

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

----- X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

----- X

September 25, 2024  
Start: 10:52 a.m.  
Recess: 12:37 p.m.

HELD AT: COMMITTEE ROOM 16TH FLOOR,  
CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Shaun Abreu, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Chris Banks  
David M. Carr  
Sandy Nurse  
Sandra Ung  
Inna Vernikov

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

Josh Goodman  
Deputy Commissioner  
Public Affairs & Customer Experience  
Department of Sanitation

Kate Kitchener  
Assistant Commissioner  
Bureau of Recycling & Sustainability  
Department of Sanitation

Jennifer McDonnell  
Assistant Commissioner  
Solid Waste Management Planning  
Department of Sanitation

Jessica Schreiber  
Founder and CEO of FabScrap

Madeline MacGillivray Wallace  
Director Climate Justice Program  
Seeding Sovereignty

Christopher Leon Johnson

Mary Arnold  
Solid Waste Advisory Board

Ulrike Nischan  
Solid Waste Advisory Board

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 3

2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good morning and welcome to  
3 the New York City Council hearing of the Committee on  
4 Sanitation and Solid Waste Management. At this time,  
5 can everybody please silence your cell phones. If  
6 you wish to testify, please go up to the Sargent at  
7 Arms desk to fill out a testimony slip, even if you  
8 already registered online.

9 At this time and going forward, no one is to  
10 approach the dais. I repeat, no one is to approach  
11 the dais. Thank you for your cooperation. Chair, we  
12 are ready to begin.

13 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Good morning, everyone.  
14 Thank you, Sanitation Committee members, DSNY Deputy  
15 Commissioner Joshua Goodman, and Director of Bureau  
16 of Recycling and Sustainability Kate Kitchener.

17 I would also like to thank the members of the  
18 public who are here to testify.

19 To minimize disruption, please place electronic  
20 devices on vibrate or silent mode. I would also like  
21 to acknowledge Councilmembers present with us here  
22 today, Councilmembers Ung, Banks, Nurse, as well as  
23 on Zoom, we have Salamanca, Gennaro. And that's it  
24 for now.

25

2 I want to begin today's hearing by recognizing  
3 Richard Errico, who served the city as a sanitation  
4 worker for 19 years. He paid the ultimate sacrifice  
5 this Saturday when he died while on the job at a DSNY  
6 garage. Richard's dedication to public service made  
7 real impacts on this city and the way we experience  
8 life here.

9 We ache for Richard's family and mourn his loss,  
10 and we'd like to pause now for a moment of silence.

11 [15 SECONDS SILENCE]

12 The purpose of today's hearing is to discuss the  
13 city's work to reduce waste. Each year, New York  
14 City residents produced almost 4 million tons of  
15 residential waste, with an additional 4 million tons  
16 produced by offices and businesses.

17 We must do more to reduce our waste, starting  
18 with a change in our mindset and our daily habits.  
19 We should minimize consumption of certain materials  
20 that are difficult or impossible to recycle, consume  
21 less overall, opt for reused materials over new ones,  
22 and ensure that whatever cannot be reused is  
23 recovered and recycled.

2 New Yorkers can also call on our government to  
3 support programs and infrastructure that promote a  
4 zero waste society.

5 To achieve the sustainable future that New  
6 Yorkers deserve, and to act in solidarity with the  
7 communities living near landfills and incinerators,  
8 we must address the 22,000 tons of waste that New  
9 Yorkers produce daily.

10 The New York City Council voted last year to pass  
11 the Zero Waste Act by my amazing colleague here,  
12 Sandy Nurse, which set the city's goal of diverting a  
13 hundred percent of recyclable waste from landfills or  
14 incinerators and established what will be one of the  
15 nation's largest residential curbside organic waste  
16 recycling programs. This act required Department of  
17 Sanitation to produce annual reports on the city's  
18 progress towards our zero waste goals.

19 We each have a personal capacity and  
20 responsibility to contribute to our city's  
21 achievement of zero waste by 2030. Looking at the  
22 latest waste characterization numbers, we recognize  
23 there's a lot more work to do. Over 1 million New  
24 Yorkers experience food insecurity, and yet we throw  
25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 6

2 away 1.2 billion pounds of food in 2022, 86 million  
3 pounds of which was still in its packaging.

4 Let me repeat this, 86 million pounds of usable  
5 food.

6 With a systematic approach that enhances food  
7 donations and improves inventory management, we can  
8 solve our waste issue and our hunger issue. Organic  
9 waste makes up about a third of residential waste in  
10 New York City, and with residential organics  
11 recycling coming to every borough next month, we are  
12 offered an opportunity to do the brave and necessary  
13 thing to alter our mindset and daily habits by  
14 recycling our leftover food scraps.

