

Today, the City continues to export 80% of its waste to landfill and incineration and recycling 20%. Despite our having sufficient infrastructure for recycling, our capture rate is still averaging 50% for recyclables. This signals that participation is way short of where it needs to be to maximize diversion and achieve zero waste. And the budget for education and outreach is at most 1% of the DSNY budget (see pie chart, below). To make the education and outreach program more effective in maximizing diversion, it must be optimized to reach and convince all New Yorkers to participate in all zero waste programs all the time.

To enable the City to reach zero waste within ten years we must have a goal for education and outreach to reach 100% participation (and 100% capture rate) or close within 10 years. Taking into account all the collection and processing capacity for recyclables and organics (which we have), the two priorities missing from DSNY's programs and needed to achieve zero waste are:

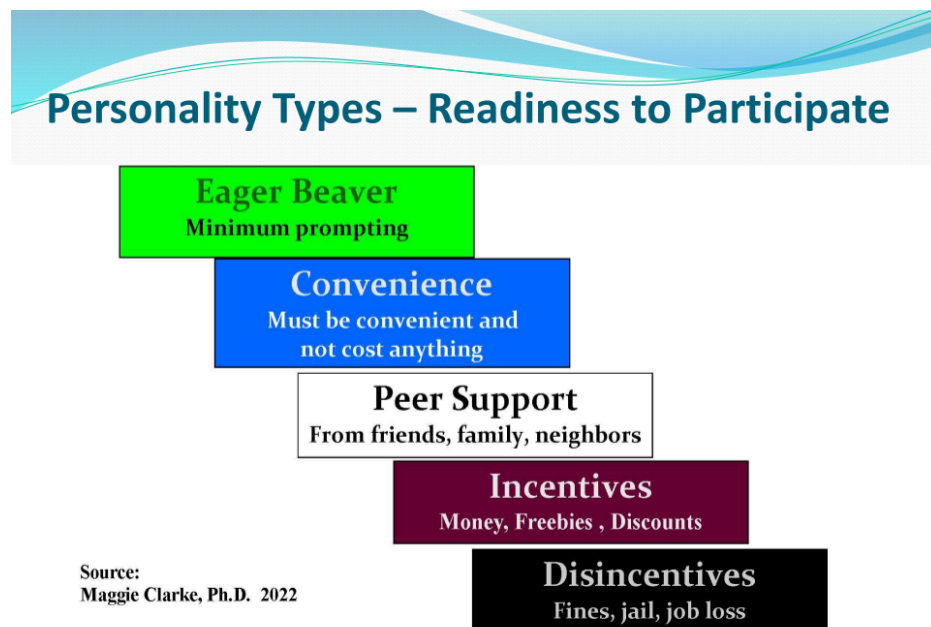
- Participation must reach or be close to 100% so that all the materials and goods are captured
- Waste prevention programs, incentives, and legislation, and a municipal reuse program to collect and process (repair, salvage, resell) reusable goods from curbside. The “other” category, where DSNY has not measured or characterized it, must be studied and infrastructure funded. Much of this “other” category is likely to be reducible via waste prevention and reuse.



Source: 2017 Waste Characterization Study

How can the City's education and outreach become more effective?

DSNY's educational materials are predominantly aimed at providing information on what to recycle and when, not why. Their approach only reaches the "eager beavers" who are already predisposed to participate. But most New Yorkers are not in this category; they might not have time, might not have much money, working a few jobs, live with people who are not into environmental preservation, etc.



9

To reach and convince the rest, the outreach programs must design a diversity of educational materials (e.g., brochures, TV, radio, internet ads, billboards, subway ads and more) that are seen with enough frequency to motivate those who are resistant and convince New Yorkers to participate. People can be resistant for various reasons: (1) lack of convenience, (2) their peers are not participating or hostile, (3) they require an incentive, usually money, or (4) they require a disincentive (e.g. fine). To reach these New Yorkers, the outreach should:

- Target at all demographics with messaging that appeals to the different groups,
- Deploy motivational ads featuring people they respect / admire / identify with who are giving testimonials in favor of participating in the recommended recycling and other zero waste behaviors
- Be consistently applied, with a varying approach so that the messaging doesn't grow stale, and seen in different locations (e.g. transit, venues, public signage, as well as via U.S. mail). Use the methods that big advertisers use (e.g. Geico, Liberty insurance and McDonalds to name a few) to reach the different target groups. Humor, cartoon characters, repetition, memorable catch phrases, peer group engagement are a few of the strategies used.
- Be specific on benefits of participation (e.g. to the environment, climate, pest control.)

[Past research conducted in NYC](#) has shown that 60% of respondents have said that they forget to recycle or are confused about what to recycle. Over 40% simply forgot. As with all advertising to get consumers to buy products, the message has to be repeated often enough to establish habits. One and done never works. This suggests that the

education and outreach strategies deployed by DSNY don't reach and motivate all New Yorkers or reach them sufficiently to establish new habits. It is vitally important for DSNY to pilot test all its educational materials and outreach methods, and not assume that everyone receives, reads, and understands such materials, overcomes negative peer pressure, and is incentivized and motivated to participate. It is necessary to fund outreach to be repeated often enough to establish habits and fund sufficient, even-handed enforcement, especially to motivate the groups that are more resistant to participate.

Fund Model Outreach to Maximize Participation

Provide Sufficient and Consistent Funding

- **Austin, TX upped participation to 85-95% by increasing outreach funding to \$5/capita/year**
 - (assuming 2.4 persons/household)
- **Seattle and San Francisco spend over \$3/capita/year; have high diversion rates**
- **New York City spends 86 cents / capita / year; has low diversion rate**
- **Every jurisdiction should calculate dollars per capita per year spent on outreach**
- **Do not cancel parts of the program (it won't save \$ long term)**
- **Do not treat recycling funding as political football**
 - Many mayors have done this in New York City

12

Past NYC budgets for education and outreach have only allocated roughly 86 cents per person per year. With such a small budget how can DSNY hope to change knowledge about the programs, improve attitudes towards participating, and achieve changed behaviors by all New Yorkers? Both Seattle and San Francisco spend over \$3/capita/year on recycling education and outreach. Austin has spent \$5/capita/year. All of these cities achieve far higher diversion rates than New York City. The recent budget cut of \$4.1 million in the already too small budget for education and outreach is a large percentage of the budget for that activity, which has been historically underfunded.

The NYC DOHMH conducted a multifaceted education and outreach program during the pandemic to educate, motivate, incentivize, penalize and otherwise convince New Yorkers to get vaccinated. They created programs to reach the eager beavers (times and locations vaccine available on a website), the convenience seekers (locations in the subway and elsewhere), those who peer influenced (deploying TV ads targeted to very specific demographic groups), those motivated by incentives (gave out \$100) and by disincentives (required vaccination to keep City jobs).

The benefit outweighed the cost by 10 to 1. Meanwhile, the City spends orders of magnitude less the \$243 million that DOHMH spent on their outreach for zero waste outreach and education.

New York City DOH Vaccine Outreach

NYC Spent over \$243 million on vaccine ads and outreach
Spends “a few” million \$ on recycling / organics outreach

DOH targeted the campaign to *all* personality types

1. Basic information, using traditional media and website for outreach
2. Many conveniently located vaccination locations in most neighborhoods (eventually)
3. Targeted peer group TV ads – pregnant woman, young black male, Jamaican guy, several others
4. \$100 incentive and Metrocards for taking vaccine
5. Vaccination required to keep jobs in public sector

Results: Every \$1 invested saved over \$10 in infection and mortality rates, productivity losses etc.

(JAMA Network Open 11/21/22)

The Example of Covid-19 Vaccinations vs. NYC recycling education campaigns: A study of the Department of Health’s campaign to overcome Covid vaccine hesitancy/resistance would be instructive since both are attempting to change behaviors in the entire population. DOH deployed outreach designed for each of the five “readiness to participate” groups and the TV ads are frequent and varied. It would be very useful to compare the individual elements of the DOH’s advertising campaign to DSNY’s campaign over a year’s time including costs and show the cost-benefit analysis as DOHMH did. The costs to public health, the environment and the climate are never quantified or taken into account when evaluating the need to allocate a sufficient budget to zero waste education and outreach. In addition, it would be instructive to measure the cost of the DOH giving incentives to participate and the effectiveness of their disincentive program (e.g. threatening jobs etc).

NYC’s motivation campaign to get people vaccinated should be very similar in structure and approach to the campaign to motivate an increase in participation in recycling. But because the two programs do not address all 5 kinds of people (less and more resistant to behavior change requests), both campaigns have not been equally successful at convincing those who are hardest to convince. Vaccinations have been made convenient, located in many places; curbside collection is the most convenient for recycling, but DSNY persists in the opt-in program and dropoffs which are only convenient for those in the most already motivated to recycle. The vaccination campaign uses a wide variety of people and their stories of learning/accepting behavior change in their TV ads to effect peer encouragement; the recycling education campaign hardly addresses this. The vaccination campaign bribes New Yorkers with transit cards, \$100, etc; the recycling campaign does not pay New Yorkers to recycle. The vaccination campaign requires vaccination to travel, to work, to go to school, etc taking jobs etc from those who refuse vaccination; the recycling campaign has a badly enforced program with low penalties for not recycling. If the City were to design, fund, and implement the multi-prong, targeted approaches for curbside collection that the

vaccination campaign has done, focusing on resistant individuals, to increase recycling participation, more would participate and costs would go down.

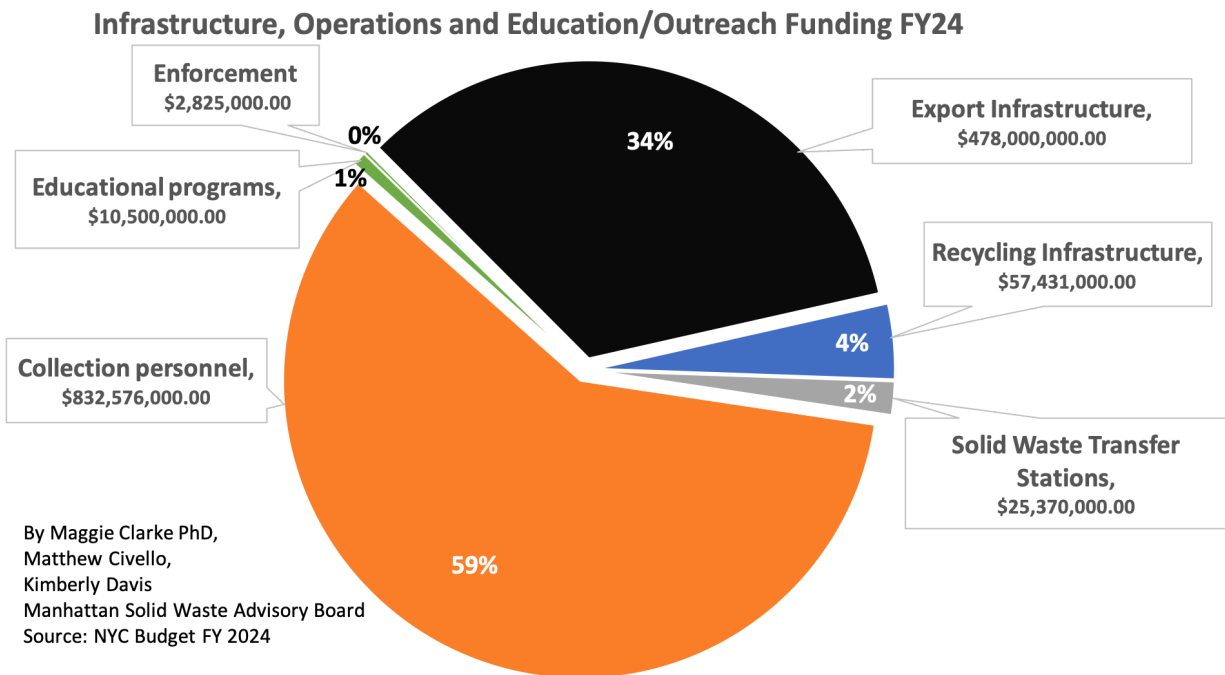
It would be instructive for the City Council to fund a study showing how much does the City's vaccination behavior change campaign cost NYC compared with the recycling education campaign and what each achieved in participation rate. How many ads have been on TV, radio, etc per month? How have the ads varied? How specific is the targeting? What is the advertising budget for each element and which media are used? How many staff are required? How much does it cost to set up and maintain vaccination locations, how much to bribe people to get vaccinated? What could be done better? We need this kind of data to design effective programs.

To ensure the effectiveness of outreach and education initiatives, they must be disseminated through diverse channels that connect with all demographics. The City expends tremendous sums on waste infrastructure export (\$465 million/year) and far less on collecting and processing recyclables and organics. While the city possesses the resources to fund all necessary infrastructure, collection/processing capacity, and personnel, progress towards eliminating waste export or achieving zero waste hinges on resident participation.

Almost all of the DSNY's \$2 billion budget is for infrastructure and personnel to operate the infrastructure. Having a tiny budget to remind and convince New Yorkers to participate in zero waste programs unnecessarily cripples the effectiveness of those costly infrastructure and personnel expenditures. The money spent on zero waste infrastructure and operations can't be utilized to the fullest extent because of the low participation. The average capture rate of 50% for recyclables has been steady for many years. It is imperative that the City catch up with the model cities' higher funding levels and adapt the effective and successful design of the education and outreach programs in these model cities. The money wasted on continually-renewed, expensive export contracts, which were initially intended as temporary, sending our recyclables, organics and reusable/repairable goods to landfills and incinerators is reckless and causes environmental damage (e.g., air pollution, carbon emissions, water pollution, secondary damage to health) created by needless transit and disposal. The exported recyclables and organics represents 60% of what is exported. Because the City won't do waste prevention/reuse characterization studies ([MSWAB has asked since 1989](#)), we don't know how many repairable and reusable items are sent away to landfills and incinerators. Keeping these now exported resources in our recycling, reuse and composting programs keeps jobs and tax revenues here in the City and would add \$ millions to revenues received from sale of commodities mined from our discards.

The 2006 Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP) made a commitment to having sufficient infrastructure for recycling and waste export. Significantly, the SWMP also recognized that waste export as unsustainable, recommending aggressive recycling diversion goals, education initiatives, and in-city processing facilities.

How does education and outreach funding compare to infrastructure, collection, and processing funding?



Seven step strategy for maximizing public participation in government programs

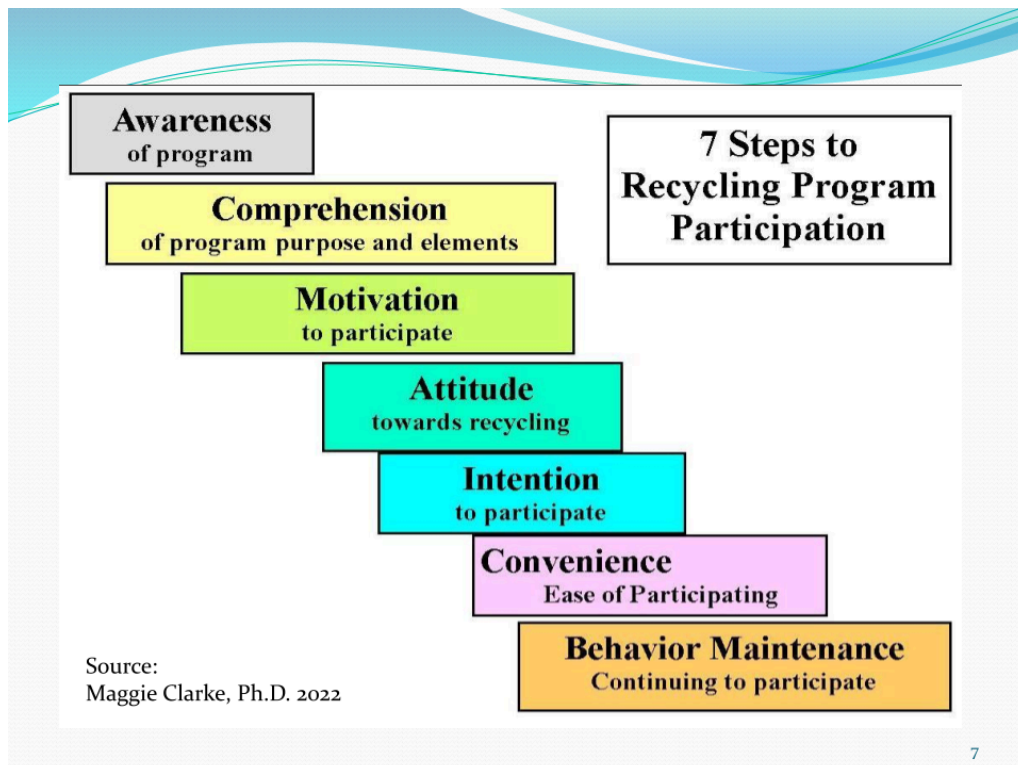
- a. There are several steps for individuals to transition from nonparticipation to participation. Ignoring any of these steps in the education/outreach process reduces participation
- b. Design collection and education with the understanding that the population has 5 components, and each needs a separate educational approach
- c. include all the demographics in pilot areas (e.g., NYCHA) because studies indicate different demographics get information on programs in different ways
- d. Give attention to having pilots in districts with the range of housing densities in the City (single-family to ultra dense high rises),
- e. Pilot test a multi-prong educational campaign program design (optimize and implement all approaches - print, media, social media, transit, peer ads, bribes, convenience, enforcement as well as optimal frequency of administration),
- f. Apply campaign elements consistently, study, tweak, repeat, and optimize (one and done doesn't work - the advertising industry spends billions and repeats and changes and targets messaging to change behavior), allocate funds for backreach to assess whether and to what extent previous outreach and messaging has been maintained.

g. Provide sufficient funding with City Council direction and oversight to DSNY to ensure that pilots, educational materials, outreach campaigns, backreach, and enforcement are designed and optimized effectively and rolled out timely.

All of these steps are described in more detail, below.

The Keys to Increasing Public Participation: Behavior change / educational programs: Important themes:

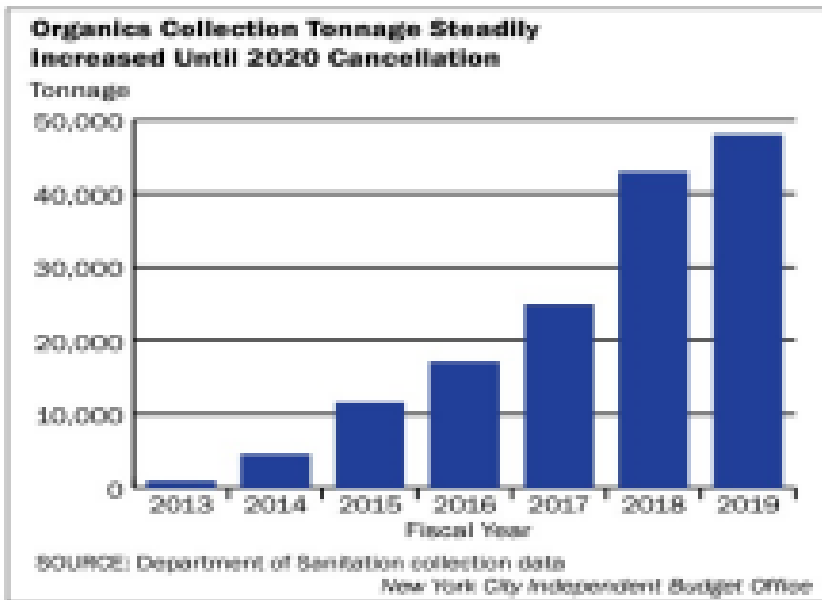
An individual changing his/her behavior involves a number of steps and educational programs need to address all of these, and programs and educational materials should be designed to succeed in getting everyone to continue to participate.



If any of these steps is not optimized, the job of the educational program is not done and participation rate will suffer. The percentage of materials captured will suffer. The City's programs have focused on the first two with its brochures and occasional media or subway campaign, but not so much on motivating or changing attitudes of those who are questioning, disinterested, harried, or resistant. And those who had a bad experience recycling will cause them to not continue to participate.

In the case of organics collection, the recent, ill-advised, opt-in system makes it difficult for most to participate (and engenders negative feelings by those who cannot get into the opt-in system). We learned that when the City creates negative feelings towards its recycling program (as it did in 2002 when glass and plastic recycling stopped for 1-2 years), the diversion rate suffers long-term. By 2001, 8 years after recycling began, the diversion rate had reached 21%. Today, over 30 years after recycling began, we are only around 18%. The SWABs and the City Council all warned the City in 2002 that canceling the recycling programs would cause permanent damage to participation rates.

Causing negative feelings against your recycling program is at odds with motivating and changing attitudes, and is the opposite of what is needed. Mayor DeBlasio made the same mistake in 2020 canceling the organics collection program as it was growing steadily, and it is likely, based on previous experience, that attitudes will sour and the participation rate will suffer long-term.