15 Beyond organics recycling, we must do more to  
16 make waste recycling accessible for waste producers,  
17 and to make waste recycling a more stable and  
18 profitable investment. It is also important that we  
19 do more to reduce our use of plastic and toxic  
20 chemicals, as we learn more about the effects of  
21 these materials leaching into our ecosystem.

22 The city's landscape will continue to change, and  
23 through such development, we must look for ways to  
24 reuse, recover demolition materials, and new  
25 construction projects.

2 Finally, we must reduce our reliance on trashing  
3 out-of-sight communities by continuing our investment  
4 in building and maintaining local waste recycling  
5 facilities.

6 Today's legislation encompasses some of these  
7 intentions. We are hearing four bills today.

8 Intro 256 from Councilmember Crystal Hudson,  
9 which would require DSNY to conduct a study on the  
10 feasibility and potential environmental effects of a  
11 mandatory household textile recycling program, and  
12 Intros 351, 696, and 697 by Councilmember Nurse.

13 Intro 351 would require DSNY to develop and  
14 implement a plan for promoting the proper disposal of  
15 rechargeable batteries, such as the lithium-ion  
16 batteries used by motorized bicycles, scooters, and  
17 other personal mobility devices.

18 Next, Intro number 695 would require DSNY, in  
19 consultation with DCWP, DOHMH, DEP, SBS, and MOPD, to  
20 study and report initiatives to reduce the use of  
21 single-use plastic items.

22 And Intro 697 would require DSNY to submit two  
23 additional waste characterization studies.

24 Currently, local law requires them through January  
25 31, 2024.

2 I look forward to the dialogue today. I look  
3 forward to hearing detailed information from the  
4 Department of Sanitation about its work to bring the  
5 city to zero waste. We're also looking forward to  
6 hearing from members of the community about their  
7 concerns and priorities regarding waste diversion.

8 I would like to-- Sandy, you'd like to share a  
9 few words on your bills?-- please pass it over to  
10 Sandy Nurse to discuss the bills before us today.

11 COUNCILMEMBER NURSE: Thank you, Chair. I just  
12 want to apologize for being late this morning, but  
13 thank you for hearing our bills. Good morning,  
14 everyone. So I have-- I'll go a little off script  
15 because I got a chance to look at your testimony.

16 Intro number 351 with regards to rechargeable  
17 batteries, particularly e-bike batteries. I know  
18 that this requires state action. I believe last  
19 year, or maybe it's this year, honestly, time is  
20 escaping me right now, but I'm pretty sure the  
21 council passed a resolution asking the state really  
22 to include the e-bike batteries in its exchange  
23 program or as part of the kind of EPR that already  
24 exists.



2 And we agree, like we want the state to take  
3 action, but I think hopefully when that happens,  
4 that's, you know, that will complement what the bill  
5 intends to do, but we still need to create a network  
6 of disposable sites for these e-bike batteries given  
7 how they have proliferated in the city, and how much  
8 damage they're causing. I don't think there's enough  
9 education. I know education-- there is this constant  
10 need for education around everything around waste,  
11 but I think in particular this issue is really  
12 deadly.

13 I know the Council has really tried to take  
14 action on it. There just like needs to be a  
15 saturation of systems to collect this information and  
16 also let people know the dangers of it. So, you  
17 know, I'm open to hearing any feedback, but I  
18 completely agree that really the state needs to take  
19 action and then we also just need a network.

20 The garages aren't enough. The one-off events  
21 are not enough. Councilmembers paying for e-waste  
22 events with discretionary funding is just not enough.

23 You know, we really need like e-bike disposable  
24 site per community district or something like that

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 10

2 because there's just too many on the street and it's  
3 dangerous.

4 The single-use plastic study. This was a bill  
5 that was requested when I first came in by advocates.

6 You know, I got single-use on my desk right here.  
7 It's all around us. I agree that some of this can be  
8 captured in the waste characterization study.

9 I'd love to hear a little bit more today in the  
10 conversation like how exactly that's captured in  
11 terms of the pervasiveness of it. Agree this is also  
12 where the state needs to kick in. Really wish the  
13 state would find the courage to pass the packaging  
14 reduction-- the EPR version of this at the state  
15 level and hopefully we can do it this year and maybe  
16 the plastics industry will get out of the way for  
17 everybody's sake.

18 But I would love to see how the waste  
19 characterization study actually can really do what  
20 the bill wants it to do, so that we can actually try  
21 to pinpoint areas of intervention.

22 And then the waste characterization study, you  
23 know, that was in collaboration with you all so we  
24 would love to see it move forward. But I think one  
25 other piece that has come up in conversation with

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 11  
2 people that I've had is the commercial waste, if  
3 there's ability to capture that in the study as well.