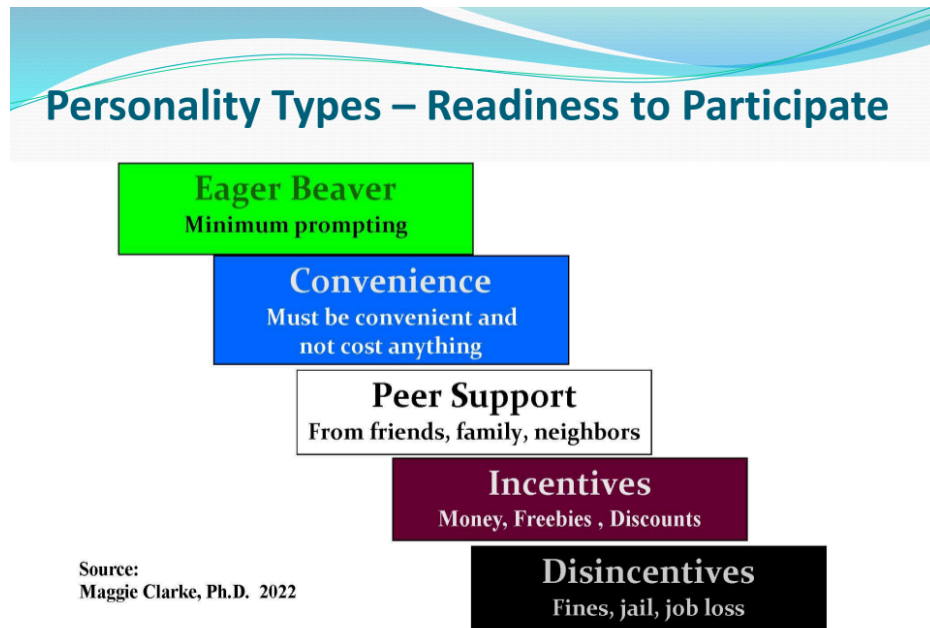


NEW YORK CITY INDEPENDENT BUDGET OFFICE 3

The universe of people is divided into 5 groups in terms of readiness to participate. To be effective, all educational programs and materials must be targeted to achieve high participation rates in all of these 5 groups. Each requires a different set of educational and programmatic approaches to reach them successfully. These groups are:

1. those who are eager to do the behavior change,
2. those who will do it if it's convenient and won't cost them time or money,
3. those who will do it if their peers (friends, family, neighbors) are doing it,
4. those who will only do it if they receive monetary incentives, and
5. those who will only do it if it will cost them (e.g., money, job, freedom) not to do it.

Readiness to participate



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A one size fits all approach, such as a single brochure, will not work except to those inclined to participate (group 1). Those who are more resistant need to be reached with additional targeted outreach, marketing and incentives. If we are only reaching those most ready to participate, we should not be surprised that the capture rate is rarely above 50%.

If we are serious about zero waste, participation rate must also be near 100%. If we are not planning ways to achieve that, we will not reach zero waste. There are west coast cities that have achieved near and over 75% diversion rates. We should be learning from them. The Mayor recently said he wanted to learn from other cities (like Chicago / crime). More details on model cities are described below.

These are the five groups and what is needed to get them to participate:

Eager Beavers/Early Adopters: Tell them what to do, and how to do it, and if it's possible, they will participate. Not so much effort is needed to convince them.

Those who require Convenience: For recycling participation the most convenient collection design is curbside collection on a sufficiently frequent basis. The current curbside program collection is only once a week, where in the past there were multiple pick ups per week of putrescible mixed with other discards. Once a week pick up deterred many from participating. Other cities remove garbage pickups when they add organics pickups. Convenience also means that the program has to be easy to follow. It has been shown that dropoff programs are not nearly as effective as curbside since a fraction will not inconvenience themselves to use dropoff locations. In New York City, where many do not have cars, the convenience factor is more important. Voluntary or Opt-in programs will also not optimize participation because effort is required to register. Mandatory curbside, citywide for recyclables was automatic; organics should be treated the same way.

Those who need Peer support: To participate, people in this group need to be assured that members of their demographic group, neighborhood, family and friends are participating. Advertising needs to be targeted to these groups and neighborhoods. In the NYC Covid vaccine campaign, TV ads featured people of different ethnic and demographic groups, including various immigrants, pregnant mothers, young men, among others who changed their mind about getting the vaccine and explained why they now wanted to participate (get the vaccine). NYC's recycling program would greatly benefit from funding to create a similar, multifaceted campaign. Ad campaigns have infrequently been used by DSNY. One memorable TV recycling ad in the late 1990s included Mayor Giuliani and Yankees manager Joe Torre – opinion leaders for some. DSNY should have a budget for similar marketing campaigns to educate and motivate New Yorkers on why recycling is important.

Those motivated by Incentives: As resistance to behavior change increases, mere knowledge, convenience, and peer acceptance of a program are insufficient to convince the last two groups. In the Covid vaccine campaigns, free metrocards and even \$100 cash were offered to members of this group. It worked to get many vaccinated. Nothing has been offered to incentivize participation in recycling in New York City. In many thousands of cities and towns, the equitable system of billing (Pay as you Throw), incentivizes residents to participate by charging for waste management based on the weight of garbage discarded, while allowing recyclables to be picked up for free. As recently as a couple of years ago the City had planned to study “Save as you throw” and even had RRS subcontracted to SERA (the experts in Pay as you throw) lined up to work on it, and then the City suddenly pulled out. We never learned why. In 2000 USEPA Region II put on a day-long conference in the City, in part, to encourage NYC to use Pay as you throw, to no avail. In 1997 a \$250,000 grant from NYSERDA was about to be awarded to independent researchers, to build and test in NYC, infrastructure to measure the weight of garbage using scales and barcode reading systems to be installed in chutes and studied in apartment buildings. NYSERDA knew that the technology was likely sound, but needed to know that there would be a market for such a PAYT infrastructure for apartment buildings, so they asked DSNY to attend a meeting. Unfortunately, DSNY would not, and the grant was never awarded. USEPA has data going back decades demonstrating how PAYT is the single most effective means of incentivizing program participation. The City should be researching how to accomplish Pay As You Throw in apartment buildings and phasing it in, at first in single-family neighborhoods and eventually to more densely packed housing districts.

Those Most Resistant/Hard to reach: When incentives don't work, then the only thing left to employ is providing sufficient disincentives for those continuing to not adopt the new behavior. In the vaccine campaign, we saw people losing their jobs. DSNY's enforcement program must have adequate funding and have oversight by the City Council to equitably and effectively enforce its mandatory recycling participation requirement. The City Council should increase the fines for continued noncompliance to increase the disincentive for not complying with mandates. These fines should be based on the number of residents (e.g. fines much higher for apartment building owners). With half the recyclables still in the trash (and some buildings not even providing recycling options), it should be very easy to find bags of garbage with recyclables. Fines is the only mechanism that the City has at its disposal to disincentivize non-participation. Apartment buildings should be fined as often as single-family homes and universities and other institutions. Enforcement records and fines (who/when/how much) should be

available online through NYC Open Data and in studies so that all can see how effective the program is and how it needs to be improved. Adequate funding must be provided to allow for increased enforcement.

To be effective, educational programs need to reach all demographic groups.

Different demographics get their information from different sources. Some read (brochures, newspaper articles, websites). Some get their info from TV and radio. Others get info from their children learning it in school and bringing it home. Some hear from friends and neighbors. Some get info from subway ads and billboards. Some use Google. And as the advertising industry shows us (e.g Liberty Mutual, Geico), repetition and variety of the message using different approaches is what works, not one and done. DSNY must not only have adequate funding but should design and implement a multi-approach, consistently applied, targeted approaches to education. Since DSNY's approach usually focuses on print and having information on its website (not a convenient means of imparting information to the vast majority who are not seeking it out), the capture rate is only half effective, only reaching those who are most interested in recycling to start with. Funding should also be provided to conduct more research/survey studies to get to know more about NYC residents' preexisting attitudes regarding recycling and the impact of barriers to participation on them. Decades of chronic under-funding has caused great damage to the program's participation.

How much does the City need to spend to achieve an effective public education/ participation program, and what does it need to spend the money on?

In order to fill the trucks and make the curbside organics collection economic, we need to increase the participation rate significantly as was done for the recycling program in the 1990s.

Studies. First, DSNY needs funding to conduct more survey studies to get to know the City's population and its inclination to participate in recycling better. Academic surveys with significant sample size and studies have been conducted in the 1990s and 2000s in New York City (2 pages filled out in person) and there are published reports on them. One of many facts learned in ¹ 2004-2005 is that 60% of the respondents didn't recycle every time because they either forgot or were confused. This is the fault of inadequate education. The City's education program will ² continue to fail without adequate funding to strategically design a program that will succeed in addressing any and all barriers. DSNY's education program has failed to achieve more than a 50% capture rate. Since New York City's programs are only reaching those most ready to participate, we should not be surprised that the capture rate is rarely above 50% .

¹ [Optimizing recycling in all of New York City's neighborhoods: Using GIS to develop the REAP index for improved recycling education, awareness, and participation](#)

² [Optimizing Recycling in All the Neighborhoods of New York City: The Roles of Demographics, Education, Barriers, and Program Changes](#)

Education Pilots. Once the needs are assessed having studied New Yorkers' knowledge, attitudes and behaviors, different educational approaches, alone and in combination, should be tested in different neighborhoods. Pilots would test various mixtures of educational literature, media, and outreach approaches. This requires funding. Without this testing we are just guessing what will be effective in motivating

everyone to participate.

Funding of educational materials design and consistent outreach campaigns.

Historically insufficient funding has been a hallmark of New York City's recycling education and outreach since the beginning due to misunderstanding the role and importance of participation in reducing costs and lack of political will to have a high participation goal. In the 1990s recycling was threatened with cancellation more than once on the basis of the per ton cost of collection being so high. In order to fill the trucks and make the economics work, everyone needs to participate all the time. In order to have that, there must be sufficient budget for targeted, ongoing outreach.

Compare New York City to other cities' effective curbside recycling and organics collection programs.

How can we know how much funding is needed to address all the types of people and housing density districts? We can compare collection routes in New York City with other jurisdictions that have the same types and range of housing density districts. There are many that fit the bill. It is easy to envision a small district of ultra dense housing in both San Francisco and New York City. San Francisco has had a 3 bin program (trash, mixed recyclables and organics) for well over a decade, sending the latter to a vast composting site in the Valley and shipping compost to the vineyards up north. If the demographics are similar in those districts, the programs should be similar. We should be looking at those large jurisdictions that are successfully diverting a large majority of recyclables and organics from disposal. If there are collection truck routes in dense urban areas, smaller apartment districts, brownstone districts and single family homes, we can learn lessons from those. It's best to compare the efficiency and design of NYC programs with successful, zero waste cities that have the same range of housing density districts as NYC (ultra high rise, mid-, low- level apartments, brownstones, duplexes, single family), for example San Francisco, Seattle, Toronto, Vancouver.

Model Cities for Recycling education maximizing participation

If we are serious about reaching zero waste, we need to plan ways to target, in program and other initiatives, and capture and appropriately recover close to 100% of what we discard; participation rate must also be near 100%. There are model cities that have achieved near and over 75% diversion rates and are aggressively working towards zero waste. We should be learning from them. The Mayor recently said he wanted to learn from other cities (e.g., Chicago / crime).

We can study the stellar example of Austin, TX which succeeded in achieving 85-95% participation by increasing funding for educational programs to \$1/household/month (which is roughly \$5/person/year). This was done in combination with a Pay as you throw program, USEPA endorsed, as the best incentive program to motivate residents to dispose of less and reduce, reuse and recycle more. We should be striving to do likewise. Underfunding of recycling participation enhancement programs over many years has kept our diversion rate below 20% and roughly half the recyclables are exported as trash.

As of 2019 both San Francisco and Seattle spent over \$3/person/year on education programs and staff and have achieved far greater diversion rates than NYC, closing in on zero waste. They have collected organics and recyclables for many years and divert most material from disposal. NYC, by comparison, spends 86 cents/person per year.

(Interviews conducted by Manhattan Borough President's office in 2021) These two cities have 70- 80% diversion rates compared with ours (17-18%). You get what you pay for.

Pay As You Throw (Incentive) - a wise path for New York City

Unlike their counterparts in many thousands of other localities large and small, New York City residents do not pay directly for garbage collection. Everyone pays the same no matter how much they dispose of. The cost is buried in the tax structure. It's an inequitable system that does not reward conservation behaviors. New York City was recently planning to spend \$1 million to study their branded "Save As You Throw", a billing system which would financially reward prevention, reuse, and recycling behaviors. Since the 1990s USEPA has recommended this system as the single most effective method to incentivize public participation. The first step must be to fund the delayed study of Pay as You Throw, design and conduct pilots for different housing density neighborhoods, and then roll it out in the single-family areas, gradually moving to more densely populated neighborhoods.

But how do we optimize operations to increase participation?

The keys to solving the empty trucks problem is (1) to structure educational approaches and (2) collection program design that will work for all and (3) ensuring there is enough funding to implement these every year. To maximize collection efficiency, the capture rate must be significantly increased from the current 50% for recycling and 1% for organics.

The current organics collection program is also uneconomic because the education and enforcement are significantly underfunded and the basics of a successful educational program following the principles of behavior science and motivation are not being followed. How should education and enforcement programs and pilots be designed to maximize participation and how much should be allocated, understanding what constitutes a successful set of approaches?

Now the City Council and new Mayor need to remediate the damage done from various stops and starts and generate positive feelings towards recycling. Universal curbside collection and maximized convenience as well as sufficient, well-designed education and outreach for the recycling/organics program are required for maximized participation and therefore, optimal cost/benefit for recycling/organics collection. The MSWAB offers its expertise to review draft educational materials and program design, and partner with DSNY on perfecting these as we did prior to 1993.

Waste Prevention and Reuse

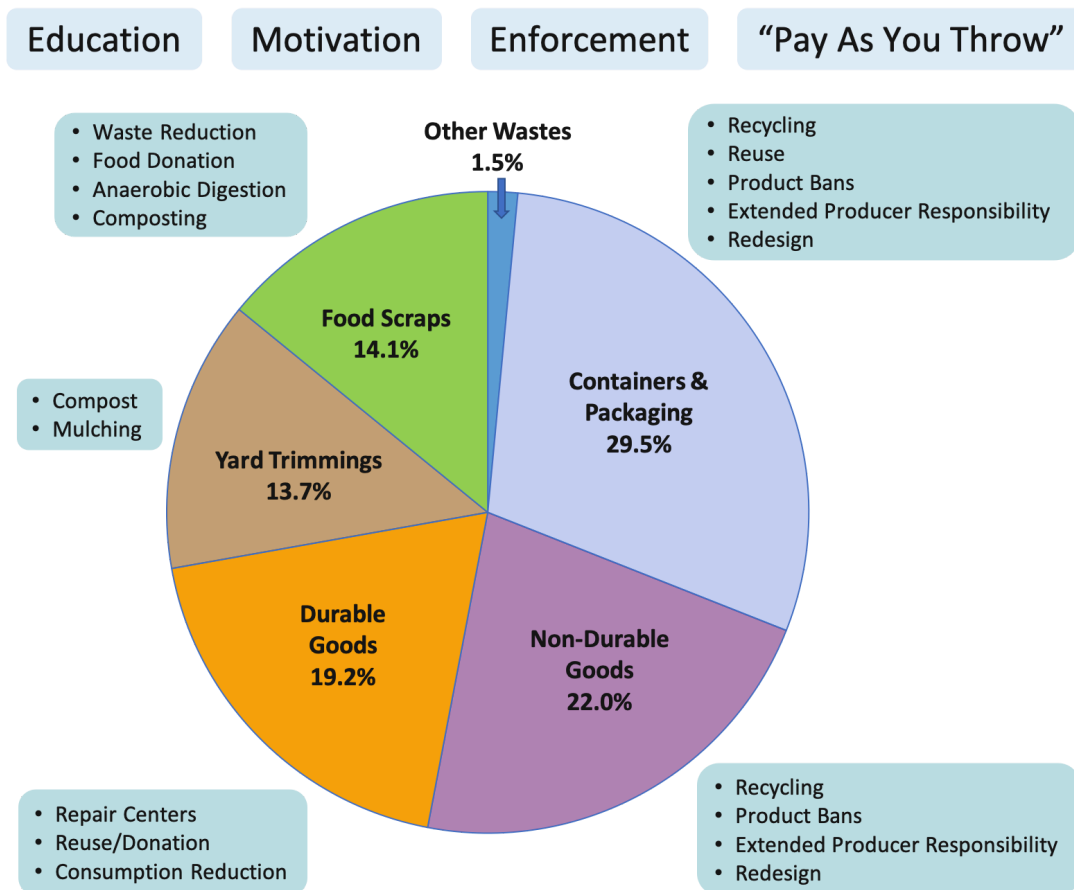
Just as it is necessary to fund education and outreach adequately in order to achieve zero waste, funding is also needed for operations of waste prevention and reuse programs and reuse infrastructure, both of which are negligible currently.

The goal of a zero waste system is to have all discards targeted to at least one zero waste program, incentive/disincentive. For example, the durable part of the waste stream includes consumer goods designed to last over 3 years, and therefore, reuse, repair, refurbishment, etc are all possible programs.

The City expends \$465 million / year and increasing for export of discards to landfill and

incineration, and orders of magnitude less on collecting and processing recyclables and organics. Funding for programs, outreach and education, and infrastructure for reuse and waste prevention are insignificant compared with the vigorous and extensive funding for and operations of the recycling programs. Reuse is not established or even contemplated as a municipal program to supplement private efforts (e.g. yard sales, consignment stores) . For recycling and organics, the City has the resources to fund all the infrastructure, collection/processing capacity, and personnel even if recycling’s capture rate were to reach 100%, but if many City residents don’t participate, the City can’t make progress in eliminating export or achieving zero waste.

Zero Waste Solutions



Source: Municipal Solid Waste in the United States, 2009 Facts and Figures, USEPA Office of Solid Waste, EPA530-R-10-012, December 2010. Re-expressed by Maggie Clarke and DeNeile Cooper, 2019

My name is Zhenia Nagorny and I have been co-leading the Compost Committee and Food Scrap Drop off at the Maple Street Community Garden in the Flatbush neighborhood of Brooklyn since 2016.

When Covid hit and the city abandoned plans of expanding the brown bins program and closed all food scrap drop offs at markets and other FSDO sites, we, at MSCG, knew that we did not have the capacity to process everyone's scraps so we reached out to Big Reuse.

I remember that beautiful Autumn day in September when Gil Lopez and Mary Rose Robbins came by and told us that they'd be happy to partner with us and take all our food scraps from our busiest day (Saturday) and haul them to the Gowanus location. This was the only reason we were able to stay open during the winter. We have been collecting data for this very important occasion so here it is: in 2021-2023, we were collecting anywhere from 23,000-26,000 lbs of food scraps per year and having a volunteer pool of over 100 dedicated community residents each season who were grateful to be working together, educating each other and helping to divert so much organic waste from going to landfills.

Due to the unexpected and senseless budget cuts proposed by Mayor Adams and Commissioner Tisch, Big Reuse was forced to scale down to a fraction of its operation and could no longer pick up our food scraps. We, at the Maple Street Community Garden, were devastated by this unexpected decision by the Mayor. We were forced to close on December 20, 2023 for the first time in 3 years and our community came out to share their many feelings of disappointment, sadness, dismay and more questions than we had answers to. Many of them were collected on our [Instagram page](#) for the Save the Compost Coalition.

Community Composting was how me and my committee co-lead, Tim Nottage (both of us were certified as Master Composters by the New York Compost Project) learned, collaborated and expanded the garden's compost operation, which includes volunteers, capacity, education. We've seen hundreds of volunteers come through our gates and help in processing, educating, collecting data and listening to the needs of our community.

And you know what they say? Keep community composting in our communities. Not everyone has access to brown bins or the smart bins that are posted around the neighborhood. Also, we want finished compost back in our communities. Our garden committee, for example, greatly relies on the compost that gets delivered by Big Reuse a few times a year.

And we agree with them 1000%!

Here are the facts about community composting programs:

- Community Composting makes up .4% or \$7 million of DSNY's overall annual budget of \$1.7 billion, and .006% of NYC's total annual budget of \$112 billion in FY2022.
- This initiative employs 115 people in local green jobs.
- Community Composting partners have composted over 8 million lbs. of organic waste at seven different processing sites.
- They have educated thousands of New Yorkers, many of our own compost volunteers, and certified them as Master Composters. Majority are inspired to take the knowledge, skills and dedication to sustainability into their own communities to make local change there.
- They have empowered New Yorkers to volunteer and engage in their community green spaces.

- All of the finished compost is distributed to community gardens, parks, and thousands of New Yorkers through public events.
- Used to care for Street Trees, Parks, and our city's urban landscape across all boroughs.
- These processes remediate soil, sustain environmental impact, and engage communities.

On behalf of the Maple Street Community Garden, our volunteers and our community, we ask that funds be relocated to support these important programs and partnerships now, while the momentum is still strong. To defund one of the most successful compost initiatives in the country is something I still cannot comprehend and I stand with my community to demand the necessary funds to support green jobs and community compost programs for all.



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

March 14, 2024

Good afternoon, Chair Abreu, former Chair Nurse, members of the Committee and dedicated staff.

My name is Eric A. Goldstein and I am the NYC Environment Director at the Natural Resources Defense Council (“NRDC”). As you know, NRDC is a not-for-profit legal and scientific organization active on a wide range of environmental health, natural resource protection and quality-of-life issues across the nation, around the world and here in New York City, where we have had our main offices since our founding in 1970. Among NRDC’s long term regional priorities has been solid waste reform. Our overarching goal is to transform New York’s waste disposal practices from primary reliance on landfilling and incineration to making waste prevention, composting, recycling and equity the cornerstones of trash policy in the Empire State.

Thank you, Chair Abreu, for your leadership and for the opportunity to testify today regarding the Adam Administration’s preliminary budget for the Department of Sanitation.

At the outset, we are very excited about the Sanitation Department’s containerization initiative. It has great potential to result in a major improvement in street cleanliness and a major decline in the city’s rat population. We congratulate Commissioner Jessica Tisch on moving this program forward. And we urge the Council to continue to fully fund the containerization conversion and to carefully review the results of the initial pilot efforts now underway.