4 So yeah, just looking forward to the conversation  
5 as always want to work in collaboration. Thank you.  
6 Thank you, Chair.

7 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thank you, Councilmember  
8 Nurse. I would also like to recognize Councilmember  
9 Vernikov who's joined us.

10 I would like to thank everyone on my team and in  
11 the legislative division for their work drafting this  
12 legislation and preparing for today's oversight  
13 hearing.

14 I would also like to begin with the testimony  
15 from the Department of Sanitation followed by  
16 Councilmember questions. We will then move to  
17 testimony by members of the public starting with in-  
18 person attendees followed by those testifying on  
19 Zoom.

20 I will now turn it over to the Committee Counsel  
21 to administer the oath.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Good morning. My name is  
23 Morgan Barrett, Committee Counsel for the Sanitation  
24 and Solid Waste Committee at the New York City  
25 Council.

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 12

2 Can you please raise your right hands?

3 Do you affirm to tell the whole truth and to  
4 answer Councilmember Questions honestly:

5 PANEL: Yes.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. You may begin  
7 your testimony when ready.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: Thank you. Good  
9 morning, Chair Abreu and members of the Committee on  
10 Sanitation and Solid Waste Management. Thank you for  
11 acknowledging the tragic loss of sanitation worker  
12 Richard Errico, a 19-year veteran of the Sanitation  
13 Department who was killed in the performance of his  
14 duties this past weekend. All of New York's  
15 strongest are in mourning and we appreciate the words  
16 of support that have come from all corners of the  
17 city.

18 I'm Joshua Goodman, Deputy Commissioner of Public  
19 Affairs and Customer Experience at the Department of  
20 Sanitation. I'm joined today by Jennifer McDonnell,  
21 Assistant Commissioner of Solid Waste Management and  
22 by Kate Kitchener, Director of the Bureau of  
23 Recycling and Sustainability.

24

25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 13

2       Every day, 24 million pounds of waste go from the  
3 curb and into the white trucks of the Sanitation  
4 Department.

5       If observing life in New York City is the  
6 greatest show on earth, then New York's strongest are  
7 its most dazzling performers, making the bags and  
8 bales of material disappear from our streets and  
9 sidewalks like master magicians. But we all know  
10 that the rabbit doesn't really vanish inside the hat  
11 and the waste, our waste, produced by eight and a  
12 half million New Yorkers, including you and me and  
13 everyone in this room, doesn't just go away either.  
14 Most of it is either sent to waste to energy  
15 facilities in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, or upstate  
16 where it becomes heat and power for homes or to  
17 landfills in Virginia, South Carolina and elsewhere  
18 where it can sit indefinitely and become nothing.

19       DSNY does not accept this as an inevitability,  
20 and the diversion of waste to differing forms of  
21 beneficial reuse has been part of our strategic  
22 planning for the department's entire history, at  
23 least from the first contract to produce fertilizer,  
24 grease and soap out of garbage on Barren Island in  
25 Brooklyn in 1896.

2 Today, those waste diversion plans are far more  
3 advanced and proceeding at a far quicker pace. The  
4 Commercial Waste Zone Program, now being implemented  
5 in the first of the 20 zones, provides the first  
6 meaningful financial incentive for commercial  
7 diversion, with the collection of recyclable and  
8 compostable material, both costing businesses less  
9 money than the collection of trash.

10 I would like to take this opportunity, as DSNY  
11 has done at three previous hearings, to again raise  
12 the issue of commercial organic separation.

13 Local Law 146 of 2013 requires certain commercial  
14 establishments to separate their compostable  
15 material, but this law is now substantially out of  
16 step with the City's commitment to the diversion of  
17 compostable waste.

18 While the Commercial Waste Zone system will  
19 improve commercial diversion, we also urge the  
20 Council to consider an update that would allow DSNY  
21 to require source separation at all commercial  
22 establishments in line with the progress made in  
23 residential diversion.

24 Earlier this year, the Adams Administration  
25 completed a promised expansion of composting to all

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 15

2 New York City public schools, keeping material out of  
3 landfill and training the next generation of  
4 composters. In 2019, school food waste collection  
5 programs diverted approximately 16 million pounds of  
6 material from landfill. In 2023, that number was  
7 over 35 million, and in 2024 to date, with months  
8 left to go, it is already over 38 million pounds.

9 On the residential side, the FY 2024 Mayor's  
10 Management Reform reported the third straight year in  
11 which the diversion rate increased. That means that  
12 the total share of waste kept out of landfills and  
13 waste to energy facilities is up every year thus far  
14 under this administration. Again, every year under  
15 this administration, the diversion rate for waste has  
16 increased.

17 The MMR also showed an incredible data point  
18 within overall diversion. The amount of compostable  
19 material saved from landfill has increased 65 percent  
20 over the last two years to an astounding 260 million  
21 pounds. This is because New York City is now home to  
22 the largest, easiest-to-use curbside composting  
23 program ever, a program that goes citywide in less  
24 than two weeks, the culmination of more than a decade

25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 16

2 of advocacy and policy development, including by many  
3 people in the room today.

4 This is a vindication of simple, customer-forward  
5 programs for waste diversion. It is all too easy for  
6 those of us who care deeply about waste diversion and  
7 environmental justice to forget that whether right or  
8 wrong, it is not always a top of mind for busy,  
9 hardworking New Yorkers. Everyone wants to do the  
10 right thing, but it has to be easy.

11 And we've taken steps through policy design and  
12 through the use of new technologies to make it easy.  
13 So please, recycle or compost your pizza box. Don't  
14 worry that it has a little grease on it.

15 We will take care of it. Recycle the peanut  
16 butter jar. Don't worry that there's still some  
17 peanut butter residue left inside. We will take care  
18 of it.

19 Recycle that plastic container, regardless of  
20 what number is on the bottom. We will take care of  
21 it on our end.

22 When you put your compost bin out on your  
23 recycling day, feel free to line it with a clear  
24 plastic bag if you want to. We will take care of  
25 that, too.



2 Complicated rules, sign-up requirements,  
3 restrictions, exceptions, all of that makes it more  
4 likely that reusable or recyclable material just goes  
5 in the trash. And wouldn't that be a shame?

6 With that focus on universality and ease of use  
7 around diversion programs, I'll now turn to the bills  
8 on today's agenda.

9 Intro 256, sponsored by Councilmember Hudson,  
10 would require the department to study the feasibility  
11 and potential environmental effects of a recycling  
12 mandate for household textiles. We strongly support  
13 the goal of textile waste diversion, and as such,  
14 we're currently studying textile diversion options as  
15 part of our solid waste management plan, due to be  
16 completed in 2026.

17 The department also has a successful, although  
18 relatively small, voluntary textile recycling  
19 program, Refashion NYC. We would welcome the  
20 council's partnership and outreach around expanding  
21 that program, which operates at no cost to the city.

22 Given our existing program and studies already  
23 underway, the bill as written and the study it  
24 mandates are unnecessary at this time.

2 I would also note that businesses whose waste  
3 stream is more than 10 percent textiles are already  
4 required to recycle them per DSNY rule, and that is a  
5 very significant amount of the total textile waste  
6 produced citywide.

7 Intro 351, sponsored by Councilmember Nurse,  
8 would require DSNY to develop a plan for ensuring  
9 proper disposal of rechargeable batteries used for  
10 powered mobility devices. These batteries present a  
11 major problem for DSNY, causing fires in our trucks  
12 and facilities when they are improperly disposed of.

13 DSNY already complies with certain portions of  
14 this law. We have one special waste drop-off site  
15 that accepts these items in each borough open one day  
16 per week, whereas the law calls for two sites per  
17 borough open seven days per week. Adding a second  
18 site per borough and making both sites operational  
19 every day would cost an estimated \$7,721,000 per  
20 year.

21 The law also calls for DSNY to accept these items  
22 at any disposal or collection event organized by the  
23 department.

24 While we do accept them at our safe events,  
25 currently funded at one per borough per year, it

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 19

2 would be unsafe and impractical to collect them at  
3 all department-sponsored events, which is what the  
4 law requires as written. For example, accepting  
5 lithium-ion batteries at a compost give-back event  
6 would not be feasible.

7 For the third and fourth requirements of the bill  
8 as it's currently written, mandating coordination  
9 with businesses and outreach with the public, we  
10 would point out that many rechargeable batteries are  
11 already covered by a New York State mandated drop-off  
12 program, where all stores that sell rechargeable  
13 batteries or items that include them must accept them  
14 for recycling, but that as the Councilmember pointed  
15 out, the current law exempts e-mobility batteries.

16 Given the cost of establishing new sites,  
17 expanding the hours of current sites, and adding  
18 hazardous waste material recovery to unrelated  
19 events, as well as the existing state infrastructure  
20 around work with businesses and the public for other  
21 battery types, we believe that the best plan for  
22 getting this hazardous item out of the waste stream  
23 is to close that state loophole and add e-mobility  
24 batteries to the existing state take-back law, which  
25 is funded by battery manufacturers.

2 The next bill on the agenda today, Intro 695,  
3 also sponsored by Councilmember Nurse, calls for a  
4 study of single-use plastics.