Second, we also support full funding to restore and expand street litter basket collections and illegal dumping camera enforcement. Street cleanliness and appearance make a difference in the quality of life all New Yorkers experience. This too seems like a budget initiative on which the Council and the Commissioner agree. We urge the Council to provide sufficient funding to ensure that all neighborhoods, regardless of income level, receive the benefits of enhanced litter basket placement and service – something that has not always been the case in the past.

NRDC’s most important point today is an urgent plea for the Council to restore full

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funding for community composting. This means 7 million dollars in funding for the New York Compost Project and funding -- from whichever pot it comes from -- for processing facilities for the Lower East Side Ecology Center and Big Reuse. The non-profit organizations that have long operated community composting services are unheralded gems, performing a great public service for New York. And their work is essential to the success of the Sanitation Department's entire curbside organics collection program.

The men and women who work for the Sanitation Department are doing a hard job with great dedication. And the Department is itself in the midst of a potentially historic evolution. But, in terms of implementing the composting program, the Department cannot do it alone. At the last hearing of this Committee, a spokesperson for the Sanitation Department said, in essence, that these non-profit community composting groups did a terrific job, but they are no longer needed now that the Department has begun curbside organics collections, so thank you very much. That sentiment is ignorant, short-sighted and dead wrong.

Curbside composting will never achieve its full potential without the work of these non-profit organizations -- GrowNYC, Lower East Side Ecology Center, Big Reuse, Earth Matter and the borough-based botanic gardens. These groups are providing the education and training of residents, school kids, and even businesspeople that are necessary for wide participation needed to make the curbside program cost-effective. The early data from the first year of implementation of curbside organics collections in Queens illustrate this point. According to a just-released analysis by Baruch College Professor Samantha McBride, in calendar year 2023, only 4.3 percent of available organics were collected for composting or anaerobic digestion from residential collections in Queens. D.S.N.Y. should embrace these non-profit groups that are so experienced in teaching, training and motivating New Yorkers to participate in composting activities, rather than take a go-it-alone approach. Working together, the Department and these community-based organizations to turn our city's program into a national model!

Meanwhile, the Parks Department needs to wake up and extend the license for the nationally honored Big Reuse non-profit's Long Island City site beyond June 30th, rather than seek to convert that solid waste jewel into a parking lot for Department vehicles. Really.

Two final points:

Regarding commercial waste zone implementation, we support full funding for implementation of all 20 zones by the end of 2025, at the latest. This includes money for implementation, enforcement and reporting. Transparency is especially important here. The Council and the public need assurances that the contracts being awarded are consistent with and supportive of the environmental, labor protection and environmental justice goals that led the Council to enact the commercial waste zone statute -- Local Law 199 of 2019 -- in the first place.

Finally, we urge the Council to ensure sufficient funding for the timely completion of the city's state-mandated 2026 Solid Waste Management Plan. We understand funding for the Solid Waste Management Plan consulting study and public engagement process was eliminated in the

first round of PEG cuts. We hope those funds will be restored. And while we're at it, we encourage the Council to inquire about implementation of projects that were to have been undertaken pursuant to the Solid Waste Management Plan of 2026. One task is to secure a serious investigation of using the city's recently rebuilt Marine Transfer Stations to handle a portion of the commercial waste stream that is currently being routed mostly through a handful of communities that have for too long been overburdened with a disproportionate share of waste facilities. A second matter in the 2006 plan envisioned the use of new or revamped facilities at Gansevoort and West 59th to help process additional waste by barge directly out of Manhattan. Both 2006 plan strategies have strong justifications in terms of environmental justice. And both long-over measures warrant a dusting off and timely re-examination.

Thank you for your attention. We appreciate the leadership of Speaker Adams on these issues, and stand ready to work with you, your staff, and the Adams Administration to advance our mutual solid waste reform goals.



**Testimony of Alia Soomro, Deputy Director for New York City Policy
New York League of Conservation Voters
City Council Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management
FY25 Preliminary Budget Hearing
March 14, 2024**

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

One of NYLCV's top policy priorities is getting us closer to our zero waste by 2030 goals. Food waste is the third largest source of New York City's overall emissions according to the City's [integrated NYC Greenhouse Gas Inventory](#), after buildings and transportation. Twenty percent of New York City's greenhouse gas emissions come from household food consumption. When food waste is sent to landfills, which are disproportionately located in low income and communities of color, organic waste decomposes to create methane gas, a powerful greenhouse gas more than twenty times more potent than carbon dioxide. Neighborhoods near polluting facilities like waste transfer stations and incinerators have higher rates of pollution, which cause disproportionately higher cases of asthma, cancer, and other health issues and compound already existing environmental and racial inequities.

Due to these environmental injustices—which are only being compounded with the impacts of climate change—the City needs to be doing everything in its power to continue moving towards organic waste recycling, including allocating robust funding for these programs. We appreciate that both the Adams Administration and City Council have prioritized zero waste initiatives, however, our City has a long way to go when it comes to implementation, funding, education, and outreach to achieve our zero waste goals and improve our quality of life.

Composting

First and most importantly, [NYLCV stands with advocates](#) calling for the restoration of the community composting budget of \$7 million, plus capital funds for build-outs of the replacement facilities planned for the LES Ecology Center and Big Reuse mid-scale composting facilities. Additionally, NYLCV urges the Administration to restore the original rollout of March 2024 for the residential curbside organics program in Staten Island and the Bronx—a borough too often neglected. It is fair to say that with [the stop and go of previous composting initiatives](#), New Yorkers are wary that this program will not effectively roll out as originally planned if the original time frame is delayed. Furthermore, the community composting budget is a drop in the bucket compared to many other City programs, despite having a profound positive impact on many

communities and residents. According to the Save Our Compost Coalition, the \$7 million spent on community composting is 0.4% of DSNY's overall annual budget of \$1.7 billion and 0.006% of NYC's total annual budget of \$112.4 billion in FY2022. We believe that the community composting program can and should [complement](#) the City's residential organics program, especially when it comes to workforce development, and outreach and education to spark behavior changes.

Moreover, [DSNY stated in their February 27 Council testimony](#) that they are on track to bring curbside compost collection to every DOE school by the end of this school year. Yet, [according to GrowNYC](#), the GrowNYC Zero Waste Schools Program's \$2.5 million budget for education and outreach to schools has been cut in the Mayor's Preliminary Budget. This program is the educational arm of a partnership between DSNY and New York City Public Schools to provide operational training and student engagement for NYC public schools for recycling and curbside compost compliance. We urge the City to restore GrowNYC's Zero Waste Schools' \$2.5 million budget so schools can fully and successfully participate in the curbside composting program and see DSNY's goal through.

NYLCV was deeply disappointed in the Mayor's November Financial Plan Update for FY24 and the Preliminary Budget released in January. The proposed budget cuts directly undermine our City's climate and zero waste goals outlined in [PlaNYC](#), in addition to the Mayor's own quality of life goals, a theme he continues to champion. While we understand the financial constraints the City faces, with the climate crisis growing more urgent by the day, this is no time for New York City to cut funding for zero waste initiatives. We appreciate that the Administration has already [reversed](#) some of the November cuts, and with higher-than-anticipated tax revenues, we hope the City restores the community composting program funding, and allocates robust funding over the next several years not only for operations and staffing, but also for outreach and education in multiple languages, and enforcement of the curbside organics program.

Commercial and Residential Organic Waste Infrastructure

NYLCV has long advocated for the equitable siting of regional capacity for processing residential and commercial organic waste, including continuing to invest in more City-owned composting facilities and community composting programs, to the extent feasible, marine transfer stations to ultimately avoid the use of landfills and incinerators. Moreover, NYLCV believes that the City can do better when it comes to incentivizing and enforcing commercial organics. In accordance with Local Law 146 of 2013, DSNY is required to evaluate whether sufficient regional processing capacity exists to accommodate the expansion in the proposed LL146 rules. To that end, if the City improves and expands commercial organic recycling, we would like to stress the importance of siting more regional processing capacity for organic waste sufficient for handling future increases. It is imperative that the emissions reductions achieved from diverting this waste are not diluted by transporting it long distances, and does not compound poor air quality in environmental justice communities by siting additional capacity that will increase truck traffic in these already overburdened districts. Lastly, the City should ensure that small businesses and large businesses alike have access to recycling and food donation programs that are accessible, easy to use, transparent, and which would result in cost savings

compared to landfilling and incineration. We echo [DSNY's February 27 testimony](#) calling for the Council to consider updating Local Law 146 of 2013 that would allow DSNY to have source separation at all commercial establishments, in line with the residential curbside program.

We also urge the City to continue taking action to upgrade the City's wastewater treatment plants' digesters to process organic commercial and residential waste into renewable energy to reduce local pollution and help address food waste, including exploring the feasibility of public-private partnerships. DEP should make clear and public what its intentions and plans are for anaerobic digestion capacity at its WWTPs and what quality of materials they will take.

Containerization

NYLCV appreciates DSNY's [recent announcement](#) about the rollout of waste containerization in CB9 in Manhattan and its partnership with Council Member Abreu. We urge the City to continue making strides on the containerization front and allocate the requisite funding for the rollout of this program, including long-term funding for Automated Side-Loading Trucks. In the future, NYLCV hopes the City learns from the pilot in CB9 to implement and fully fund a permanent citywide waste containerization program on our streets to streamline waste and prevent buildup on sidewalks and trashrooms. Providing permanent, sealed containers throughout the City to hold trash bags prior to collection can mitigate the issues of the bags being opened by rodents and will create a cleaner city. Getting trash off the sidewalk also creates more opportunities for beneficial use of public space like bioswales, bike corrals, sidewalk seating, bus shelters, and pedestrian plazas.

Commercial Waste Zones and Truck Electrification

We also call on the City to provide continued funding for the electrification of light-, medium-, and heavy-duty DSNY and commercial sanitation trucks. Additionally, the City must continue working with DCAS, utility companies, and industry professionals to ensure adequate charging infrastructure is installed and available for sanitation trucks and give extra consideration for CWZ carters with the most aggressive plans to do so. Requiring cleaner fleets as part of the City's move to CWZs is also the best way to bring measurable air quality improvements to neighborhoods that house a disproportionately high number of haulers and waste processing facilities. It is not good enough to require citywide emissions reductions. We should also strive for more localized benefits.

Conclusion

As our City continues to experience climate change on a regular basis, with the most vulnerable communities impacted disproportionately, we cannot risk cutting funding for vital environmental programs that are designed to reduce emissions and improve public health. While the City Council and Administration made strides over the past year prioritizing zero waste bills and policies, they are only as effective as the funding and political support they receive. NYLCV stands with advocates calling upon the Administration to restore cuts to community composting programs and LES Ecology Center and Big Reuse facilities, and prioritize the original rollout for curbside composting in the Bronx and Staten Island.

N Y L P I

**JUSTICE THROUGH
COMMUNITY POWER**

**Comments Submitted by Justin Wood, Director of Policy of
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest
to the New York City Department of Sanitation
on March 14, 2023
Regarding the Preliminary Sanitation Budget for FY2025**

Good afternoon, my name is Justin Wood and I am the Director of Policy at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI). Thank you to Chair Abreu and members of the committee for the opportunity to testify today.

In this budget process, we call on the Council to continue defending vital city services and investments from budget cuts and flatlining. The New York City Independent Budget Office (IBO) has projected a budget surplus that is \$2.8 billion higher than the Mayor's Office of Budget and Management (OMB). IBO also estimates \$2.4 billion less in spending on asylum seekers than what is reflected in the Administration's estimates across 2024 and 2025. Similarly, the Council's own forecast shows substantially more revenue than estimated by OMB. **Now is not the time to retreat from our city's public health, equity, and sustainability goals.**

For the Sanitation sector, this means not only defending but rapidly expanding and improving programs and infrastructure intended to achieve the City's goal of zero waste to landfill, and to make our sprawling solid waste system more equitable, safe, and sustainable.

With each passing year the negative impacts of climate change hit more New Yorkers harder and more frequently. Greenhouse gas emissions disposing and transporting solid waste sector are estimated to make up 12% of New York State's economy-wide emissions – a huge amount roughly equivalent to the state's entire electricity generation sector.

And yet New York City continues to spend almost half a billion dollars annually to export approximately 82% of municipal solid waste to landfills and incinerators outside the city according to DSNY's latest figures, falling far behind leading cities that have implemented comprehensive, common-sense waste reduction and recycling programs.

To change course, we hope to work closely with the Council, DSNY, and City Hall to achieve the following goals:

1. Commit and Fully Fund to an Aggressive Plan to Achieve Zero Waste and Equity in the upcoming 20-year Solid Waste Management Plan.

We are concerned that DSNY's budget for a consultant to undertake community engagement and planning for the Solid Waste Management Plan due in 2026 was eliminated in the winter PEG cuts, and that the Department itself has not yet announced a plan for public engagement, planning, or budgeting for the SWMP on its own website.¹

Some of the major waste equity goals of the current 2006 Solid Waste Management Plan remain unfulfilled and without financing, including the construction of the Gansevoort Marine Transfer Station intended to move recyclable materials from Manhattan to Brooklyn via barge, and a program to accept commercial waste at DSNY's existing marine and rail transfer stations. Both of which would reduce polluting and dangerous diesel truck trips from environmental justice communities in Brooklyn, the Bronx, Queens, and New Jersey.

We hope to work with the Council and the Department on development of a comprehensive SWMP that creates a clear path to achieving the statewide emissions reductions mandates of the state's Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) and the City's zero waste goals.

2. Fully and robustly implement Local Law 199 of 2019 (Commercial Waste Zones)

Until the Commercial Waste Zones system mandated by Local Law 199 of 2019 is fully and implemented citywide, the sprawling commercial waste sector continues to operate without transparency as to how much business waste is generated, landfilled, incinerated, recycled, and composted while a communities in the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Queens continue to bear the safety and air pollution burden of having three quarters of the City's privately managed waste trucked through clusters of private transfer stations.²

We are concerned that DSNY has announced a timeframe to implement only a single one of twenty zones and has not yet published details including the awardees' waste reduction and recycling plans, worker and public safety plans, expected VMT reductions, and which recycling, transfer, and composting facilities awardees will utilize. **The clear legislative intent of Local Law is a citywide transition to an efficient, safe, sustainable, and accountable system and we must not treat the rollout as a "pilot" that will fail to achieve the necessary scale to transform the broken commercial waste system.**

¹ <https://www.nyc.gov/site/dsny/resources/reports/solid-waste-management-plan.page>

² https://www.nyc.gov/assets/dsny/downloads/resources/reports/waste-equity-law/2022-and-2023/LL-152-Report_WasteEquity_2023_Final.pdf

DSNY's FY25 budget must commit ample staff and resources to enforcement of commercial and organics rules to ensure businesses are properly source-separating recyclable materials, food waste, and unsold food for donation or composting, and that the private waste industry is providing transparent, easily accessible, and affordable recycling composting services to all businesses covered by the law.

3. Fully Fund a Multi-Sector, Aggressive Public Education Campaign on Organics Recycling, Waste Reduction, and Recycling Rules, including support for Community Composting.

The simultaneous implementation of curbside organic waste recycling mandated by Local Law 85 of 2023 and the transition to a commercial waste zone system mandated by Local Law 199 of 2019 creates a singular opportunity to synchronize, coordinate, and rationalize recycling practices and messaging across the residential and commercial sectors.

We are deeply concerned by delays to the implementation of both programs proposed in the proposed executive budget, and by cuts to community-based composting programs and facilities, which serve an invaluable outreach and education role while creating good, local green jobs.

Public messaging around recycling and waste reduction must be sustained, accessible, and ubiquitous, and hard experience shows that the City cannot take a haphazard start-stop approach to recycling programs and expect them to succeed.

We therefore call on the Council to ensure that annual budgets going forward include ample staffing and resources to ensure that students, building owners, homeowners, business owners, customers of commercial establishments, and employees citywide receive consistent and accessible messaging and education on how to properly recycle organic food and yard waste and how to reduce waste in New Yorkers' homes, workplaces, public spaces, and commercial establishments.

4. Invest in Composting Capacity and Waste Equity

Finally, we recommend that processing of source-separated organics prioritize local and regional composting solutions over anaerobic digestion and anaerobic co-digestion in processing. We further recommend that the City take steps to make residential and commercial compost collection as efficient as possible, and to avoid any increases to truck traffic in overburdened communities, including:

- Preserving and expanding community composting sites across the City including parks and City-owned sites;
- Investing in new aerobic composting facilities similar to DSNY's Staten Island facility that can process high volumes of source-separated residential and commercial organic waste within the five boroughs and reduce both greenhouse gas emission and diesel truck miles. Potential sites should include Rikers Island as envisioned in the Renewable Rikers Act;
- Utilization of City-owned marine and rail transfer stations to process both commercial refuse (an unrealized goal of the current Solid Waste Management Plan) and exploration of marine and rail-based transfer stations to transport source-separated organics to the extent necessary;
- Using innovative micro-haulers and zero-emissions vehicles to collect and consolidate organic waste for local processing, as called for in Local Law 199.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and comment. We look forward to working closely with the City Council, with DSNY, and with City Hall to transform our unsustainable and costly export-to-disposal model to a system with far less waste generation, and far more sustainable and job-generating investments in local reuse, composting, and recycling.

Yours,

Justin Wood, Director of Policy
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest
151 West 30th Street, 11th floor
New York, NY 10001
jwood@nylpi.org
(212) 244-4664

About New York Lawyers for the Public Interest

Founded more than 45 years ago by leaders of the bar, New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI) is a community-driven civil rights organization that pursues justice for all New Yorkers. NYLPI works toward a New York where all people can thrive in their communities, with quality healthcare and housing, safe jobs, good schools, and healthy neighborhoods. In NYLPI's vision, all New Yorkers live with dignity and independence, with the resources they need to succeed. NYLPI's community-driven approach powers its commitments to civil rights and to disability, health, immigrant, and environmental justice. NYLPI seeks lasting change through litigation, community organizing, policy advocacy, pro bono service, and education.

The Brotherhood Sister Sol “1,000 Composting Systems” Initiative

Hello and good afternoon. Thank you to Chair Abreu and Members of the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management for this opportunity to testify. My name is Nando Rodriguez, Senior Manager of Environmental Programs at The Brotherhood Sister Sol - A non-profit youth development and social justice organization serving New York City since 1995. The Brotherhood Sister Sol and a long-time partner, Open Road of NY, have joined forces to advance the “1,000 Composting Systems” initiative. A campaign that advances New York City’s 2030 Zero Waste Goal.

Our objective is to establish 1,000 local Food Waste Processing sites in each borough of NYC. Collectively these sites will have the capacity to divert tons of local food-waste from our landfills each day. Ultimately, we envision an interconnected network of community composting sites throughout NYC with local stewards who are actively engaged in improving the health of their communities and mitigating the effects of climate change. The 1,000 Composting Systems Initiative will accomplish multiple goals, including these main 3:

- 1) **Increasing environmental education & activism amongst NYC residents.** These new sites (based in community gardens, parks, school yards and other open spaces) will bring together New Yorkers of various ages to manage the local composting system. Each site will become a self-sustaining partner in the composting community, and in turn educate and draw food waste from hundreds of local residents.
- 2) **Supporting healthy communities and environments;** Local composting is one of the powerful ways communities can work collaboratively to improve community health and address the challenges of climate change. By collecting community food waste locally we are greatly reducing the garbage sent to landfills. In addition, Compost is a critical ingredient in the development of healthy soil. Compost provides plants with nutrients, reduces availability of heavy metals for plant uptake, and suppresses soil diseases (a growing danger with climate change). By producing and distributing compost locally, we are supporting local communities’ ability to grow healthy fruits, vegetables and herbs for personal and community use, thereby improving local Food Security.
- 3) **Supporting Green Jobs.** The 1,000 Composting Systems Initiative will provide employment for hundreds of youth and young adults who will be trained to build and maintain the local composting systems, as well as educate and organize their local community to support the project.

Open Road of NY, our partner in this campaign, is a non-profit founded in 1990 to develop programs and environments with and for young people that promote community, independence and self respect. They are also the creators of “The HotBox”, a patented composting system that lasts over 30 years, is rodent proof, and has been proven highly effective by a Cornell University study.

Lastly, I’d like to share that in 1990, when the initial NYC Compost Project was created, I was in my teens learning about urban composting on the Lower East Side. The idea of New York City residents separating food waste from their garbage had me full of doubts, but I was interested and inspired by the groups emerging. Fast forward today, I am now working in an organization where I see over 500 youth per year learning and practicing composting, and I have witnessed the growth of the most diverse composting community in NYC, which has erased all doubts I had about NYC residents. I am now filled with hopes and dreams of NYC leading the movement to combat Climate Change through Community Composting.

BroSis looks forward to working with you and all Council Members to make composting a reality across the City. Thank You!

UPPER GREEN SIDE

1136 First Avenue, Suite 7, New York, New York 10065
212-759-6895 uppergreenside@gmail.com

March 17, 2024

NYC Committee on Sanitation & Waste Management

Ladies & Gentlemen:

Please accept my respectful plea to refund community-based composting and Save the NYC Food Scrap Drop-Off (FSDO) for Compost program and thus saving this environmentally impeccable program from elimination due to budget cuts.

Since the early 2000's our Upper East Side community has benefited from the partnership with the DSNY Food Scrap to Compost Program hosted by GrowNYC at our two Farmers Markets (one year-round, the other seasonal), the weekly Lenox Hill/Robbins Plaza Food Box Program and 96th Street/Lex every Friday drop-offs.

Programs that were so stupendously well-patronized that – to cite just one example – 149,000 pounds of compost were collected at the Saturday St. Stephen's/82nd Street Greenmarket alone in the last full, pre-Covid year of collection... A 78,000 pound increase from 2017's poundage... With similar year-to-year increases racked up at our other three UESide collection locations.

Need I say there was plenty of pride in our area's having diverted this colossal quantity of food scraps from the alternative: Costly and polluting transport to distant landfills or incineration with attendant methane release at both. Yes, and needless to say our many UESide volunteer gardeners were only too aware that it was our city's erstwhile waste that was now enriching parks, gardens and tree beds throughout the area.

Then came Covid... And program cancellation...

But cancellation limited to just the duration of pandemic we were told.

With this letter comes our most profound plea that this – no exaggeration – treasured and intensely ecologically sound program be reinstated and funded.

Most sincerely,

Sarah Woodside Gallagher

SWG:mf

March 14, 2024

Hello. Thank you Chair Abrue and all members of this committee for this opportunity to testify.

I am Marisa DeDominicis, co founder and ED of Earth Matter NY Inc. We are an educational non profit and DEC registered compost processing facility. We are located on Governors Island

Community scale composting represents the successful efforts of engaged neighbors to address multiple issues with a single solution.

Composting of organic waste and compost use address many of the Mayor's related priorities: waste diversion, GHG reduction, resources recovery, circular economy, flood mitigation, food security, and carbon sequestration. Achieving these goals all begins with the clean separation of food scraps from the waste stream; something that participants in community scale composting achieve like no other program.

Community scale composting is a transparent model that inspires New Yorkers that yes, they can get stuff done. That they are drivers in helping our city be more prepared for our future.

A civic community that is so deeply engaged is something to be prized and rewarded, not ignored and defunded. Restore the \$7 million in funding for community composting and allow this community to flourish in our urban ecosystem.

Thank you again for this opportunity.

Marisa DeDominicis

Testimony by Chris Arias, Member of the GrowNYC Workers Collective
New York City Council Committee on Sanitation
Chair Shaun Abreu
Preliminary Budget Hearing - Sanitation and Solid Waste Management
March 14, 2024

Dear Chair Abreu and City Council Committee on Sanitation,

I am Christopher Arias and I work as a compost coordinator and driver for GrowNYC. I am also a proud member of the GrowNYC Workers Collective, represented by the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, RWDSU. Firstly I would like to share an anecdote about what community composting means to me.

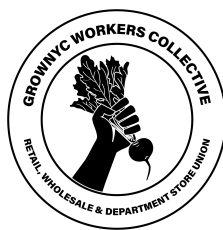
When funding cuts have occurred in the past, we have had to say goodbye to communities such as the Rockaway Parkway food scrap drop off site in Canarsie. It's no secret that Canarsie has historically been an extremely underserved neighborhood, the type of which is most disproportionately prone to environmental injustices, food insecurity, and is the most skeptical of outsiders. As guest to this neighborhood, the efforts we made to engage participants in composting were based in genuine and culturally relevant connections. In fact, not only did we educate them with what we had to offer, but through stories of how many of them conducted composting practices back in their Caribbean Nations of origin, they educated us as well. That is the beauty of my work, community composting engages us all in sustainable work that feels meaningful and immensely grounded in reality; those types of connections simply cannot be replaced.

Aside from the immense value that community composting holds from the perspective of building intimate local connections to waste management, I fully understand that something as special as this to me, might mean very little to other council members and the Mayor. So with that in mind, it is also worth noting the lack of logic that comes with cutting community compost. Being around \$5 million dollars, NYCCP community compost costs so very little of the sanitation (just .003% of it) and wider city budget; and the city wide curbside program is nowhere near ready to be successfully implemented. Curbside keeps getting delayed.

In a December 2023 City Council hearing the Mayor's Budget Director, Jacques Jiha, described community compost as "small and ineffective". Justifying cutting funds for community composting jobs and preventing workers from providing composting outreach because, "We're moving into a citywide program. Only difference is the program is delayed by a couple of months but the program will be up and running and will be as effective."

In all honestly, I would love to hear Mr. Jiha explain this transition to a citywide program to the communities that I serve, as they would very easily point out the many shortcomings of this city program. The reality on the ground is that the City composting plan is extremely fragmented. Not only by not existing in certain boroughs yet that we can "expect in a few months" but in the neighborhoods supposedly already being serviced. I have received countless stories of bins provided being nowhere near large enough for apartments, of landlords refusing to comply and

support the usage of the bins, and of certain blocks simply not having their food waste bins being picked up. It is a mess. I would love for the city to have a large scale functioning composting system, and believe it is heading in that direction. All that I ask is that community composting, those who have done years of work to build trust and buy in, those of us who are full of so much first hand knowledge, be included to help support a successful transition.



Testimony by Courtney Scheffler, Member of the GrowNYC Workers Collective
to New York City Council Committee on Sanitation Chair Shaun Abreu
Preliminary Budget Hearing - Sanitation and Solid Waste Management
March 14, 2024

My name is Courtney Scheffler, and I am a proud member of the GrowNYC Workers Collective, a labor union represented by RWDSU, the Retail Wholesale and Department Store Union. I work as a Compost Coordinator and Driver for GrowNYC. Together with our partners at The New York City Compost Project, we work to provide New Yorkers with waste equity access through food scrap collections and processing, outreach, education, and finished compost.

It is imperative the City Council fully restore sufficient funding for community composting (NYCCP) in the 2024 budget this spring and mandate that these programs exist through legislation. We are asking for organics to be processed hyper-locally through community composting for the health of our neighborhoods and livelihoods. I live paycheck to paycheck, like many of my coworkers, and like many New Yorkers. The defunding of zero waste programming will lay off 78 of my coworkers by June. That is over half of our union. Our work is essential and not expensive. The cost is only 0.003% of the City's Sanitation budget, yet it has made a positive impact on the lives of tens of thousands of New Yorkers. The City's tax revenue is up, and there is more than enough money to fund these vital programs. There is always money for the NYPD to surveil and brutalize the communities we serve, but never enough for community services.

With service gaps and inadequate outreach, curbside and smart bins alone will not realize the waste equity needs of our city. If this administration were earnestly committed to its purported environmental objectives, the services we provide the public would be adequately funded and legislated beyond our year-to-year contracts. Investing in communities is always worth it, especially those disproportionately experiencing environmental injustice.

Community compost, zero waste schools and stop and swap have been defunded just as our union has entered negotiations for our first contract to make our workplace truly sustainable for all workers. We are fighting for both a fair contract and the jobs of over half of our bargaining unit. Defunding our programs is an injustice to the communities we serve, the parks and street tree beds we nourish, and to union workers.

Thank you,
Courtney Scheffler
Brooklyn

Dear City Council Members & Sanitation Committee Members,

My name is Jonathan Sock, I am a full-time GrowNYC employee, with the community composting program and am a member of the GrowNYC Workers Collective under RWDSU. Due to the mayor's budget cuts, my coworkers and I are losing our unionized jobs on May 20th of this year.

I am writing to express my concern and disappointment with the decision to end the city's community composting program after decades of leading this movement to divert and recycle our city's food waste. It is not so much about the loss of jobs that will affect us and others in the short-term, but it is the long-term effects of taking away a program that creates opportunities for the public to get educated about, involved in, and see the direct benefits of a community-centric composting network that they too become passionate about. While I support the rollout of the DSNY curbside program and the expansion of the city's ability to divert food waste, I believe community composting's role should be expanded as a much needed supplement and public-facing resource to sanitation's efforts. DSNY's decision to cut our program is short-sighted, selfish, and a detriment to many communities citywide. I have seen first-hand the stark differences in the operations and impacts of the community-based system vs. the one run by DSNY. Everyone involved in the community composting program is there due to their passions for the preservation of our environment, environmental justice, community advocacy, and diversion of food waste, and it shows in our work, our products & programs, and how much community support we do receive. DSNY on the other hand, while their public relations slogans and messaging may give the impression of greening and dedication to this project, their on-the-ground employees, as important as they are to our city, don't share that same passion for actual environmental standards and ethics as we do. If you and your colleagues were able to observe the two composting operations in action, the differences would be noticeable to which program is operating on these environmental principles and which is definitely not. It is extremely angering that the city wants to cut the programs who have actually been the champions of these efforts for decades when there is still such a need for collections. We could be used, and would be willing, to fill in the gaps of their program which has many in terms of collection, outreach, and impact. We need to stop hearing from DSNY that their program is "the best and most effective" program in the world, when we on the ground hear and see that it is missing the mark in many ways and has gone out of the way to "greenwash" their operations. If the city is really intent on taking these environmental problems seriously, we should be allocated the support and resources to do our jobs to the fullest and with the greatest impact possible.

Thank you for your time, I hope to see our program live on with your support.



**Testimony by Leah Butz, Member of the GrowNYC Workers Collective
New York City Council Committee on Sanitation
Chair Shaun Abreu
Preliminary Budget Hearing - Sanitation and Solid Waste Management
March 14, 2024**

Good afternoon Chair Abreu, and members of the Sanitation committee. My name is Leah Butz, and I am a proud member of the GrowNYC Workers Collective, a labor union represented by the Retail, Wholesale, and Department Store Union, RWDSU. Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony.

My colleagues in GrowNYC's Zero Waste programming include Compost Coordinators and Drivers (who manage and staff 50+ food scrap drop-off sites, both at Greenmarkets and standalone), Zero Waste Schools Educators (who work directly with schools and students to pursue Eric Adams's goal of perfecting NYC's school composting and recycling), and Stop 'N' Swap Assistants and Coordinators (who organize and promote zero waste/reuse promotion events across the five boroughs). This is not even to mention the incredible work done by community composters in the New York City Compost Project, a lifeline of information and technical assistance to the City's parks, gardens, and people. All of these individuals are facing termination of employment before the end of the fiscal year — a cohort that includes more than 50 unionized jobs.

I am disappointed and frustrated by the City's mishandling of composting and obvious lack of care for environmental initiatives. The NYC Compost Project and workers at GrowNYC perform vital services—municipal City services—that the Department of Sanitation otherwise would be unable to complete with anywhere close to the success that my colleagues at GrowNYC and the NYC Compost Project have demonstrated. If the City actually wants to promote and support environmentally sustainable infrastructure and a zero waste future, you must invest in green jobs. Mayor Adams, Jessica Tisch, Jacques Jiha and all the rest of the politicians who are trying to sell us the baloney that anaerobic co-digestion is even remotely a solution to the climate crisis do not know anywhere close to as much about this work as the people who have actually been doing it. We will only reach any success at mitigating the impending climate disaster through the innovations of the people...the taxpayers...the voters...the NYC residents who are involved in community-driven environmental initiatives.

The Deputy Commissioner of Public Affairs & Customer Experience at DSNY, Joshua Goodman, once said that community composting was only for the “truest of true believers.” This insulting line did a few things. First, it dismissed those who support community composting as hippies who can be ignored. Second, it downplayed the climate crisis, which by all accounts is and should be treated as the greatest existential crisis of our time. That is likely too “hippie” of a take to present to City Council if I expect to be taken seriously, so let’s move on to something a politician will understand. Deputy Commissioner Goodman’s comment basically said that the “truest of true believers,” despite being tax-paying New York City residents, are not worth the City serving. I guess we are not worth the votes. I would like to take this opportunity to remind the City Council and the Adams Administration that you all work for *us*, not the other way around.

When the City undervalues community composting and zero waste initiatives, they are introducing waste inequity by way of service gaps to communities with less reliable waste infrastructure. This is typically chronically marginalized communities that have been historically systematically excluded and redlined by the City. The elimination of community composting stymies any growth the City expects to see toward a zero-waste-to-landfill future, as it dismisses the incredible effort and work for decades within this City already. There are lifelong New Yorkers who have been educating about compost for a long, long time, and they deserve a living wage and job stability.

I implore you to fight for community composting and solidify it into the City laws. Every single year we have to fight for the right to work our jobs that make this world a better place, work that offers so much more to the livability of the city than can be adequately quantified. Defunding this work is an injustice to marginalized communities across New York City, an insult to labor unions, and a death sentence to the beautiful parks, street trees and gardens that the City boasts. Thank you for your time.



**Testimony by Lena Frey, Member of the GrowNYC Workers Collective
New York City Council Committee on Sanitation
Chair Shaun Abreu
Preliminary Budget Hearing - Sanitation and Solid Waste Management
March 14, 2024**

Good afternoon Chair Abreu, and members of the Sanitation committee. Thank you for this opportunity to speak. My name is Lena Frey, and I address you today as a proud community compost worker and a member of the GrowNYC Workers Collective, a labor union represented by RWDSU.

The recent decision to cut all funding for community compost and Zero Waste programs will deny millions of New Yorkers the ability to keep their food scraps out of landfills – and it means over 140 people like myself will lose our jobs.

This is a labor issue, and 79 union workers across three departments will be unemployed by June. We are in a critical moment for our union as we continue to negotiate for our first contract, and for green labor across New York City, with jobs in waste management and education now hamstrung by these shortsighted budget cuts. We need our city to invest in sustainable waste management, build community resilience, and fund green labor, yet the Mayor and the Sanitation Commissioner are choosing to do just the opposite.

The City cannot sustain a viable curbside organics collection program while working against community composting and the people who maintain it. With the imminent loss of all the outreach, education, and access provided by GrowNYC's Zero Waste Programs and the NYC Compost Project, the City's curbside program will continue to stagnate in participation and suffer high rates of contamination. We know that when there are gaps in service, good habits are lost, and if these programs are not renewed, the compost diversion rate will likely never recover.

I implore The City Council to reinstate funding for the Zero Waste Programs at GrowNYC and the NYC Compost Project. Funds must be made immediately available to save our jobs and the 30+ years of progress we have made towards a sustainable New York City for all.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Lena Frey
Brooklyn



**Testimony by Nathalie Huang, Member of the GrowNYC Workers Collective
to New York City Council Committee on Sanitation
Chair Shaun Abreu
Preliminary Budget Hearing - Sanitation and Solid Waste Management
March 14, 2024**

Good afternoon Chair Abreu, members of the Sanitation Committee, and my Councilperson Susan Zhuang. Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony. My name is Nathalie Huang, and I am a proud member of the GrowNYC Workers Collective, represented by the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, RWDSU. I have worked as a Compost Coordinator at GrowNYC for 2 years now and together with our partners at The New York City Compost Project, we represent the community composting programs who serve millions of New Yorkers.

GrowNYC's compost program was extended in December due to a generous private donor, and while we were told this funding would last until June, we received news last month that, due to cutting operational costs, me and my 53 colleagues will instead lose our jobs on May 20th.

I owe my life to community composting, from interning at Earth Matter to training in the Master Composter program at the Lower East Side Ecology Center. They empowered me to advocate for community composting and taught me what the citywide organics collection program could not - the joy, beauty, and community that comes through building a compost pile with other people and being able to touch and feel the product of our shared labor - finished, nutrient-rich compost. As community compost workers, we engage in face-to-face interactions to teach people about composting methods, recycling initiatives, and tangible ways to be more sustainable. The citywide organics collection program does not come close. The finished compost created from community composting is returned to local communities to improve their soils, the biogas produced from the majority of organic waste collected from brown bins and smart bins do not. The city CANNOT have a successful citywide organics collection program without working in partnership with community composting organizations.

We deserve to keep the jobs we have the heart and passion for, and to continue serving local communities who need us for community composting. The City Council must fight to fully restore funding for GrowNYC's compost program and The New York City Compost Project in the upcoming budget, and mandate that these programs are protected through legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Nathalie Huang

Brooklyn



**Testimony by Phyllis Yip, Member of the GrowNYC Workers Collective
to New York City Council Committee on Sanitation
Chair Shaun Abreu
Preliminary Budget Hearing - Sanitation and Solid Waste Management
March 14, 2024**

Good afternoon. My name is Phyllis Yip. I am a union member of the GrowNYC Workers Collective. I am also a District 10 resident.

Mayor Eric Adams and his administration like to use the word, "inefficient" to describe community composting, and they will continue to use the word, "inefficient" to describe our zero waste programs.

"Inefficient" means "insignificant." They believe we, the zero waste workers, are insignificant. The work we do is insignificant. A complete waste of taxpayer's money.

But will they say to the single mother picking up free clothes for her baby at a Stop 'N' Swap event, that she's insignificant? What about the senior citizen, who doesn't have a smartphone to use a smart bin? Will they also say that he's insignificant? And then there are the young high school students learning the science behind turning food scraps into fuel for growing new plants. Are they, too, insignificant?

We know there are a lot of competing issues worthy of your attention. I ask this committee and all of City Council, to please make zero waste jobs your top priority. You are not only fighting for us union workers, but you are also fighting for the people we serve. They are the city's most vulnerable population, communities of color, immigrants, seniors, and low-income New Yorkers. So do everything in your power to get us back our funding.

Thank you for listening,
Phyllis Yip
Manhattan

Honorable members of the Sanitation Committee,

I am writing as a member of the GrowNYC Workers Collective, represented by RWDSU, and as a New Yorker working to keep the city I love sustainable for future generations. Restoring funding to zero waste programming, including community composting, stop n' swap sites, and zero waste education, is essential to our city's resilience. It is also essential for 78 union jobs, jobs upon which my coworkers rely and which constitute a large portion of our bargaining unit as we build worker power and negotiate a contract to better serve our communities in all five boroughs. With just \$5 million, the city could fund these programs that are sites of community interaction, environmental sustainability, and essential jobs. I strongly urge you to fund these life-sustaining programs that bring together so many across the city.

Sincerely,

Aliana Ruxin

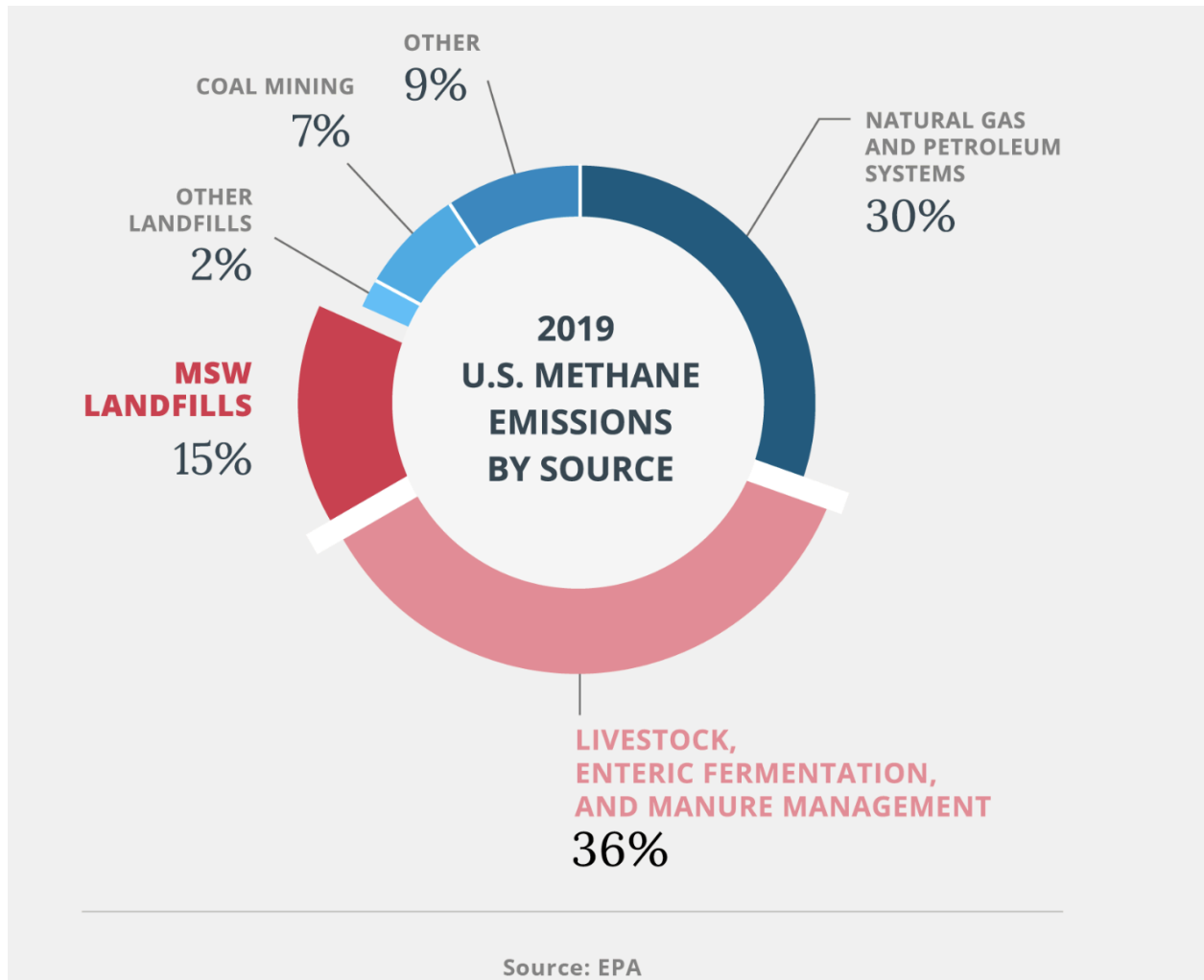
Preliminary Budget Hearing 3/14/24 - Sanitation & Solid Waste Management Testimony

Council Member Abreu and members of the Sanitation Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on the importance of restoring the budget cuts that have decimated community composting and the strong community of people that engage with, appreciate and benefit from the Compost Projects.