5 This council has made substantial progress on the  
6 issue of single-use plastics, particularly with the  
7 passage of Local Law 17 of 2023, the Skip the Stuff  
8 Act. Enforcement of this law only just began this  
9 summer, and given both that and the fact that we  
10 currently study the reality of single-use plastics as  
11 part of our waste characterization efforts, a new  
12 study is premature. If the goal is a broader study  
13 of single-use plastics in context and their impact on  
14 environmental justice communities, we believe that  
15 one of our sister agencies would be better suited to  
16 lead that kind of impact analysis, and we support the  
17 bill if it is in the right place.

18 The final bill, Intro 697, sponsored by  
19 Councilmember Nurse as well, renews the existing  
20 mandate to conduct waste characterization studies,  
21 specifically requiring one in 2028 and one in 2032.  
22 We appreciate the Councilmember's forethought on  
23 this. Only by knowing what is in our waste can we  
24 hope to reduce and divert it, and we have certainly  
25 found past studies to be useful.

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 21

2 Thank you, and we look forward to taking your  
3 questions.

4 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thank you so much,  
5 Commissioner, for your testimony.

6 I'll begin by asking, has the City ever analyzed  
7 the individual impact of the average New Yorker's  
8 divertible waste when it comes to landfill space  
9 required each year or annual carbon emissions  
10 produced?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: So, we collect  
12 substantial data at the community board level, and  
13 I'm going to turn it over to Assistant Commissioner  
14 McDonnell to talk a little bit about what we do at  
15 the per-person level.

16 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MCDONNELL: The best  
17 source of information about the individual impact of  
18 waste generation can be found in the State Solid  
19 Waste Management Plan, which was recently released.  
20 They have-- Similar to our process, the State goes  
21 through a every-10-year solid waste management  
22 planning process, and they've published statistics  
23 statewide that compare individual planning units, and  
24 New York City is a planning unit in and of itself,  
25 and those numbers actually show that our per capita

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 22  
2 generation of waste is quite low compared to other  
3 areas in the State, particularly at the pounds per  
4 person per year basis.

5 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: And that's State information,  
6 right? The City doesn't perform that necessarily.

7 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MCDONNELL: Correct. The  
8 State uses information that the City submits to  
9 perform those calculations.

10 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thank you. DSNY has been  
11 criticized for dropping its role in reaching the  
12 City's waste diversion goals, including through  
13 education to residents about the importance of waste  
14 reduction and recycling. Can you describe how the  
15 agency currently sees itself in the larger waste  
16 reduction movement?

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: Sure. I'm not  
18 familiar with the criticism you're referring to, and  
19 I would not accept the premise of it.

20 Just before I get to the answer, I'll just say  
21 that the Department of Sanitation is intimately  
22 involved in outreach and education around waste  
23 diversion, as evidenced by the fact that we're now in  
24 our third straight year of diversion rate increase,  
25 and that we've got the 65% increase in compostable

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 23

2 material kept out of landfill in two years. I don't  
3 see how that would be possible without a very  
4 aggressive outreach and education. So I wouldn't  
5 agree with that characterization.

6 That said, how do we see ourselves? The  
7 Department of Sanitation picks up 24 million pounds  
8 of trash today. We'll pick up 24 million pounds of  
9 trash tomorrow. We'll pick up 24 million pounds of  
10 trash the next day.

11 It just keeps coming, and our role is to process  
12 it and make sure that as much of it as possible is  
13 put to beneficial use.

14 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Organic waste makes up about  
15 a third of New York City's waste stream. As organic  
16 waste decomposes in landfills, it releases methane  
17 gas, which is 84 times more effective at absorbing  
18 the sun's heat than carbon dioxide over a 20-year  
19 time frame, which is pretty remarkable.

20 Starting next month, every New Yorker will be  
21 required to separate their organic waste and set it  
22 out in a container for collection and recycling.  
23 This is already available in Queens and Brooklyn, but  
24 data that we've received and we're happy to share  
25 shows very low capture rates for organics collection.

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 24

2 I think that's where the criticisms are coming from,  
3 with 4.3% in Queens, and 3.6%, respectively, in FY24.  
4 What do you attribute the low capture rates to in  
5 Queens and Brooklyn?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: It's a new program.  
7 It took more than a decade to get to our current  
8 roughly 50% capture rates on metal, glass, plastic,  
9 and paper. Outreach and education has to be  
10 sustained over a long period of time, and that's what  
11 we're doing.

12 I think that when you compare curbside capture  
13 rates and tonnage rates to what we're seeing in the  
14 schools, where it's handled by a staff, you really  
15 get at how much education is important in this.

16 You know, the numbers diverted from schools have  
17 just gone up, up, up, up, up. Because it's a smaller  
18 population where the department can conduct very  
19 direct education and outreach. Working with building  
20 managers and individual residents who manage their  
21 own waste is going to be a multi-year process, and we  
22 have no intention of backing off that process.

23 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: I'm excited about that level  
24 of engagement that's going to be necessary, and  
25 that's also a big reason why the council restored



1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 25

2 community composting. We think it's going to make a  
3 big difference in terms of bringing that engagement,  
4 civic engagement, and education that we hope would  
5 increase participation and thereby improve capture  
6 rates and diversion rates.

7 I'm also aware that I can't-- I don't know if it  
8 was on in about 2017 In Queens, the capture rate was  
9 twice the amount it is now. I think it was like 10%,  
10 whereas now it's 4.3%. Can you explain why we are  
11 trending downwards in that sense?

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: So there's a few  
13 pieces to this. The first thing that I think is  
14 worth mentioning-- I don't want to be too critical  
15 of the prior administration, but the old legacy  
16 programs operated in cherry-picked districts, and  
17 that was true citywide.

18 Okay, we think we're going to get a lot here, so  
19 that's where we're going to run the program to juice  
20 the numbers. The goal of this administration was to  
21 develop a universal program that works for everybody.  
22 When it went online in all of Queens, the idea was  
23 everybody-- every resident of the borough, and then  
24 later Brooklyn, and then in two weeks citywide, gets  
25 access to this same service.

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 26

2 It's not a favor they're doing for us to give us  
3 juiced up numbers. It's a service we provide to all  
4 New Yorkers to keep this important material out of  
5 the landfill and waste-to-energy stream. So I do  
6 think it's going to be an ongoing process.

7 I wouldn't describe us as trending down because I  
8 think the 2022 program--

9 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: I agree that under Eric  
10 Adams, it has been trending upward, but not to the  
11 levels that we want to see.

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: I understand.

13 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: And I understand-- I think  
14 also to add to your answer, in 2020 when we removed  
15 curbside-- and I understand this happened before your  
16 administration, we built this muscle, right?

17 Building the muscle of composting is something very  
18 serious. Like when you go to the gym, right, over  
19 time, you're going to build the stamina. You're  
20 going to start looking better, start feeling better.

21 But once you stop going to the gym, you're going  
22 to lose those habits again. And I think that that's  
23 why I think our city needs to continue to demonstrate  
24 a commitment to composting because we can't move that  
25 muscle again, right? We can't remove those habits

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 27

2 that people have been forming. If we were at 10% in  
3 2017 in Queens, we could have been at 20 or 30% if we  
4 hadn't removed it.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: I think that that's  
6 why it's so important that in the new program-- and I  
7 really do believe that in a fundamental way, the  
8 program that goes citywide in two weeks is different  
9 from what, it's a separate program from what existed  
10 pre-pandemic. You know, it's not really-- I  
11 wouldn't say it's unfair, but just on our side, we  
12 don't think of it as like, oh, the program was paused  
13 and then we restarted it. We think of the pre-  
14 pandemic composting program was eliminated and we  
15 developed a new program.

16 So I think it is so fundamentally different that  
17 I wouldn't compare the pre-pandemic numbers with the  
18 current numbers. And we would just compare ourselves  
19 to ourselves. And I would say that to your point  
20 about that composting muscle, it was why it was so  
21 important to develop a plan where in the entire city,  
22 your composting day is your recycling day.

23 It's not a third day you have to remember. It's  
24 the metal, glass, plastic, and paper day and the

25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 28

2 composting day. It will really help people get into  
3 the groove as we move forward.

4 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Yeah, look, and I understand  
5 that, you know, I understand why this administration  
6 will compare itself to what it's done. But New  
7 Yorkers are comparing what they've experienced before  
8 this administration came in and what's happening now.  
9 And so that's very-- I think that's still very  
10 important information for the public because they're  
11 the ones who have felt the difference.

12 The agency has previously stated that it will  
13 begin residential organics recycling enforcement next  
14 month, but that it will issue warnings instead of  
15 violations until spring 2025. DSNY previously  
16 reported it has sent mailers to our residents to warn  
17 them of the upcoming change.

18 What other outreach and education has the DSNY  
19 done to help education, help educate residents about  
20 new organic recycling requirements?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: We're currently in  
22 the process of knocking the door of every building  
23 with one to nine units specifically to discuss  
24 curbside composting in the three boroughs that are  
25 about to come online.

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 29

2 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Every door?

3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: The door of every  
4 building with one to nine units in the Bronx,  
5 Manhattan, and Staten Island. We did the same thing  
6 in Brooklyn and Queens.