I am a member of the Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board (MSWAB) and Chair its Organics Committee. However, I am providing this testimony as a NYC resident concerned about the high levels of waste and flat, dismal recycling rates. I don't see any efforts to address waste reduction and the associated cost of exporting waste that isn't really waste. This cost increases every year unabated. We are spending approximately \$500M (HALF A BILLION DOLLARS) in waste export costs, **this year alone** (and expected to increase due to inflation), to throw away valuable material. Now, with the budget cuts that have eliminated the already meager funding for community composting, it's hard to see how the mandatory citywide curbside collection will succeed in maximizing participation in October - just 7 months away - without adequate and ample outreach and education. These programs need more funding and boots on the ground NOW - not less.

I saw a glimmer of hope when the Mayor announced the new Green Economic Action Plan (GEAP). In the very first sentence the Deputy Mayor says climate change is real. And what are the key contributors to methane/greenhouse gas emissions and climate change? Methane released from landfills - and the largest contributor to these emissions is food waste rotting there, that could be diverted for composting.



Diverting food waste is the easiest thing we can all do right now to minimize our individual climate impacts. The community composters already know this. They are a crucial link in communicating this and all the other benefits of composting to New Yorkers at large.

Waste reduction is a large part of reducing greenhouse gas as quantified in a MSWAB fact sheet on Consumer Demand & Climate Change which indicates that for every pound a consumer throws away, there's 70 pounds of upstream waste - all contributing greenhouse gas emissions. It's time to rethink all the trash that isn't trash and allocate increased funding towards waste reduction.

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f3abb4d64c0a775be36eb4d/t/60306478b065b425a5ba0c90/1613784186141/Consumer-Demand-Climate-Change.pdf>

While I'm dismayed to not see anything in the GEAP about reducing waste, it does mention some organizations and individuals that are leading the way on issues that have moved the goal of waste reduction forward. Shout out to Fabscrap and Dior St Hillaire (Bronx SWAB Chair).

When I first learned of the GEAP while watching NY1, I was encouraged to see Green City Force (which promotes composting) in attendance - an organization that spawned the likes of Domingo Morales, a true leader and visionary in the world of NYC community composting efforts. The Administration had also highlighted Domingo's work in PlaNYC in. However, juxtaposed on that same (and next) page in PlaNYC, the city goes on to tout the benefits and expanded opportunities to "compost" while also indicating that co-digestion of food waste is the city's prioritized solution.

Little did we know or expect that co-digestion was the largest part of the Administration's solution for processing organic waste. DSNY stated at the hearing that 80% of the material collected by brown bins and orange smart bins is currently sent for co-digestion - only 20% composted. The orange bins are in fact misleading the public as they are labeled "compost bins". This must be rectified as should the Administration's talking points when using the term "composting". I would also ask that the city be more transparent when using the term "digestion" if they are referring to "co-digestion" with sewage to produce sewage sludge which is landfilled and has limited, if any, beneficial use as a fertilizer. Actual plastic free compost (only produced by community composters) is 100% beneficial use and an important fertilizer that nourishes our parks, street trees, soil and overall health. But now, the Parks Department has also chosen to add fuel to the war on composting by kicking Big Reuse off their Queensbridge site for parking and the city has chosen to renege on promises to provide funding (\$2M+) for Lower East Side Ecology Center to build out its site in Canarsie.

While the city has spent untold Billions on the Wastewater Treatment Plant in Newtown Creek, it is increasingly under scrutiny for producing methane and a toxic biosolid that no one wants or can use, and is thus sent to landfills. I would expect the news to continue to follow this story and the real truth is surely to be revealed.

It's unconscionable and short sighted that the city would prioritize co-digestion over composting. NYC should be a leader on community composting, but the decision to cut the 30 year old compost projects has shunned local community composting leaders and destroyed a strong community and network of people who reach New Yorkers daily to promote the importance of composting.

We need MORE funding for community composting - not less! Especially as the city is about to roll out mandatory curbside composting city wide. The city found almost \$1 BILLION (or more) for the new GEAP while forcing a mere \$7-9M cut ($\frac{1}{3}$ of one percent of the overall DSNY nearly two billion dollar annual budget) which will end the beloved Compost Project. To add insult to injury, the city also recently announced a budget surplus that exceeded the Mayor's estimate by approximately \$3 BILLION! Concerning, to say the least, considering all the cuts that were made to community composting, other programs and jobs that were lost.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-02-15/nyc-budget-surplus-out-does-mayor-s-estimate-by-nearly-3-billion>

Is there an upcoming new plan, soon to be revealed, that will replace and expand the outreach and education done by the Compost Projects? Is there a social marketing plan and strategy for getting all New Yorkers to start separating their food scraps - as well as improve their overall recycling habits?

Extensive outreach and "backreach" will be required. The Compost Project funding needs to be reinstated before we lose its momentum and those valuable players who have already been leading the charge serving as NYC's best compost ambassadors for promoting food waste separation. It is well known that all the starts and stops that have impacted NYC's composting programs over the years, have contributed to the low levels of participation.

Outreach must be continued and expanded with backreach added to the mix - especially to onboard larger high rise buildings, beyond the 1-9 unit buildings that were targeted during door to door canvassing. Knocking on doors one time and sending one mailer to 8M+ residents won't do it. As 2024 is an election year, take note of how many times you see messages from candidates asking for votes - not a "one and done" undertaking. A basic tenet of marketing is that

you need to reach people multiple times to influence behavior/purchases. Decades ago that number was thought to be 7, but that was back when tv/radio was limited and social media non existent, so at this point 7 would be the bare minimum. This requires much more funding than the city has ever allocated.

EPA has resources on social marketing/creating messages that drive behavior change. The MSWAB will also be posting resources shortly on its website

<https://www.epa.gov/circulareconomy/creating-messages-drive-behavior-change>

In addition to the community compost leadership already present in NYC, I would encourage the administration to look at community composting programs in other cities, such as Detroit, Baltimore and many others, and NOT allow NYC to fall behind. These programs are just a few of the great examples of the multiple benefits, to EJ communities especially.

<https://www.c40.org/case-studies/detroit-composting-for-community-health/>

The information collected thus far by the Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP) consultant hired by DSNY, should also be published in order to start moving the needle on food waste diversion. This contract was canceled, but I would expect that some information was provided as the study was well underway when that budget was cut.

We should also start by asking city leadership and cultural institutions to start setting the example now. Food waste separation receptacles should be available at all city events and at all city agencies starting immediately so that people can start seeing how it works and how easy it actually is. In addition, single use plastic should be banned from city properties, agencies and events.

I was hoping to deliver my testimony live at the hearing but I was too busy working on organizing the all SWAB participation at the NY Botanical Garden's "Crazy for Composting" event that took place 3/16. Not sure if anyone from the city was there. It was highly inspiring despite the pall cast over the event by community composting budget cuts and from those whose green jobs were eliminated, when these are the exact people, the best evangelists, to promote composting across the city.

The room was filled with people whose lives have been transformed by community composting and those people can also be found by visiting a local FSDO and are worth engaging with and listening to. Do not cut the funds needed to employ the boots on the ground, the eyes and ears needed to increase participation in food waste diversion

The role and importance of building community is also something the Administration may not be fully aware of, as it relates to community composting. I was struck over the last holiday season by all the news reports on the loneliness epidemic and stories about feelings of isolation experienced by many - young and old. Countless news stories you can google. Governor Hochul actually appointed Dr Ruth as the Loneliness Ambassador. I'm curious to know what budget she has and if there will be funding to build and support community projects like composting. Senator Chris Murphy in our neighboring state of CT has introduced legislation and I believe other states are following.

<https://www.murphy.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/murphy-casey-introduce-bill-to-fight-social-isolation-and-loneliness-among-older-americans>

Social media (ie Facebook) has been criticized for impacts on mental health - especially youth. Teen suicides resulting from social media was dramatically demonstrated at a hearing in Congress a couple months ago, where Mark Zuckerberg basically apologized to parents of those that have lost their children to suicide. See the US Surgeon General's report

<https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-social-connection-advistory.pdf>

If the city acknowledges that climate change is real when will they acknowledge the isolation/loneliness epidemic and increase funding for community programs, such as community composting. Perhaps Department of Health (DOH) can provide funding?

DOH also has a program (and resources) to combat rats and unfortunately miss a lot of opportunities to cross promote composting as rat mitigation in their communications channels and materials. I have submitted testimony in the past

related to this before the Rat Action Plan was passed. Community composting offers people some of the only opportunities people have to see their neighbors. Hang around a FSDO and you will be amazed to hear the stories and see how good people feel doing the right thing by dropping off their food waste. It's the one easy thing people can do right now to impact climate change and actually give back to the planet we are hell bent on destroying.

Finally, with such a high focus (and expense) on containerizing waste, there should be equal if not more focus and spending on **reducing the waste to begin with**. It's not enough to just hide the problem by changing set out times and mandating containers, which we already see overflowing.

We need a trash reduction revolution and strategy. It's time to spend now on effective programs to **REDUCE** waste locally rather than spend much more every year on skyrocketing waste export contracts.

Thank you for your consideration.

Allison Allen

Preliminary Budget Oversight HEARING COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE
MANAGEMENT

3/14/24 1:00PM

Anita Chan's Testimony

Good afternoon Chair Abreu and Committee Members. My name is Anita Chan. I'm a lifelong NYC resident, a composter, an Earth Matter NY board member, and a member of 350NYC WasteNot. I urge the city council to restore funding for community composting for the upcoming fiscal year and beyond.

As we are trying to combat the climate crisis and achieve our city's sustainability goals, we need to invest in green jobs. I got my first green job when I was 16 and have worked many more since. Two weeks ago, Mayor Adams said that he wants to make NYC the leader in Green Collar jobs. We must first restore the jobs that were lost last year and secure the ones that will be lost in the upcoming months due to the budget cuts, and then we go on to create more jobs for the new graduates, people looking to switch careers, and our youth who are planning to pursue degrees in climate.

Earth Matter NY, Big Reuse, Lower East Side Ecology Center, the 4 botanical gardens, and GrowNYC have proven their ability to efficiently utilize a very small budget to create robust compost programming, education, collection, and processing that benefits a large network of organizations, schools, gardens, and individuals year round. When you participate in community composting, you are able to trace your food scraps to a processing site and know that it has been composted and will be used to nourish our soils. Having staffed food scrap drop off sites, in person compost education, local processing, and door to door outreach are crucial for the success of the "brown bins" organic curbside program, the "orange bin" Smart Bin program, and organic waste diversion as a whole in our city.

Community composting should be funded through the city, not by private donations. The city needs to properly fund it and let them lead on the expansion of organic waste diversion. Thank you to all of the city council members who have been showing their support and we hope we get everyone on board to support restoring the community composting budget.

Sincerely,
Anita Chan
anita82593@gmail.com

Re: Save Community Compost

Greetings,

I am writing this testimony to urge the funding for community composting be restored. Community Composting makes up .4% or \$7 million of DSNY's overall annual budget of \$1.7 billion, and .006% of NYC's total annual budget of \$112 billion in FY2022. This initiative employs 115 people in local green jobs. Community Composting partners have composted over 8 million lbs. of organic waste at seven different processing sites. They have educated thousands of New Yorkers and certified them as Master Composters. They have empowered New Yorkers to volunteer and engage in their community green spaces. All of the finished compost is distributed to community gardens, parks, and thousands of New Yorkers through public events. Used to care for Street Trees, Parks, and our city's urban landscape across all boroughs. These processes remediate soil, sustain environmental impact, and engage communities.

Sincerely,
Anna Rhoads

Becky Carpenter
Winthrop St
Brooklyn, NY 11225

Hi, I am writing to voice my support for the community composting programs in NYC. I live in Prospect Lefferts Garden and have been volunteering at the Maple Street Community garden for almost a year and a half now. Through both volunteering and dropping off my compost at this and other community funded programs, I have contributed to the care of the trees, parks, and landscaping throughout the city, helped to remediate soil and sustain environmental impact, and engaged directly with my community green space.

Investing in our environment is more important now than ever, as we face challenging climate crises that affect our ecosystems both large and small. These community composting programs have helped compost over 8 million pounds of organic waste at seven different processing sites, which help keep the rats out of our streets and homes. Finally, during times of economic uncertainty, community composting has employed 115 people in local green jobs.

I cannot emphasize how much both volunteering and dropping off my compost has helped me engage with and care about my neighborhood and space. Through the community compost program, I also have connected to my local neighborhood cleanup group, where we clean up PLG of trash. I feel a lot more ownership of my home and my community through these programs. Please help to fund these programs so that our community can continue to thrive.

Thank you!
Becky Carpenter

Carole Maisonneuve

Testimony to the 14 March public hearing of NYC Council's Sanitation Committee

Dear Chair of the Sanitation Committee,
Dear Council members,

I have the honor to testify as a resident of New York City since 2009, a city which my husband, and our three children call home.

We have been consistently collecting our organic waste for over a decade now, using at times mobile collection points provided by the city, which were suspended with the pandemic, our own building's compost bin, Harlem's community gardens and urban farms composting facilities, and the newest Smart Compost Bins.

I wish to testify to express my strong disappointment about the Smart Compost Bins, and, generally, the so-called compost program run by the city, on the one hand, and the budget cuts that non-profit organizations such as GrowNYC, Big Reuse, LES Ecology Center, Earth Matter NY, New York Botanical Garden, Queens Botanical Garden, Brooklyn Botanic Garden, and Snug Harbor Cultural Center & Botanical Garden have recently undergone, on the other hand. Such cuts jeopardize the city's capacity to recycle organic waste into natural fertilizers for now and the years to come, and represent a huge missed opportunity.

Designating these orange food scrap collection bins, and NYC's residential organic waste collection program, as a "compost" program is fallacious at best. Compost is not what comes **in** these bins, but what comes **out** of a complex and well-balanced composting process. What comes in are just food scraps. Using the term "compost" is misleading – whether it is intentional or not, and this practice should cease immediately.

Additionally, anaerobic digestion process is an energy-intensive system which also triggers pollution in itself, while depriving farmers from much-needed natural fertilizers. The biogas it produces contributes to carbon gas emissions and climate change. While it is evidently better than using fossil fuels, we should bear in mind that another far more environmentally-friendly solution – composting – is not being seriously considered. Actual composting is the true circular economy that NYC's Council has been calling for.

As a concerned citizen, I am urging you to:

- **rename NYC's "compost" program** to reflect what it is: nothing more than a food scrap or organic waste management program.
- **reinvest immediately into community composting by reinstating budget allocations to the previously mentioned organizations.**
- invest, now and in the long term, in educational campaigns aiming at raising awareness of New Yorkers of the critical importance of actually composting organic waste, and the benefits – including reduced costs for taxpayers – that such an actual composting program would trigger. Awareness should also be raised about the significant difference between actual composting and anaerobic digestion.

I thank you for your attention.

Best regards,

Carole Maisonneuve

Carrie Rubinstein
Beekman Place
Brooklyn, NY 11225

March 13, 2024

To Whom It May Concern:

Community composting is a logical and efficient way for organic waste to be put to good use, becoming nutrient rich soil, rather than a contributor to harmful methane emissions by adding it to the city trash. Especially in a city where we already have a good amount of pollution. It's worth the effort and energy to pitch in to protect our environment. The garden and its composting program fosters community in our diverse neighborhoods. It was started from the ground up by concerned neighbors. Please fund this vital project.

Sincerely

Carrie Rubinstein

I am writing to call for the return of community composting. I used to drop my compost off at Maple Street Community Garden in Prospect Lefferts Garden, Brooklyn and feel the loss of the program has left a hole in the community. While I think it's great the city is rolling out curbside composting, the garden drop-off provided a place for connection, learning and the chance to get down and dirty with the composting process.

I understand that community composting only makes up 0.4-percent of DSNY's overall annual budget and employs more than 100 people in local green jobs. It has also resulted in millions of pounds of organic waste for the city's trees, gardens and parks. The program has educated thousands of New Yorkers and certified them as Master Composters, as well as empowered them to volunteer and engage in local green spaces.

I am also an advocate for reducing food waste and putting food scraps back into the soil. This program helped so many New Yorkers feel like we were truly making a difference.

Please consider bringing back the community composting program.

Thank you,
Christin Marks
PLG, Brooklyn

March 14, 2024

Please accept my respectful plea to refund community-based composting and Save the NYC Food Scrap Drop-Off (FSDO) for Compost program from elimination due to budget cuts.

Since 2015, our Roosevelt Island community has benefited from the partnership with the DSNY food scrap to compost program hosted by Big Reuse. Our weekly 5 hour Saturday food scrap collection for compost has diverted over 341,000 pounds of food scraps from the costly travel to other state's landfills. Landfilled food scraps create Methane gas, a pollutant more harmful than CO2. Whereas, food scraps that are processed and decomposed down into nutrient-rich compost capture CO2 in what is called a carbon sink. When that compost is returned to neighborhood urban soils the carbon stays underground and out of NYC air.

And during the 2020 budget reduction, an all volunteer resident group was formed and named HAKI by the Lenape Center. Our grassroots Haki Compost Collective volunteer group has stood by the green bin food scrap to compost program each Saturday since September 2020 performing community outreach and education and giving back compost to neighbors in support of Big Reuse's compost processing work.

Much of that Big Reuse nutrient-rich compost has returned to Roosevelt Island and fed over 100 new baby trees, numerous school gardens, community projects and resident houseplants too.

And Big Reuse compost will amend the soil in NYC's first ever Miyawaki Method Pocket Forest on Roosevelt Island April 2024. Losing access to community composting means losing good quality, expertly managed compost for neighborhood soil amendment projects including school gardens and park plantings.

Urban cities benefit from food scrap to compost programs in the following ways:

- Rat Mitigation. Removing food scraps from public sidewalks and school trash areas removes the food sources rats need to flourish.
- Local food scrap for compost programs reduce truck, barge and landfill costs for NYC taxpayers.
- Compost amended soils are vastly more water absorbent and are a city smart strategy to stop severe, deadly and costly storm flooding events in NYC.
- Nutrient-rich compost strengthens open space and parklands by feeding tree and shrub roots which creates land more resilient to soil erosion.
- Healthy trees in an urban landscape pull more pollutants including CO2 from the air while emitting oxygen for residents while providing shade to reduce high heat events.
- Compost returned to urban soils captures carbon underground, while costly trucking and barging organic material like food scraps to landfill does not allow the scraps to decompose naturally and worse, emits Methane gas, a dangerous air pollutant.
- Employs 115 people who will all lose their jobs if this FSDO program is eliminated.

Please do everything in your power to save the NYC Food Scrap Drop-Off for Compost program from currently planned budget cuts.

Sincerely,

Christina Delfico

March 14, 2024

New York City Council
Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management
Re: Preliminary Budget Hearing - Sanitation and Solid Waste Management

Dear Councilmember Abreu and members of the committee:

I want to share my NYC compost journey with you, which begins 24 years ago when I moved to the city from Washington, DC, and was immediately struck by the volumes of waste on the sidewalks here. The city soon after closed its last landfill and a few months later the 9/11 terrorist attack launched us into a budget crisis. Despite the astronomical cost of now exporting our refuse out of state, in 2002 the incoming mayor decided to cut the recycling program to save money.

In disbelief that one of the few options to reduce black bags of garbage was being dismantled, I joined with others to voice opposition and eventually, the program was restored. It turned out to not really save much money owing to the cost of paying communities in other states to burn or bury our recyclables, and greatly disrupted participation in the recycling program.

Recognizing that recycling is not the ultimate solution, I began looking for other ways to reduce waste and reuse materials. I led the volunteer-run Freecycle New York City group where tens of thousands of people found new homes for usable items they no longer needed. And, I joined my local community garden not to grow plants, but to recycle my food waste into compost for those who actually had green thumbs. I paid an annual membership fee and volunteered 40+ hours a year to manage the compost pile, host visitors and initiate new compost members, all for the ability to have somewhere other than the landfill to put my food waste.

Meanwhile, participation in the curbside recycling program never quite bounced back, and a few years later, in 2007, I joined the newly established, city-funded recycling outreach staff at Council on the Environment of New York City, now known as GrowNYC. I also became certified as a New York City Master Composter to help people compost in a way that was sustainable to them and their community. In 2011 GrowNYC began our compost program, building on the model established by LES Ecology Center and Earth Matter, to make composting more accessible with expanded drop-offs at GrowNYC's Greenmarkets. When I became a parent in 2012, this model provided me more downtime to spend with my newborn by composting at my local farmers market instead of volunteering at the garden.

Knowing that recycling food still isn't the starting point for everyone who wants to reduce waste and cut their carbon footprint, GrowNYC also worked to expand reuse—building community with the joy of sharing usable items with a program called Stop 'N' Swap. The magic of an organization like GrowNYC is the array of options it provides to New Yorkers who care about sustainability, whether through access to local food, zero waste efforts, gardens, or environmental education. People start their journey where they are comfortable, and usually end up trying something new. Unfortunately, Stop 'N' Swap, and Zero Waste Schools are also on the budget chopping block.

The exponential growth of GrowNYC's program made composting an everyday, indispensable habit for so many and demonstrated to the city that a curbside model was worth trying. In 2013 our team got to work on enrolling large apartment complexes into the new program, and deftly guided them through the fits and starts of a pilot program. Our experience, enthusiasm, and accessibility encouraged them to stick with it. People coming to our Greenmarkets learned how to bring composting service right to their apartment buildings. The program began to see successes.

In 2014 when curbside composting came to my neighborhood in Park Slope, I convinced our co-op board to give it a try and volunteered to oversee the program, from resident education, to rinsing out the bins and managing to replace them after countless thefts. In the budget crisis of the 2020 pandemic, the city cut the curbside compost program, and my job at GrowNYC.

During lockdown, I used my Master Composter training and some co-op funds to set up at-home composting in our building's alleyway, scaling back to the basic items acceptable in a small system, and throwing our cat's uneaten food back in the trash. Though no match for the robust network of compost sites that were closed or the city's curbside collection, it was a measure of solace, a way to channel grief and connect with nature close to home. When my small system reached its limits I was able to bring the overflow to a collection near the Gowanus Canal, run by Big Reuse and the Gowanus Canal Conservancy. And when I encountered an issue I had not seen in any of my bins before, the Big Reuse compost team helped me troubleshoot.