7 I should have the number in front of me. I'm  
8 sorry, I don't. It's something like 275,000  
9 buildings, but we can get you the exact number.

10 And specifically outreach staff going door to  
11 door to talk about curbside composting.

12 We did do a mailer, significant social media, and  
13 there's an extensive amount of info sessions  
14 scheduled. There've been several over the last few  
15 months scheduled going forward at  
16 [nyc.gov/curbsidecomposting](http://nyc.gov/curbsidecomposting) as well as our work with  
17 community boards.

18 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Who's doing the door knocking  
19 and what's the budget for that?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: It's a contracted  
21 vendor funded by an EPA grant, actually. I believe  
22 the budget is about \$500,000, but I can get you the  
23 exact number. But it's federal money.

24 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: So you believe you can knock  
25 on 275,000 doors with \$500,000?

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 30

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: Yeah, absolutely.  
3 It's based on the-- It's a per shift fee. That's  
4 what we paid to-- It's a comparable program to what  
5 we did in Brooklyn and Queens. Although within  
6 Brooklyn and Queens, it was not an outside vendor.  
7 It was done by DCS.

8 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: And do you have the name of  
9 the contractor?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: Yeah, it's an MWBE  
11 firm called Lori Davis.

12 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Glory?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: L-O-R-I.

14 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Lori Davis?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: Yeah.

16 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Do you know how big their  
17 team is?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: It's 30 canvassers  
19 per day.

20 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: 30 canvassers per day?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: That's the field  
22 team. I don't know about the administrative staff  
23 offhand.

24 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Okay. And do we know which  
25 doors are going to get knocked on first?

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 31

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: They've been  
3 working on this for several weeks, starting in the  
4 Bronx and working their way down. But they're also  
5 running teams in Manhattan and Staten Island, but...

6 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Okay.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: And the plan is to  
8 get everywhere.

9 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: And this is just with respect  
10 to the one to nine unit requirement that's  
11 implemented in November, right?

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: No, they're only  
13 talking about--

14 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Organics?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: They're doing one  
16 to nine unit buildings because that was what we did  
17 in Brooklyn and Queens. It can be very difficult to  
18 get into a larger building. So the focus is just to  
19 talk to-- And particularly, larger buildings, as we  
20 know, have professional staff.

21 They are more likely to know about the  
22 requirement because it's their job to manage the  
23 trash.

24

25

2 So the focus of the canvassers is to reach  
3 residents in smaller buildings who manage their own  
4 trash and explain the process to them.

5 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: So in districts like mine,  
6 where we have larger buildings, a lot of supers are  
7 not active. A lot of landlords are absent. What do  
8 we do in that situation?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: So we are-- That's  
10 where the mailing, social media, and work with  
11 community boards really become essential. The  
12 mailing was purposefully done to go to residents  
13 rather than property managers to empower residents to  
14 go to their building management and their landlord,  
15 whatever the case may be, and say, I know that this  
16 program is coming. What is the plan for our building?

17 The program has to be designed to work  
18 differently in every building. Just like recycling,  
19 we don't mandate specifically where in the building  
20 the recycling bin needs to go, right? Buildings need  
21 that flexibility based on their different space needs  
22 and size. But we really wanted to empower residents  
23 to have the information they need to say to their  
24 building management, I know that you must comply with  
25 this. It's the law.



1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 33

2 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: What will be the exact  
3 process for DSNY's enforcement officers to conduct  
4 residential organics recycling enforcement?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: It will be very  
6 similar to the enforcement that exists today around  
7 improper separation of metal, glass, and plastic. My  
8 understanding of the Zero Waste Act is that it's  
9 written to set it up as essentially the same type of  
10 violation.

11 So what is illegal under the law is putting  
12 compostable material in the trash. Not having any.  
13 If someone doesn't have any compostable material,  
14 they don't have to participate in the program. But  
15 it is certainly our intention to conduct the same  
16 kind of enforcement that we do now.

17 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Can you speak to what that  
18 looks like?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: It can happen at  
20 the curb level. It can happen sometimes at the  
21 transfer station side. It can happen from  
22 supervisory staff who are observing collection. It  
23 takes a lot of forms, you know, with picking up as  
24 much as we do in as many places as we do.

25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 34

2 But once this becomes illegal citywide, since of  
3 course the law rolls it out by borough, we will be  
4 developing a more thorough and detailed plan around  
5 enforcement.

6 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: How many enforcement agents  
7 does DSNY have dedicated to residential organics?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: Enforcement staff  
9 are rarely dedicated to a specific item, only when  
10 mandated, for example, around commercial waste zones  
11 where there were enforcement staff set up to do  
12 commercial waste zone enforcement.