When curbside composting returned 18 months later I could see that animals had been going into our trash cans to fish out meat scraps, but not touching our secure compost bin. Our building was eager to rejoin the program and show that residents had not given up, though many had diminished enthusiasm due to the pause in collections, change in the schedule, or other issues that can take a strong stomach to handle while you try to get it right. The NYC

Compost Project hosted by Big Reuse came to our co-op meeting and helped to boost participation, and they attended events at our elementary school to bring more families back to the program. I reached out to neighbors and helped people figure out ways to overcome their individual obstacles to successful participation. This support network continues to this day.

Some say community composting is for the true believers, but the true believers are what make NYC vibrant and resilient. We are the ones who care—the early adopters who make progress possible by showing things can be done, and helping others come along. We put in the time and effort to make a small difference so we can turn it into a big impact.

We're on the verge of throwing away a network of people and programs that has grown over decades, which has been able to weather storms and provide diverse opportunities for all New Yorkers to do their part. You know we must manage our waste responsibly, nurture our green spaces, and grow green jobs, and DSNY cannot do it alone with a one-size-fits-all approach. I urge you to allocate the funds—0.04% of the DSNY budget—to continue this work.

True believers are the ones who don't give up on New York. With so much more ground to cover, it's no time for New York to give up on us.

Sincerely,

Christina Salvi
Brooklyn, NY

Greetings,

I am writing to you in an effort to save community composting. I believe this is a vital part of community improvement in NYC. Community Composting makes up .4% or \$7 million of DSNY's overall annual budget of \$1.7 billion, and .006% of NYC's total annual budget of \$112 billion in FY2022. Not only that, but this initiative employs 115 people in local green jobs. In addition, community composting partners have composted over 8 million lbs. of organic waste at seven different processing sites. They have educated thousands of New Yorkers and certified them as Master Composters. They have empowered New Yorkers to volunteer and engage in their community green spaces. All of the finished compost is distributed to community gardens, parks, and thousands of New Yorkers through public events. This compost is used to care for Street Trees, Parks, and our city's urban landscape across all boroughs. Not only is composting helpful in the immediate timeframe, but these processes remediate soil, sustain environmental impact, and engage communities to help further growth and development for years to come.

Sincerely,

Dan Floyd

March 14, 2024

Please accept my respectful plea to refund community-based composting and Save the NYC Food Scrap Drop-Off (FSDO) for Compost program from elimination due to budget cuts.

Since 2015, our Roosevelt Island community has benefited from the partnership with the DSNY food scrap to compost program hosted by Big Reuse. Our weekly 5 hour Saturday food scrap collection for compost has diverted over 341,000 pounds of food scraps from the costly travel to other state's landfills. Landfilled food scraps create Methane gas, a pollutant more harmful than CO2. Whereas, food scraps that are processed and decomposed down into nutrient-rich compost capture CO2 in what is called a carbon sink. When that compost is returned to neighborhood urban soils the carbon stays underground and out of NYC air.

And during the 2020 budget reduction, an all volunteer resident group was formed and named HAKI which means ground/soil by the Lenape Center. Our grassroots Haki Compost Collective volunteer group has stood by the green bin food scrap to compost program each Saturday since September 2020 performing community outreach and education and giving back compost to neighbors in support of Big Reuse's compost processing work.

Much of that Big Reuse nutrient-rich compost has returned to Roosevelt Island and fed over 100 new baby trees, numerous school gardens, community projects and resident houseplants too.

And Big Reuse compost will amend the soil in NYC's first ever Miyawaki Method Pocket Forest on Roosevelt Island April 2024. Losing access to community composting means losing good quality, expertly managed compost for neighborhood soil amendment projects including school gardens and park plantings.

Urban cities benefit from food scrap to compost programs in the following ways:

- Rat Mitigation. Removing food scraps from public sidewalks and school trash areas removes the food sources rats need to flourish.
- Local food scrap for compost programs reduce truck, barge and landfill costs for NYC taxpayers.
- Compost amended soils are vastly more water absorbent and are a city smart strategy to stop severe, deadly and costly storm flooding events in NYC.
- Nutrient-rich compost strengthens open space and parklands by feeding tree and shrub roots which creates land more resilient to soil erosion.
- Healthy trees in an urban landscape pull more pollutants including CO2 from the air while emitting oxygen for residents while providing shade to reduce high heat events.
- Compost returned to urban soils captures carbon underground, while costly trucking and barging organic material like food scraps to landfill does not allow the scraps to decompose naturally and worse, emits Methane gas, a dangerous air pollutant.
- Employs 115 people who will all lose their jobs if this FSDO program is eliminated.

Please do everything in your power to save the NYC Food Scrap Drop-Off for Compost program from currently planned budget cuts.

Sincerely, David Wen Riccardi-Zhu

To the Honorable NYC Council Members:

Having the ability to compost food scraps has proven to be wonderful for our environment. I have attached the following link from the US Composting Council that states the many vital ways composting helps us: <https://www.compostingcouncil.org/page/CompostBenefits>

In addition:

- 1) I have attached Composting Council's detailed piece on the Benefits of Composting
- 2) I extracted the following list for you to see:

Benefits of Using Compost

- Improves the soil structure, porosity, and density, thus creating a better plant root environment.
- Increases infiltration and permeability of heavy soils, thus reducing erosion and runoff.
- Improves water holding capacity, thus reducing water loss and leaching in sandy soils.
- Supplies a variety of macro and micronutrients.
- May control or suppress certain soil-borne plant pathogens.
- Supplies significant quantities of organic matter.
- Improves cation exchange capacity (CEC) of soils and growing media, thus improving their ability to hold nutrients for plant use.
- Supplies beneficial microorganisms to soils and growing media.
- Improves and stabilizes soil pH.
- Can bind and degrade specific pollutants

Most of my own waste that headed for composting removed a good 25 to 33% from my ordinary garbage. Reducing a good amount of garbage from the regular city collections comes with a significant reduction in garbage collection, thus creating savings for the city.

Composting is a "win-win" situation for the city, the companies it houses and their residents. I implore you to bring back composting for the good of us all!

Thank you & appreciate your consideration,
Deborah J Drucker

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Elizabeth Hickey and this is my written testimony to save Community Composting in New York City. I am absolutely disgusted that Mayor Adams and his administration have the gall to slash the Community Composting budget when it makes up a mere .4% of the gargantuan DSYN overall budget of \$1.7 billion dollars. As a taxpaying resident of New York City, I do not approve of the government allocating these funds towards services that will not directly improve the lives of New Yorkers. Community Composting is allowing New Yorkers to improve their local green spaces which is absolutely crucial to the mental health of all of us living through this extremely turbulent time in NYC history.

Mayor Adams has made a great deal of missteps during his short tenure as Mayor and cutting this budget has not gone unnoticed by the thousands of New Yorkers who are deeply engaged with this program. Never forget that Mayor Adams, as well as every other member of his administration, are elected public servants - which means that you work for us, the hardworking, resilient residents of the five boroughs. You do not have the permission from those who elected you to simply cut programs at your whim. Take stock of your extremely bloated budget, perhaps cut your own egregiously high salary by a few hundred thousand dollars and do not take away the incredible progress New Yorkers have made in becoming a more eco-friendly and sustainable city, simply due to your own greed.

If you need to find money to fund the police to combat the current lawlessness of our city, revoke the disastrous bail reform laws of Alvin Bragg, ease the police's burden of endlessly arresting career criminals and figure out how to undo the unbelievable damage you've caused with the migrant crisis. Do not slash the budgets for Community Composting, the NYPL or NYC public schools. Do not actively make the quality of life for tax-paying New Yorkers worse as a quick fix for the many failures of your administration.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony.

Best,

Elizabeth Hickey

Hello, my name is Eric Arnum, and I am a volunteer with the Forest Hills Green Team out in Queens. Five years ago, when I joined the Green Team, we were mostly planting tulips and cleaning up parkland. But then four years ago -- almost to the day -- the world changed when the pandemic shutdowns began. And in Forest Hills, the community composting site at MacDonald Park on Queens Boulevard was also shut down, though the Farmer's Market remained open.

in response to the loss of this climate-crisis-reducing program, the Green Team decided to open our own community composting site in its place. And then throughout the pandemic we collected tons of food scraps, and gave away boxes of masks, sanitizer, and test kits. We also began setting up tables and chairs, so we could sit and chat with neighbors, hand out flyers, get them to sign petitions, and even to do some campaigning with our local City Council candidate in the run-up to the 2021 election (we are not a 501(c)(3) organization, so partisan politics is no problem).

Eventually, as the pandemic subsided, the previous community composting operation reopened in MacDonald Park. In addition, the Department of Sanitation began curbside compost collections in Queens. But we decided not to shut down. Instead, we opened a second site a short distance away on 108th Street, at CommonPoint Queens, also known as the Central Queens Y. And we found that hundreds of neighborhood people who really wanted to compost were grateful for the convenience and continued to fill our buckets.

Why didn't we simply shut down when things got back to normal? Two reasons: first, we found that hundreds of steady customers were visiting us weekly as a sort of social outing and political check-in, and second, we found that compliance with the new mandatory curbside compost collection laws in Queens were abysmally low (Eric Goldstein, of the NRDC, cited a statistic of only 4.3% in his previous testimony).

We have talked a lot today about community composting serving as a sort of entry level program for curbside composting, where people can learn about composting and become accustomed to the right way of doing it at home. But I wanted to suggest to current chair Shaun Abreu and past chair Sandy Nurse that there are several more good reasons to keep the programs running: first, they serve as a sort of town square for the neighborhood, as a social outlet for the civic-minded among us (really, who has ever talked politics with their local sanitation workers?), and second, they are the only outlet for climate-worried tenants in those big brick buildings who really want to compost but whose supers and porters really don't.

Eric Arnum
Forest Hills Green Team
earnum@interport.net
(###) ###-####

March 14, 2024

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And during the 2020 budget reduction, an all volunteer resident group was formed and named HAKI which means ground/soil by the Lenape Center. Our grassroots Haki Compost Collective volunteer group has stood by the green bin food scrap to compost program each Saturday since September 2020 performing community outreach and education and giving back compost to neighbors in support of Big Reuse's compost processing work.

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Urban cities benefit from food scrap to compost programs in the following ways:

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- Employs 115 people who will all lose their jobs if this FSDO program is eliminated.

Please do everything in your power to save the NYC Food Scrap Drop-Off for Compost program from currently planned budget cuts.

Sincerely,
Howard L. Polivy
Main Street, Apt. ####
New York, NY 10044

Dear City Council Members,

I am extremely disappointed to learn that the city is planning to defund community composting as part of the Program to Eliminate the Gap (PEG) cuts to the Department of Sanitation. Compost in NYC is as much about building healthy communities as it is building soil structure, and the work of the NYC Compost Project and GrowNYC is essential to our city.

I cannot stress enough the urgency of reinstating the funding for the NYC Compost Project and GrowNYC's compost programming, and enabling them to continue their vital work of education, diverting food scraps from landfills, and making the city a healthier, cleaner, and more resilient place to live and work. If these programs are removed from the budget, the city's Zero Waste goals are imperiled, and the jobs of 115 workers from 9 non-profit organizations will be lost. Cutting these jobs, 53 of which are union, is unacceptable.

We cannot allow this colossal environmental setback on our watch; New Yorkers deserve better.

Please reverse these cuts to community composting programs and vote NO to the Mayor's cuts to this essential program in order to save union jobs and make our city more sustainable. The Council must also fight for this program going forward by ensuring sufficient funding in the 2024 budget this spring. The Council should also mandate that this program exist through legislation, which would make it permanent.

Thank you, Isaac Clerencia

Brooklyn, 11222

As the leader of Its Easy Being Green, an Upper West Side climate education and personal action group with 500+ newsletter subscribers, I want to speak in favor of the restoration of funding for community compost programs.

Restoration of community organics is important because turning food scraps into compost for later use in community gardens and parks is the purest example of circularity. People who contribute their food waste to these collection facilities feel good knowing they are doing something tangible and useful.

Most citizens are not aware of the current unfortunate trend of converting most of curbside collected food scraps to biogas through anaerobic digestion. They believe they are contributing to the health of city gardens when really their food waste is making a fuel which when burned emits methane. This is deceptive.

Community organics collection sites provide the growing number of us who know the difference reliable and convenient locations to contribute to the betterment of our city.

Restore funding for Community Compost NOW!

itseasybeinggreen.org

Dear City Council Members,

My name is Jennifer Bombardier and I live in Flatbush, Brooklyn. I work in the Lower East Side at the LES Ecology Center as the Environmental Education Manager. I moved to New York 10 years ago for grad school - I earned my M.A. in Environmental Conservation Education at NYU. After grad school, I decided to stay in NYC and build a life and career here because I was so impressed with the number of incredible people and organizations working to build a sustainable city.

The past few months have been heartbreaking. Since the budget for community composting was cut, I have seen my colleagues and friends lose their jobs, food scrap collection sites have been shut down, access to nutrient rich soil amendments has been harder to find, and community members have more questions than answers about how, when, and what to compost. A large gaping wound has been left in our city and our government has offered nothing to help it heal.

Community Composting, and specifically the NYC Compost Project, has been an essential city resource that not only tackles the climate crisis, reduces organics in our waste stream, and supports rat mitigation, but it also provides waste and climate education to New Yorkers of all ages. In some ways we can count the impact of community composting: 8.3 pounds of food waste diverted from landfills, 115 green jobs, 6 compost sites, 325 community groups receiving nutrient rich organic matter, etc. But there are impacts far beyond what we can quantify - How many children grow up learning about our city's waste streams and what it means to be a climate steward simply by helping their parents sort their food waste and dropping it off at a collection site? How many New Yorkers learn about composting by passing through a community garden and having a conversation with a composter supported by the Ecology Center, Big Reuse, or GrowNYC? As an experienced environmental and climate educator, I can say confidently that these programs are the kind that have real, meaningful impacts. They are tangible, community-based, hyper-local and provide immediate rewards for those who participate.

Community composting is more effective at combating climate change, educating New Yorkers, mediating our contaminated soil, and building community than the curbside program will ever dream of accomplishing. This is not by any means an underutilized or failing program - it is a thriving program that has far-reaching impacts. It is an investment in our communities, in our climate, and in our future and on top of all of that, it is only 0.3% of the entire Sanitation budget.

Anaerobic co-digestion is not the answer. The benefits of this program are extremely limited and without community level outreach and education, that program is destined for failure. I am calling for a complete restoration of the community compost budget and an investment in our future.

Thank you,
Jennifer Bombardier
Brooklyn, New York

Restore NYC Community compost Budget

For the past few months, we have been deprived of green options to compost our food scraps. As a New Yorker living on Roosevelt Island, the Food Scrap Drop Off every Saturday next to the green market was a beacon of community engagement. Volunteers collected food scraps that were then sent locally to the Queensboro Bridge in Long Island City. This allowed tons of material that would otherwise turn into greenhouse gas to feed city trees, parks and community gardens trapping in that way more CO2 into the soil.

Since the interruption of this very effective, local, community engaging, and green job producing, there are only two solutions for our food scraps: the orange bins that are regularly full and, to our understanding, sent to produce methane gas, a highly potent trapping gas, or to be send to landfill with more negative consequences.

The cut of this very inexpensive program goes against mayor Adams' proclaimed dedication to create green jobs. This budget cut in fact affected about 100 green jobs. Volunteers are trying to find solutions to restore on their own this program but so far with not a lot of success because of the lack of city support.

It is important that we restore fundings for this program so New York City can effectively become more of a leader in the green economy, not less. Fundings for these programs have more value added than cost as it relies on volunteers. They should be restored, preserved and even developed. Thank you for the attention you can bring from these citizen requests.

Good afternoon. My name is Joyce Bialik. I'm a retired social work educator who currently volunteers as a solid waste educator, member of the Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board and WE ACT for Environmental Justice. I am testifying on my own behalf. My sanitation focus has been increasing healthy composting and decreasing plastics and their toxic chemicals.

First, I would like to see a restoration and an increase in funds for community composting. This program has a proven track record in conducting outreach and education to NYC residents about the importance of diverting their food scraps from trash. If we hope to increase participation in food scrap diversion good, widespread education is critical. This program also produces excellent quality healthy compost compared to the industrial scale compost prepared in Staten Island by DSNY. And this is where plastic comes into play. DSNY permits residents to throw plastic bags containing food scraps in collection bins. If DSNY does not actively encourage residents to empty their food scraps from the bag compost produced by DSNY will contain from the plastic such toxic chemicals as PFAS, phthalates, and formaldehyde as opposed to the healthy compost from community composting.

I also propose a new category of funds that would go toward providing incentives for businesses to change their practices or upgrade their machines to reduce plastic contamination. This issue arose with last year's choose to reuse bill. The intent of the bill is to reduce single use plastics in food establishments; however, the usual value of ending single use falls apart when we consider plastic as a container for food and beverages. That is because the more plastic is used the more its toxic chemicals are likely to leach onto its contents – in this case the food we eat and the beverages we drink. Increasingly we are seeing research evidence of the link between plastic and bad health effects. I ask that you include funds in our budget for incentives so that when the choose to reuse bill is reintroduced the incentives will encourage food establishments to substitute metal, ceramic, or glass for plastics for serving and taking out food. Another use for incentives is for washing machine companies to encourage their building machines that have filters for capturing the millions of plastic microfibers that are emitted from each washing machine cycle. For consideration is an upcoming bill to require such filters in commercial washing machines, and the incentive would reduce opposition from the washing machine industry.

Written Testimony for March 14, 2024

To: City Council Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management

I remain shocked by the mismanagement of my taxes and the lack of response from City Council to the voices of New Yorkers. More must be done to reinstate this very successful and essential program. So many other programs that are far more wasteful are fully funded to continue.

- Community Composting keeps our neighborhoods connected and cleaner with constant education about varied methods to handle compostable materials and divert them from landfill. They provide essential food scrap drop off collection sites and hyper local real composting to rebuild our city soils.
- Community Composting medium scale composting sites, teaching events, and food scrap drop off sites across the city divert thousands and thousands of pounds of organic waste from landfill and from transport across the city and then return this to communities in the form of soil amendment after hyper local compost processing.
- Community Composting rebuilds essential soils across NYC and brings life to parks and gardens and people. Soil is the base of all life and an important greenhouse gas sink. It is a falsehood to believe that we are not connected to our urban soils and the plants that bring us oxygen and joy. Trees are fed as compost and mulch is added to their tight, city confines.

These programs and compost sites build real people to people connections for resilient communities, teaches constantly in many diverse ways as it brings people closer to nature, our true home.

Community Composting truly helps to mitigate global warming, and you have cut this essential and inexpensive service that brought only connections and ripples of mutual aid and neighborhood advocacy and life to our city, our home.

The NYC Compost Project employees and volunteers ALWAYS answered my letters and queries and listened carefully to my community's needs (unlike the Mayor and the City Council.) Since 2014, I never sent them an email or called them or stopped by a site without a professional response.

Restore and refund all the NYC Compost Project funding and programs immediately to NYC for our futures together with our planet.



And I repeat...

Save all the NYC Community Compost programs from financially short-sighted and unwise budget cuts!

This means saving all the green bin food scrap drop off sites, all the important NYC compost producing sites (Earth Matter site, Big Reuse sites, Queens Botanical Garden site, the future LES site, as well as the Master Composting program).

The top reasons are the following:

- These programs are part of very steady people to people social infrastructure across NYC. These are places where thousands of New Yorkers volunteer, learn, and connect, thus keeping us all safer and more resilient in the face of future crises. They help mental health, equity issues, and reduce loneliness. New York City needs our

neighborhood sites for connection and health. Read the research on urban health and the importance of these kind of people engagement opportunities and sites as compared to very broken “broken window” policing practices and philosophies that have been proven ineffective.

- These programs are essential parts of NYC’s green infrastructure and are needed to meet NYC climate goals. Food scraps sent to landfill in faraway states are expensive and release methane gas into the atmosphere, a pollutant worse than CO2. However, removing food scraps from sidewalk street trash prevents rats by eliminating their food source. Green bin programs process food scraps hyper locally with constant volunteer resources, thus reducing more greenhouse gases and providing a carbon sink in healthier urban soils with the compost give backs. Composting is one of the top 100 solutions to reversing global warming.
- Urban soils with compost amendments are proven to boost absorption of flood waters during storm surges and a strong flood mitigation strategy. Study NYC websites about combined sewage overflow and rain gardens. Study what wiser cities are actively working on and achieving with rain gardens and composted soils. Why remove something that works for problems that will only increase in severity in coming years? This should instead be an area of investment not complete decimation.
- Saving the green bin food scraps for compost program will protect 115 NYC jobs. As a 2023 participant who completed the Master Composting program, I have witnessed first-hand the high-quality work of these jobs at sites across the city. The energy and professionalism are unmatched. The people who fill these jobs are amazing in their work that combines a passion for earth, people, equity, and solutions! I would be proud to work with these people and I also find that they are constantly trying to do better in their jobs. Quite unfortunately, I cannot say the same about some city leaders or some other city or some DSNY funded initiatives in NYC. In 2023, I learned and connected with people and sites across the boroughs due to this Master Composter program which meant that I completed 45 plus hours of workshops, volunteering, and visits. I am a teacher with 30 years’ experience and a master’s in education and feel qualified to say that the Master Composter program is a very high-quality educational program. To gut this program, which is running so well and teaching so many people about ways to compost, ways to volunteer regularly, ways to reduce global warming, ways to rebuild local soils, to connect appropriately and wisely with neighbors, and to mitigate rat proliferation in NYC – this is an extremely unwise decision financially.
- The misleading orange and brown bin programs have no people connections and no education and do not produce any real compost locally to rebuild local parks, street trees, and community spirit.

Restore the Community Compost green bin programs to the city budget. Listen to the New Yorkers who vote, who volunteer, who mitigate climate change at no cost to NYC, who actively work for the people and the health of this city. Listen to the people who voted for this Mayor and who are so very disappointed. Listen to the people living close to and caring for urban nature, parks, garden sites and neighbors. We are the people who will put in volunteer time on top of our full-time jobs to help NYC. We are the New Yorkers who make this city a great place to live, and this is shocking.

We are New Yorkers who care about our NYC neighbors and neighborhoods far more than the Mayor and DSNY Commissioner seem to care. Please listen to us and save the financially wise and high-quality programs that make up Community Composting (green bin programs and jobs) in NYC.

Thank you to the amazing Community Compost programs and to these NYC workers in the 115 jobs of Community Composting. Gratitude to all for making all these programs possible with their commitment to community, equity, pollution reduction, and health. This participation in composting has contributed to making our NYC neighborhoods more sustainable and more livable in incredible ways.

Save NYC Community Compost (Green Bins Programs). For the health and safety of NYC ongoing, I am asking that NYC change the city budget cuts that eliminates Community Composting (Green Bin) programs. Active community connections help people and improved soil biodiversity and plantings in our neighborhood help storm surge resilience.

The community compost programs like the NYC Compost Project (Big Reuse, Lower East Side Ecology, Earth Matter, Snug Harbor) and Grow NYC play a vital role in our city. These 115 essential green jobs mean that NYC

- diverts over 8 million pounds of organic waste from landfills.
- gives finished compost to over 335 community groups and thousands of individuals.
- creates storm resilient soils across the city that mitigate flooding.
- provides compost education to over 600,000 New Yorkers and educates constantly about ongoing rat prevention.

Compost is one of the top 100 solutions for global warming and these local programs work. Healthy social infrastructure is the way forward for resilient, diverse, democratic societies.

These long standing, successful, people and environment programs and jobs must not be cut but should be permanently assured and thrive for the future of NYC.

The Community Composting (green bin program) is part of the health and safety for our people locally in all NYC neighborhoods.

<https://www.flinders.edu.au/content/dam/documents/research/bgl/Fulbright-Lecture-Series-Pub8.pdf>

<https://drawdown.org/solutions/composting>

And I say again...

Not too long ago, in 2020 community composting faced similar challenges, below is my letter from that date:

Good morning,

My name is Julia Ferguson and I volunteer with the Roosevelt Island Garden Club. We are a 40-year-old volunteer run community of gardeners on Roosevelt Island who have actively supported, benefitted from, and worked alongside NYC Compost (for education, advice, food scrap drop off programs, and compost give backs) through both Big Reuse and Grow NYC.

Our gardens and our broader community have been revitalized through this work. We have learned so much in our community and connected with so many neighbors both on Roosevelt Island and city-wide because of these programs. In this testimony, we ask that the city not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Composting has brought all ages of our gardening group and also broader community of 15,000 people on Roosevelt Island together. Because of NYC Compost programs our community has diverted over 100,000 pounds of food scraps from landfills. Please reinstate 7 million into the budget to reopen NYC Compost programs. Composting connections and is a wise use of our fiscal and natural resources. In addition, the ripple effects for our environmental health and our children's futures are priceless. This is an equitable solution that is cost effective.

Below are only a few examples of how important this work is to our Roosevelt Island community and to NYC:

Partnerships and More Partnerships through Composting

<http://www.rigarden.org/ri-garden-blog/ri-day-partnerships-for-compost-and-planting>

<http://www.rigarden.org/ri-garden-blog/full-circle-from-food-scrap-to-school-garden>

<http://www.rigarden.org/ri-garden-blog/nyc-compost-project-and-big-reuse-on-roosevelt-island>

Outreach/Service Events for all Ages: Cornell Tech to P.S. 217

<http://www.rigarden.org/ri-garden-blog/nyc-compost-official-pumpkin-smash-on-roosevelt-island-2019-third-annual-event>

<http://www.rigarden.org/ri-garden-blog/cornell-tech-volunteers-with-roosevelt-island-garden-club>

<http://www.rigarden.org/ri-garden-blog/compost-connection-worms>

Sincerely,

Julia Ferguson volunteer with Roosevelt Island Garden Club www.rigarden.org "RIGC - In Earth We Trust"

March 15, 2024

Dear City Council Members,

I am disheartened by the lack of care and intention with which Mayor Adams cut funding for the NYC Compost Project and community composting and cannot stress enough the urgency of reinstating funding in the upcoming City budget.

The NYC Compost Project and GrowNYC manage hundreds of food scrap drop-offs across the city, process millions of pounds of organics each year, do vital work to educate citizens, and directly contribute to building a healthier and more resilient future for this city. Mayor Adams' cuts represent an affront to the tireless efforts of these organizations, community stewards, and environmentalists over the past several decades.

We cannot rely solely on the curbside composting and smart bin program, especially when we know that these programs do not produce nutrient rich compost as a primary output. Community composting programs provide opportunities for connection, education, and engagement with our neighbors, in addition to producing high quality compost.

Moreover, community composting represents only a sliver of the total city budget. Despite the minimal cost of these programs, they are highly effective and beloved by many.

Please restore funding for the NYC Compost Project and community composting. Every New Yorker deserves a healthy, sustainable future.

Thank you,
Katie Zwick
District 33
Greenpoint, Brooklyn

Hello,

My name is Kellie M. Beck and I am a resident of East Flatbush, Brooklyn. I moved to the neighborhood two years ago, and since then, the Maple Street Community Garden has been a home away from home. It has taught me endless things about taking care of our environment, our natural flora and fauna, and how to use that knowledge to feed my neighbors. Every Wednesday and Saturday, I walk to the community garden with my compost. I live in a small apartment with three other people, and the amount of trash we divert by simply tossing it in the freezer is astounding. We average 5 lbs of compost a week. That's 260 lbs of compost diverted from our landfills, that instead goes directly towards nurturing our community gardens, parks, and public events. Community composting is used to care for street trees, like the ones they planted along my street this fall, towards parks, like Prospect Park that my household walks to every Saturday morning after the compost, getting bagels at Flatbush Bagel, and coffee at High Grade. These processes remediate soil, sustain environmental impact, and engage our communities. Community Composting partners have composted over eight million pounds of organic waste at just seven processing sites. This initiative employs over 100 New Yorkers in local, green jobs. The benefits of the community composting program directly touch the lives of New Yorkers, and allows New Yorkers the opportunity to directly nurture and care for the streets around us. The fact is, community composting makes up 0.4% of DSNY's annual budget of \$1.7 billion. That's zero point zero, zero six percent (0.006%) of the city's annual budget of \$112 billion in the fiscal year of 2022. My hope would be that when deciding what taxpayer dollars will be spent on in the department of sanitation, the committee would consider setting aside what is, comparatively, crumbs towards the Community Composting program so that New Yorkers, like me, and those that are completely unlike me, can continue to support their neighborhoods directly.

Kellie M. Beck
Hawthorne St.
Brooklyn, NY 11203

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to urge the council to reinstate funding for Community Composting initiatives. As you already know, Community Composting made up .4% or \$7 million of DSNY's overall annual budget of \$1.7 billion, and .006% of NYC's total annual budget of \$112 billion (in FY2022). With this funding, the initiatives employ 115 people in local green jobs. Through this work, partners have composted over 8 million pounds of organic waste and educated thousands of New Yorkers, even certifying some as Master Composters. I personally began the Master Composter certification program with the goal of gaining knowledge and skills to support local green spaces and educate those around me. With the cut in funding, I was not able to complete the program.

In addition to partners doing the work to compost millions of pounds of organic waste, they also did the work of redistributing that waste to benefit the city. It was distributed to community gardens, parks, and thousands of New Yorkers. It was used to support the well-being of Street Trees, Parks, and the city's urban landscape across all boroughs. These processes not only remediate soil, which is vital for the health of our ecosystem, but they also sustain environmental impact and engage communities to take better care of their surroundings and therefore the city's infrastructure.

Please reinstate funding for the Community Composting initiatives.

Sincerely,

Kendall Jenkins
Crown Heights Resident

March 14, 2024

Kevin Cuesta
St
South Richmond Hill, Queens, NY

Dear City Council,

My name is Kevin Cuesta, and I have been a resident of Queens, New York, since I was born in Flushing 25 years ago. I am submitting this written testimony today to amplify the voices of those that are being impacted by the recent defunding for New York City community composting and its respective education programs.

As someone who has grown up here, it seems to me that the reputation New York City once had as one of the most modern, admired cities in the world – a reality I witnessed as I grew up – has been slipping away from us. This is due to many things, including “cleanliness” and safety concerns. These may seem like separate issues. However, in my mind, these aspects of the city have an impact on each other and as a result, affect the livelihood and quality of our city. The more programs in place to better our community, the more opportunity we build for New York City to thrive. Waste management and sustainability are important practices for not just NYC, but the world – and there is no singular practice or technological invention that will take care of it for us. Behind every positive effort for the environment we live in, there is a team of people that dedicate their love and labor to improving society and uplifting our community in the ways they know how to. In this case, these efforts are being unrightfully devalued. I, like many others, consider the relatively small amount of funding (\$7 million, about 0.4% of the Department of Sanitation New York’s annual budget) to be a highly efficient and considerate use of funds for the New York City public. Removing these funds is a step backwards, away from the advanced and environment-friendly New York City that, not just residents, but citizens of the world and hopeful-visitors wish to see and experience for themselves.

I ask that the decision makers reconsider what the community compost and education initiatives means for our city, and to restore the funding for these programs.

Thank you for the time and consideration,

Kevin Cuesta
Queens, NY

Thank you for reading my testimony.

I am writing today to ask you to please reconsider the cuts to community composting. I have been bringing my food scraps to my local farmers market in Inwood ever since the program began, and I have seen it grow by leaps and bounds. The people that bring food scraps to the Inwood Farmers Market every week are responsible for diverting literally TONS of food waste from landfills, and that's just one community. People WANT to compost, people WANT to do what's best for the planet. Supposedly the required composting bins are being rolled out, but our community has yet to get them and knowing that you have also cut the funding for the programs that would educate the public about the brown composting bins, that means that the program will be less effective. It is truly shameful that you are cutting these community programs. This is not responsible progress, this is going backwards. New York should do better.

Please listen to the tens of thousands of NYC citizens that have written and called and rallied:
Please reverse the cuts and FUND OUR COMMUNITY COMPOST PROGRAMS!

Thank you,

Kirsten Hopkins

10034

Subject: Urgent: Restore Funding for Community Composting in NYC

Dear Members of the NYC City Council,

I am writing to urge you to **restore funding for community composting** in New York City. As a concerned resident, I believe that community-based compost programs are **vital** to moving our city closer to its sustainability goals. Here's why:

1. Environmental Impact:

- Community composting plays a crucial role in diverting organic waste from landfills and incinerators. By turning food scraps and yard waste into nutrient-rich compost, we reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote soil health.
- New York City has been a **leading example** for decades, inspiring other communities across the country to adopt similar composting initiatives. Let's continue this legacy by investing in local composting efforts.

2. Equity and Engagement:

- Community composting is a **grassroots movement** that empowers residents to take responsibility for their waste. It fosters a sense of ownership and engagement within neighborhoods.
- By supporting community composting, we ensure that all New Yorkers, regardless of their socioeconomic status, have access to sustainable waste management practices.

3. Economic Benefits:

- Composting creates jobs and stimulates local economies. From collection to processing, community composting generates employment opportunities.
- Additionally, compost can be used to enrich our parks, gardens, and urban green spaces, enhancing the overall quality of life for residents.

The immense public outcry over Mayor Eric Adams' decision to cut funding for community composting demonstrates New Yorkers' commitment to combating the effects of climate change. We cannot afford to lose this valuable program.

Let's prioritize our environment, equity, and economic well-being. I urge you to allocate the necessary funds to reinstate community composting in the city budget for FY 2025. Together, we can continue making New York City a greener, more resilient place to live.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Laine Campbell

4th Avenue Apt

Brooklyn, New York 11215

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Dear Councilmembers,

I have been lucky enough to live within walking distance of a compost dropoff in this city for years. Long before curbside composting was an option, myself and thousands of others have been diverting food scraps from sitting in bags on the streets and ending up in a landfill. Planted within neighborhoods, these sites have served as community education outposts. Seeing my neighbors do this work and becoming excited to learn more, I signed up for the NYC Compost Project Master Composter course in 2023. Traveling all over the city to volunteer, my eyes were opened even more; so many people are doing this work, and have been doing this work for decades. As of January, many of them lost their jobs as programs were cut drastically.

There is something so profound about taking your food waste and working together with your neighbors to turn it into rich compost, brimming with life. To then apply that compost to a tree bed in your neighborhood to reduce the impact of flooding, or to a garden bed so that you can grow more food for your community; this is what's missing from curbside composting. While I believe the city's new composting program is vitally important, I don't think you can have a successful program without the community composters, who work to educate their communities and show what this closed loop really looks like on a local level. To cut this funding is like saying to them, "thanks for all your work, but we don't need you anymore." The amount that these programs cost the city is such a small ask (.006% of the total budget), compared to the giant impact that they have. This city can have an amazing, successful composting program, but not without community engagement and education. Please do everything you can to reverse these cuts, the well being of NYC depends on it.

Sincerely and urgently,

Lauren Wansker

Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management
Hearing: March 14, 2024, 1:00pm

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my hope that the city run composting programs will remain in place, or even be expanded. It is crucial that as a society we embrace this important adjustment to our waste management. Not only for now, but also (indeed mostly) for the future.

We need to raise the next generation to be aware of and thinking about composting, AND about recycling, and about trash in general. And these future generations need to see it as a natural extension of being good citizens, not as an imposition or burden. We can only do that if we at least keep these programs now and hopefully expand them in the future.

I know that my husband and I just LIKE being able to compost. We LIKE the minor extra effort to make us feel that we are doing the right thing for us, for our community, our city, and our planet. These small things we do as individuals for the greater good need to be supported, because when we all come together the small thing becomes a large thing -- and that can lead to a great things.

Thank you,

Lyn Pinezich
lynpin@me.com
Brooklyn, NY

March 14, 2024

Please accept my respectful plea to refund community-based composting and Save the NYC Food Scrap Drop-Off (FSDO) for Compost program from elimination due to budget cuts.

Since 2015, our Roosevelt Island community has benefited from the partnership with the DSNY food scrap to compost program hosted by Big Reuse. Our weekly 5 hour Saturday food scrap collection for compost has diverted over 341,000 pounds of food scraps from the costly travel to other state's landfills. Landfilled food scraps create Methane gas, a pollutant more harmful than CO2. Whereas, food scraps that are processed and decomposed down into nutrient-rich compost capture CO2 in what is called a carbon sink. When that compost is returned to neighborhood urban soils the carbon stays underground and out of NYC air.

And during the 2020 budget reduction, an all volunteer resident group was formed and named HAKI which means ground/soil by the Lenape Center. Our grassroots Haki Compost Collective volunteer group has stood by the green bin food scrap to compost program each Saturday since September 2020 performing community outreach and education and giving back compost to neighbors in support of Big Reuse's compost processing work.

Much of that Big Reuse nutrient-rich compost has returned to Roosevelt Island and fed over 100 new baby trees, numerous school gardens, community projects and resident houseplants too.

And Big Reuse compost will amend the soil in NYC's first ever Miyawaki Method Pocket Forest on Roosevelt Island April 2024. Losing access to community composting means losing good quality, expertly managed compost for neighborhood soil amendment projects including school gardens and park plantings.

Urban cities benefit from food scrap to compost programs in the following ways:

- Rat Mitigation. Removing food scraps from public sidewalks and school trash areas removes the food sources rats need to flourish.
- Local food scrap for compost programs reduce truck, barge and landfill costs for NYC taxpayers.
- Compost amended soils are vastly more water absorbent and are a city smart strategy to stop severe, deadly and costly storm flooding events in NYC.
- Nutrient-rich compost strengthens open space and parklands by feeding tree and shrub roots which creates land more resilient to soil erosion.
- Healthy trees in an urban landscape pull more pollutants including CO2 from the air while emitting oxygen for residents while providing shade to reduce high heat events.
- Compost returned to urban soils captures carbon underground, while costly trucking and barging organic material like food scraps to landfill does not allow the scraps to decompose naturally and worse, emits Methane gas, a dangerous air pollutant.
- Employs 115 people who will all lose their jobs if this FSDO program is eliminated.

Please do everything in your power to save the NYC Food Scrap Drop-Off for Compost program from currently planned budget cuts.

We need to keep moving in the right direction for a healthy and safe environment for our future generations.

Sincerely,

Lynn Marfey

Urgent Request: Restore Funding for NYC's Vital Community Composting Programs

I am writing to express my deep concern about the recent cuts to the NYC Department of Sanitation's (DSNY) community composting budget. These cuts, amounting to only \$7 million, represent a mere 0.4% of the DSNY's annual budget and an insignificant 0.006% of NYC's entire budget.

The Impact of Community Composting

Community composting programs play a crucial role in our fight against climate change. By diverting millions of pounds of organic waste from landfills, these programs significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Here in NYC, community composting partners have composted over 8 million pounds of organic waste, transforming it into valuable compost used by community gardens, parks, and countless New Yorkers.

Beyond Composting: Building a Stronger Community

The impact of community composting goes far beyond waste reduction. These programs foster environmental education, empower residents to take action, and cultivate a sense of community. In my experience with the Maple Street Community Garden composting project in Brooklyn, I've witnessed firsthand how a small initiative has blossomed into a vibrant hub of activity. Our team of volunteers has grown, engaging residents of all ages and backgrounds. This has led to the formation of secondary community groups focused on cleanups, sustainable agriculture, and recycling. Composting has become a powerful force for positive change in our neighborhood.

A Call to Action

While the budget cuts may seem insignificant on paper, their impact is far-reaching. We cannot afford to lose these vital programs in our fight against climate change and for a healthier, more sustainable city.

Therefore, I urge you to fully restore the funding for NYC's community composting programs. This small investment will yield significant environmental and social benefits for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Margaret Marcy Emerson

Brooklyn, NY · ### ## # · mariana.mbc@protonmail.com

Dear Council Members,

I live in Brooklyn. I am a renter. I am a mother. I collect our food scraps then bring them to a Grow NYC program that transforms it into compost. Our landlady does not want us to use the brown bins. We don't have a lot of options for composting if not for the Community Composting programs. This is a cheap and simple way to give a few people a meaningful and useful job, while doing the very important work of reducing landfill size, increasing soil quality and reducing greenhouse causing gases. Please keep this program alive!

I urge you to support the restoration of funding for community composting programs in the upcoming budget for FY 2025. Without community composting initiatives, we would have limited options for responsibly disposing of our food scraps and contributing to sustainable waste management practices.

Community composting not only helps divert organic waste from landfills but also transforms it into nutrient-rich compost that enhances soil quality and supports urban greening efforts. Additionally, these programs provide meaningful employment opportunities for members of our community and promote environmental education and awareness.

It is disheartening to learn that funding for community composting has been eliminated from the Mayor's proposed budget, especially considering the overwhelming support from New Yorkers, who have submitted nearly 50,000 letters advocating for its continuation. As City Council members, I implore you to take action to restore funding for community composting programs and ensure that they remain accessible to all residents.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,
Mariana Cardoso

Honorable Council Members,

Since its inception the NYC Compost Project has diverted tons of waste from landfills and turned that waste into a useful, climate friendly product - compost!

That compost helps nurture and sustain the city's many community gardens and other sites, keeping them healthy and blooming for all to enjoy.

The project also provides jobs for those interested in entering the field of sustainable waste practices.

One of the key elements to having a successful outcome in such a project is consistency - getting people into the habit of separating food scraps, bringing them to their community garden or drop-off site at a Greenmarket, or using the bins provided by the city.

It takes some time and effort to get used to doing it, but once it becomes part of your household routine, you realize how easy it is and how much less trash you are throwing into the waste stream.

And the added bonus of getting back compost is a great incentive.

To break that momentum now would undo all the good work of the previous years, not to mention putting more food waste garbage on the streets, where we are already battling a serious rodent problem.

We are at a critical time, if we want to survive on this planet, we have to keep making changes to how we consume and get rid of our waste - I urge you to keep the NYC Compost Project funded!

Respectfully,
Mary Feaster
Staten Island, NY

Dear Council Members,

Thank you for taking my testimony.

My partner and I got into the habit of recycling our food scraps about two years ago. Each Sunday, we'd take the scraps to the composting station during its operating hours in McGolrick Park.

We adopted this habit quickly and with dedication for one main reason: We saw, very literally, how much of our waste would otherwise become garbage. Rinds! Peels! Coffee grounds! On and on.

For a long time, I thought it didn't matter. My thinking was: It's organic matter; it will decompose. So who cares if it goes into the trash? Finally, I learned a critical fact: When organic waste is dumped into landfills, it undergoes anaerobic decomposition (due to the lack of oxygen) and produces methane. And methane, of course, is an extremely potent greenhouse gas.

So—organic matter can either be composted and used toward the productive and environmental goal of creating fertile planting material; or it can be dumped and then become a source of a highly toxic pollutant.

The choice is obvious. The composting programs are affordable, popular, and easy to maintain. We need to preserve them and in fact extend them. There is absolutely no good reason for organic waste to flood landfills—unnecessarily creating literal tons of waste and generating high quantities of methane.

Thanks again for your time and attention.

Pamela Rafalow Grossman
Newton St. ###
Brooklyn NY 11222
###-###-####

Dear Council Members,

I am writing this testimony in support of city funded composting programs such as the one in my neighborhood which lost funding recently. Community compost programs make up a small fraction of DSNY's overall annual budget, and has a large impact on the communities they serve through education, employment, and engaging New Yorkers in their communities and local greenspaces. New Yorkers can learn about where their waste goes, meet members of the community, and feel a sense of positive camaraderie and community that is sorely needed in our neighborhoods.

These programs have helped compost over 8 million lbs. of organic waste at seven different processing sites, while educating thousands of New Yorkers as Master Composters. In the absence of other municipal composting programs, the community composting enables at source organic waste separation, benefitting both climate pollution prevention and sanitation needs. At the same time, finished compost provides healthy soil to community gardens, parks, street trees, and New Yorkers across all boroughs.

For a small impact on the budget, these programs go a long way to impacting the city and its people.

Urgent Plea to Restore Funding for Community Composting and Related Education Programs

Dear Decision Makers at the Department of Sanitation New York (DSNY),

I am writing to express my deep concern and to voice my opposition to the recent decision to eliminate all funding for community composting and related education initiatives. This decision not only undermines our city's progress towards sustainability and environmental stewardship but also neglects the considerable benefits these programs have already brought to our communities. I urge you to reconsider this action and to restore the \$7 million previously allocated to these vital efforts.

The funding in question represents a mere 0.4% of DSNY's overall annual budget of \$1.7 billion, and an even more minuscule 0.006% of New York City's total annual budget of \$112.4 billion for FY2022. This relatively small investment yields substantial returns for our city, both environmentally and socially, making it an exemplary model of efficient and impactful use of public funds.

Here are the pivotal reasons why reinstating funding for community composting and related education programs is essential:

- 1. Job Creation and Economic Benefits:** The initiative has successfully employed 115 individuals in local green jobs. These roles not only provide sustainable employment but also foster a sense of community and purpose, contributing to the local economy and the environmental sector's growth.
- 2. Waste Reduction and Environmental Impact:** Through the processing of over 8 million pounds of organic waste at seven different sites, this program has significantly reduced the amount of waste sent to landfills, thereby mitigating methane emissions, a potent greenhouse gas.
- 3. Education and Community Engagement:** The Master Composter program and other educational efforts have been instrumental in increasing awareness and knowledge about composting and sustainability, empowering New Yorkers to take active roles in their communities.
- 4. Support for Urban Green Spaces:** All the finished compost generated by these initiatives is used to enrich community gardens, parks, and urban landscapes across all boroughs, enhancing the health and beauty of our city's green spaces.
- 5. Soil Remediation and Environmental Sustainability:** These composting programs play a crucial role in remediating soil and sustaining environmental health, supporting the city's broader sustainability goals.

The decision to cut funding for these initiatives not only halts their immediate benefits but also signals a step backward in our collective commitment to a greener, more sustainable New York City. At a time when environmental issues demand more action, not less, we must invest in programs that have proven their worth in terms of economic, environmental, and social returns.

I urge you to reconsider this decision and to restore the funding for community composting and related education programs. By doing so, you reaffirm New York City's commitment to sustainability, community empowerment, and the well-being of both our environment and our citizens.

Thank you for considering this urgent plea. I, along with many other concerned New Yorkers, eagerly await your positive response and the reinstatement of support for these critical programs.

Sincerely,

Raymond Cosgrove

Rob Parker
Winthrop Street, Apt

Brooklyn, NY 11225

Dear New York City Council,

I'm a constituent living in Prospect Lefferts Gardens (PLG), Brooklyn, and I write to you in support of our community's composting programs. These composting programs are an incredibly important part of our community in many ways. They provide natural resources for our park systems, reduce municipal waste, help grow local food, provide volunteer opportunities, and support small businesses and jobs for people living in Brooklyn.

NYC's Department of Sanitation has already started its borough-wide composting program, but it isn't enough. Community composting only costs 0.006% of NYC's total annual budget of \$112 billion dollars and yet has managed to compost over 8 million pounds of compost. We need community-based composting programs now more than ever. Please join so many of us in supporting these programs and help develop Brooklyn's green economy!

Thank you again for your time, consideration, and attention to this important matter.

All
Rob Parker

my

best,

March 14, 2024

To: City of New York City Council

Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management

Dear Chair Abreu, Committee Members and other Elected Representatives,

I write again to respectfully request the Sanitation Committee and City Council add community composting to the Fiscal Year 2025 budget. Most of this letter is the same as my February 25, 2024 letter to this committee and letters I submitted in December to the Rat Mitigation Hearing and to the PEG Hearing, where I testified in person. I'll keep writing even though I never receive any response and question whether it's worth it.

I'm becoming increasingly saddened as the community compost programs are being killed off by the Mayor, more and more each month. Soon there will be no more processors and the farmers' market drop-offs will be gone by the end of May. I worry about the people I have come to know over the past two years of working at one of the market drop-offs. There are several older adults who gain so much more out of their drop-off experience than the satisfaction of knowing they are diverting food scraps from the landfill. They get a sense of connection as they share a smile, a story, a complaint, a comment about the weather. These older adults have committed to bringing their scraps and the Mayor and OMB Director Jiha have just dismissed them without a second thought. Shameful.

As you know, Mayor Adams and DSNY cut **all** community composting in the November Plan PEG, effective this past December 2023. This has led to discontinuation of the NYC Compost Project and its community and education programs including the Master Composter Certification programs. Groups in NYC involved in community composting have laid off staff and cut programming because of these cuts. Some programs have survived with the support of temporary private funding but face complete elimination of their programs in the coming months. Despite the reassurance that no jobs were cut as a result of the PEG, this is simply not true.

The sudden discontinuation of these community programs has led to confusion and a disruption to the habits New Yorkers have developed over time. The rationale

for the cuts was that community composting is ‘small and inefficient’ and yet these cuts have led to waste and adding workers to the unemployment rolls. For many New Yorkers, once the community drop-offs ceased operations, thousands of pounds of food scraps are now being thrown into the garbage. Isn’t it inefficient to cut food scrap drop-offs when not every borough even has curbside composting? Isn’t it inefficient to cut community composting when not everyone can use a smart bin or has one near them? Isn’t it inefficient to cut community composting when even in boroughs that have brown bins, many buildings are not using the brown bins? All of this inefficiency is only causing confusion and disruption to the habits people have developed of saving their scraps until the weekly trip to the market or a nearby drop-offs.

I have been so proud to be a New Yorker watching the City’s community composting programs grow over the past decade. I received my first worm bin at a workshop led by the Lower East Side Ecology Center in 2009. Like many New Yorkers, I took my food scraps on the subway to Union Square. I was happy to see Master Composters in my Queens neighborhood start collecting food scraps at the local farmers market. In 2012, I enrolled in the Master Composter Course at Queens Botanical Garden and devoted numerous hours to programs all over the city where processing food scraps was happening. I was part of a group of community composters that attended meetings at DSNY to discuss issues related to our concerns as we grew. I was part of Sunny Compost, mentioned in this 2014 report, https://dsny.cityofnewyork.us/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/about_2014-community-composting-report-LL77_0815.pdf. I now work part-time for GrowNYC as a Compost Coordinator where I talk to hundreds of people every week about all things compost.

It's mind-boggling to see NYC come so far to now simply decimate all community composting. The brown bin curbside program and the Smart bins are potentially great options and it’s not surprising that the DSNY support of community composting will change. But it is inefficient and unwise to completely eliminate community composting. Please consider these ideas below.

Suggestions:

- Keep the community composting collection and processing operations funded for at a minimum of two more years until each borough has both curbside and Smart bin organics processing programs in place as well as fines for noncompliance with brown bins.

- Continue to fund the NYC Compost Project programs that provide education and outreach to students, Master Composter course takers and community members long-term.
- Continue to fund outreach and education programs to support the DOE curbside composting. Schools have new staff and students each year and will need ongoing support to ensure these programs are successful.
- Partner with the community composting groups to design education and outreach roles at greenmarkets and community gardens.

Please see addendum, “What is Lost Without Community Composting.”

Thank you for reading my testimony. I look forward to your action to save community composting in New York City.

Ruth Groebner

What is Lost Without Community Composting

A child walking by a Greenmarket FSDO points out the totes full of food scraps and excitedly tells their parent how they learned about this in school.

An older adult stops by the FSDO at the market thanking the worker for providing a small bag of finished compost a couple of weeks earlier and shares how her plants responded so well to it.

A new arrival from Los Angeles stops by the market compost booth and asks what composting options are available in NYC.

A family walking by notices the green bins and ask what's the difference between these food scraps and the brown bins.

An older adult anxiously talks about how she tried to use the orange Smart bin but it wouldn't open and an FSDO staffer shows her how to download the appropriate app on her phone.

Several community members, often older adults, share greetings and updates about weather, local events, their lives, and thank the FSDO staff for being there each week.

A person drives up to the market with some yard waste they'd like to be composted, unaware of how the City takes yard waste now.

An engaged NYC resident signs up for the NYC Compost Project's Master Composter course and learns about the science of composting and gives numerous hours to community groups in all boroughs.

Community groups rely on Master Composters to volunteer at a wide range of programs including zero-waste events on Governors Island, library workshops, street tree care events and more.

A community garden that has accepted food scraps for several years receives support of organizations like BigReuse or Queens Botanical Garden to provide leaves or wood chips, or to take excess food scraps or finished compost, or provide bins and tools.

A local street tree care project receives logistical support to provide the finished compost and tools to the group.

Workers who have committed themselves to careers helping the environment by working in NYC's community composting infrastructure are laid off, losing stable work and in many cases, benefits.

Dear committee members and administration officials,

I am writing to you today to voice my opinion about the importance of community composting in New York City. Here is a list of reasons the administration should be taking composting seriously:

- Community Composting makes up .4% or \$7 million of DSNY's overall annual budget of \$1.7 billion, and .006% of NYC's total annual budget of \$112 billion in FY2022.
- This initiative employs 115 people in local green jobs.
- Community Composting partners have composted over 8 million lbs. of organic waste at seven different processing sites.
- They have educated thousands of New Yorkers and certified them as Master Composters.
- They have empowered New Yorkers to volunteer and engage in their community green spaces.
- All of the finished compost is distributed to community gardens, parks, and thousands of New Yorkers through public events.
- Used to care for Street Trees, Parks, and our city's urban landscape across all boroughs.
- These processes remediate soil, sustain environmental impact, and engage communities.

Given the urgency of the present climate change crisis, it's crucial to prioritize all efforts towards the Earth and motivating individuals to enact positive transformations. The advantages of composting are widely acknowledged and serve as a potent means for communities to reestablish their connection with the Earth and with one another. The moment to take action is now, and you have the means and power to save community composting.

Thank you for your work and dedication.

Best regards,
Sebastien Ammann

Please support composting. I keep all my food scraps and am happy to drop them in the secure street bins provided. These bins should be on every block to encourage the USE of valuable “garbage.”

Thank you.

Sharon King Hoge

Park Avenue

NYC 10022

Restore Funding for Community Composting

By Toni Ceaser

I am a certified Master Composter. I thought this was so important, I took classes, did a practicum and have worked with compost for over a decade. Composting is essential to enriching our soil which enriches in turn our trees, grass, flowers, and food. This of course benefits our symbiotic relationship with the greenery that takes CO₂ which the city and all sane people want to reduce. In turn the greenery gives off Oxygen. Composting reduces waste and increases nutrient rich soil. It improves quality of life for all. That is just the way to go. It is so simple and smart.

To: New York City Council
From: Wassa Bagayoko

I would like to express my *fervent* support for continuing the composting programs currently in place. As a New York native, I take pride in how our city pioneers green programs, and regularly use the composting stations near me. In addition to my personal passion for composting, there are objective benefits to the practice, especially in a city such as New York.

These include:

- Community Composting makes up .4% or \$7 million of DSNY's overall annual budget of \$1.7 billion, and .006% of NYC's total annual budget of \$112 billion in FY2022.
- This initiative employs 115 people in local green jobs.
- Community Composting partners have composted over 8 million lbs. of organic waste at seven different processing sites.
- They have educated thousands of New Yorkers and certified them as Master Composters.
- They have empowered New Yorkers to volunteer and engage in their community green spaces.
- All of the finished compost is distributed to community gardens, parks, and thousands of New Yorkers through public events.
- Used to care for Street Trees, Parks, and our city's urban landscape across all boroughs.
- These processes remediate soil, sustain environmental impact, and engage communities.

I urge you to continue funding the composting program and help New York City become a greener, more future forward city.

My very best,

Wassa Bagayoko

My name is Wladimir Navarrete, I am disabled and live in Roosevelt Island

I think it is important to keep the NYC Community Food Scrap Collection for Composting because it helps to divert more than 8.3 million pounds of organic waste from landfills each year and it produces and distributes hundreds of thousands of pounds of compost to over 325 community groups, parks, 85 street tree care events. It helps our community garden with donations of compost, I am part of the community garden and I benefit from those donations; my garden is my therapy since I am in a wheelchair and I can't stand, run or go to the gym, I spend a lot of time at the garden, thanks to the compost I am able to enjoy my garden. Please restore funding for the community food scrap collection for composting.

I am writing to offer my support for funding community composting programs around NYC.

Community composting not only keeps waste out of landfills and puts it to good use sequestering carbon emissions, supporting healthy soil and ecosystems, but also strengthens local social networks. My involvement with Nurture BK, a local composting community organization in Brooklyn, introduced me to more of my neighbors than any other means.

Curbside 'compost' collection in brown bins does not replace these programs. There is no education around how compost works and why it is beneficial, no community involvement, and most of the material gathered in this way is not used for compost, but rather processed with sewage to generate biogas.

Funding for community composting programs should be restored.

Compost is so important for the environment, as it diverts waste from the landfill and turns it into healthy soil that can act as a carbon sink and pull carbon out of the atmosphere. It is honestly embarrassing that a city as important as New York does not yet have a fully functioning compost program. Other cities are lightyears ahead of us in this realm. Investing in compost, which takes a fraction of the budget, is a solid investment in our future. Please fund composting!!

I am submitting testimony to support the refunding of community-based composting in order to save the NYC Food Scrap Drop-Off (FSDO) for Compost program from elimination due to budget cuts.

Governmental and independent budget watchdogs have pointed to a number of strategies for managing the city's fiscal issues without requiring such severe cuts to public services, including curtailing uniformed overtime, undoing the hiring freeze at revenue generating agencies, and using some of the city's \$8B reserve fund.

Due to the Mayor's cuts, essential composting programs have shuttered their doors, libraries are cutting their hours, people are losing their jobs, education is being slashed, CUNY ASAP is being gutted, childcare seats are being cut, thousands of housing and service agency positions are being eliminated, and New Yorkers and our children are the ones paying the price.

Meanwhile, NYPD and DOC are escaping the brunt of the Mayor's cuts once again, despite wasteful spending in their overtime and uniformed budgets.

I am especially concerned by the complete elimination of the community composting program. The city's brown and orange bin food waste systems are not available city-wide, and the food scraps collected through these systems are not actually composted – they are processed through anaerobic digestion creating biogas that is meant to go to nearby homes but is often burned off instead. This process leaves behind solids, over half of which are sent to landfills. The community compost program, which supports food scrap drop-off sites at farmer's markets and gardens across the city, is much more sustainable and critical to NYC's climate goals.

I have volunteered for three years at the food scrap drop off on Roosevelt Island, which is possible only through a partnership with Big Reuse. These budget cuts threaten to completely eliminate Big Reuse's DSNY funding and will require them to give up their equipment and compost processing space. This cut, which is only a few million dollars of DSNY's budget, has completely shut down community composting. Big Reuse is only one of many organizations across the city that have been affected in this way. Nearly 100 people have already lost their jobs, and food waste that had been composted locally is going to landfills miles away.

At our drop-off on Roosevelt Island, over 200 households brought their food scraps every week, and since 2015 we have diverted 170 tons of food waste from landfills. The food scrap drop-off is also a community space, where we also host educational events and other activities like clothing drives. I have seen the benefit of neighbors, many of whom are elderly and living alone, connecting and socializing when they come to drop off their compost.

I urge the City Council to halt these massive cuts and to guarantee full funding to community composting programs for the future. These cost-effective programs contribute to a more livable city with fewer rats, cleaner streets, and healthier soils, while cutting waste destined for landfills or incinerators.

New Yorkers need a functioning, well-run city government and city services and social safety net now more than ever. Members of the NYC Council, we especially need you to stand up against all of these unnecessary cuts in upcoming budget modification negotiations.

Mayor Adams' plan to eliminate funding for Community Composting is short-sighted.

The program brings city residents together, supports gardens and other greenspace in the city with the compost that is generated, teaches important principles of environmentalism and conservation, and—perhaps most importantly at a time when the world faces huge challenges from climate change — sparks interest in and commitment to sustainability. With the City rolling out its citywide curbside organics collection, now more than ever the Community Composting program is needed to provide education.

At far less than \$10 million dollars a year, Community Composting is dirt cheap and should be spared from the Mayor's cuts.

Testimonial for saving our compost

Saving NYC's Compost: More Than Just Green Talk

I'm a resident of Roosevelt Island, and while I'm all for reducing our environmental footprint, the current city composting system feels more like greenwashing than real action. The new compost bins are a great idea, but in my experience, they're rarely emptied. Multiple times I've tried to add my food scraps, only to find them overflowing!

That's why I'm excited about Haki Compost. They offer a different approach, one that goes beyond the "feel-good" label of "green energy."

Here's why I support Haki:

- **Community Focus:** Haki prioritizes engagement. They educate residents on composting and create opportunities for neighborhoods to actively participate in the process. It feels more empowering than just tossing scraps in a bin.
- **Composting for Real Results:** Haki composts in a way that optimizes soil health and reduces carbon emissions. It's not just about diverting waste, it's about creating a valuable resource for our city's gardens and green spaces. This feels more impactful than the vague term "green energy."

Let's move beyond performative green initiatives and support programs like Haki that focus on genuine community engagement and creating a closed-loop system for our waste.

Together, we can turn our food scraps into fertile soil, not overflowing bins.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, food is the single largest category of material placed in municipal landfills in the USA, where it emits methane, a powerful greenhouse gas. NYC needs to restore its composting program and get more people engaged in food waste composting because it is something everyone can do to reduce the release of greenhouse gases. Now that rat-proof containers are starting to be required in the city and the numbers of rats are already significantly reduced, maybe the Mayor can eliminate the position of Rat Czar and use that money to bring back composting throughout the city. We need composting far more than a Rat Czar.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/13/2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kate Wimsatt

Address: 100 Gold St NY NY

I represent: grow NYC zero Waste Schools

Address: 100 Gold St NY NY

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Christine Dake-Romeo

Address: 299 E 8th St #22 NY 10009

I represent: LES Ecology Center

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

Compost

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Corey Wilkins

Address: _____

I represent: Grow NYC Workers Collective

Address: RWDSU

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. Community Composting Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/14/2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Anita Chan

Address: _____ Long Island City
NY 11101

I represent: myself

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Arif Sunmoan

Address: _____

I represent: Grow NYC

Address: 100 Gold St -

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ERIC GOLDSTEIN

Address: _____

I represent: NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL

Address: 40 WEST 84 ST. NY, NY 10024

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lina Lopez

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: GIL LOPEZ

Address: _____

I represent: Self

Address: QUEENS, NY

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Samartha MacBride, Ph D

Address: [REDACTED], NYC 1000

I represent: Self

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ROBINI NAQLE

Address: _____

I represent: myself

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/14/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JUSTIN WOOD

Address: 151 W 30th St NY 10001

I represent: NYLPI

Address: 151 W 30th St, NY, NY 10001

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ERIC Goldstein

Address: _____

I represent: WRDC

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Theo Moore

Address: ALIGN

I represent: ALIGN

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lena Frey

Address: _____

I represent: Grow NYC workers RWDSU

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nathalie Huang

Address: _____

I represent: Grow NYC Workers Collective

Address: RWDSU

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Phyllis Yip

Address: _____

I represent: Grow NYC Workers Collective RWDSU

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sitra Bowman

Address: _____

I represent: Grow NYC Workers Collective - RWDSU

Address: Zero Waste Schools/Compost

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/12/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Matthew Cervello

Address: _____

I represent: Albany County Public Employees Assn

Address: 1000 State St Albany NY 12207

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

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK *Compost*

Appearance Card

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

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Erik Menjivar

Address: Brown NYC Masters Collective

I represent: RWDSU

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

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

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lacey Tauber

Address: _____

I represent: Brooklyn Borough President Reynolds

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

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

Date: 1/4/14

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mira Velaz

Address: _____

I represent: Upper School

Address: 11 South Street

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ANNEZIESE ZAUSNER-MANNING

Address: _____

I represent: BIG REUSE

Address: BROOKLYN, NY 11225

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JUSTIN GREEN

Address: _____

I represent: BIG REUSE

Address: BROOKLYN, NY 11215

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: CLARE MIFLIN

Address: _____

I represent: CENTER FOR ZERO

Address: WASTE DESIGN
+ SAVE OUR COMPOST

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MARISA DE DOMINICIS

Address: 179 RIVINGTOWN ST

I represent: EARTH MATTER

Address: GOVERNORS ISLAND

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/14/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Andrea Lieske

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: Mar 14, 2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Eric Arnum

Address: Forest Hills Green Team

I represent: 10520 66th Rd

Address: Forest Hills NY 11375

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nando Rodriguez

Address: _____

I represent: The Brotherhood Sister Sol

Address: _____

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