13 Enforcement staff enforce against a variety of  
14 violations.

15 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: So how do we have confidence  
16 that this would-- that violations on source  
17 separation for organics, that enforcement for that  
18 would succeed without a clear understanding of how  
19 many we're going to--

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: The department has  
21 a legacy of enforcing regulations around source  
22 separation of other materials. And that work is  
23 going to continue as this is added to the  
24 requirements for source separation.

25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 35

2 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Could a sanitation worker who  
3 is on a collection truck issue a violation related to  
4 a residential organics? Or would the issuance of the  
5 violations need to wait until an enforcement agent  
6 can be present?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: Sanitation workers  
8 cannot issue violations for any violation. Cannot.

9 But there are multiple groups that can issue  
10 violations. One is our dedicated enforcement staff.

11 And the other primary group is the sanitation  
12 supervisor, which is one level up from sanitation  
13 worker.

14 Every sanitation worker on collection has a  
15 direct supervisor and they are supposed to call  
16 observed violations in under many circumstances.

17 So, for example, if a sanitation worker sees a  
18 mattress that's not properly wrapped as required by  
19 law, they are supposed to call it into their  
20 supervisor who then comes and writes the violation.

21 So, a sanitation worker has an existing process  
22 to report violations that they observe, even though  
23 it is not in their job duties to write the violation  
24 personally.

25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 36

2 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: I would like to recognize  
3 Councilmember Carr who joined us.

4 As we've discussed, brown bins will be used to  
5 containerize New York residents' organic waste. On  
6 approximately what date can New Yorkers expect to  
7 receive their brown bins?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: Deliveries are  
9 underway now, and I believe upwards of a thousand are  
10 being delivered each day. Kate, do you want to say a  
11 little more about that?

12 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MCDONNELL: Sure. So  
13 anyone who ordered--

14 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: I got mine, by the way.

15 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MCDONNELL: Oh, you did?  
16 Great. Awesome.

17 Anyone who ordered a bin in the month of August  
18 will receive it prior to service on October 6th. And  
19 then the deliveries that were requested in September  
20 will be rolling after that.

21 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: What happens if a building  
22 resident who is not an owner orders a brown bin to be  
23 delivered to and used at a building with many other  
24 tenants? Will DSNY still deliver the bin?

25 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MCDONNELL: Yes.

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 37

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: Yes.

3 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: What should a building tenant  
4 do if their landlord, in some way or form, refuses to  
5 allow the tenant to comply with organics recycling  
6 mandates?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: They should  
8 continue to insist to them that it is the law, first  
9 of all. They are also always welcome to reach out to  
10 us, our customer service team, through 311, on social  
11 media, through the contact form on our website.

12 If we are-- We did, in fact, in Brooklyn and  
13 Queens, receive social media complaints from people  
14 who said, you know, I live in a 40-story high-rise  
15 and my building's not participating. A member of our  
16 staff went and said, "Gee, it sure seems like you  
17 could use an info session. How can we help? What  
18 can we do to help you comply with this law?" So we  
19 would encourage people, when they feel frustrated and  
20 exhausted with working with their building management  
21 directly, to reach out to us and we'll do what we  
22 can.

23 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Is there-- Can they make a  
24 301 complaint based off of this?

25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 38

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: They can do it  
3 through a comment to the Department of Sanitation.  
4 There is not a dedicated SR for this topic at this  
5 time.

6 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Okay. And would the agency  
7 consider maybe doing a portal or something?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: We would certainly  
9 consider it, of course.

10 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Because, I mean, I'm going to  
11 expect the widespread non-compliance. I mean,  
12 especially when something new comes on, right? In  
13 the beginning, though, the warnings, you know, I'm  
14 sure make a big difference.

15 But at some point, I want to make sure that we're  
16 having strong compliance and that our tenants and  
17 residents who are subject to bad actors, that they  
18 can voice their concerns on, you know, their bins  
19 were stolen or the landlord's refusing to comply with  
20 the mandate, those type of things.

21 For October 6th, is that for all bins or just the  
22 brown bins?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: That's for the  
24 brown bins that were ordered prior to September 1st,  
25 will be delivered by October 6th.

2 If you want the schedule on the wheelie bins.  
3 Anybody who orders, actually are still within the  
4 window now-- Anybody who orders by October 1st is  
5 guaranteed to get them by the November 12th mandated  
6 date.

7 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thank you. After DSNY  
8 receives a complaint that a building owner is not  
9 allowing a resident to comply with organics recycling  
10 mandates, how does the agency respond?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: It depends on the  
12 nature, the exact nature of the complaint.

13 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: And they reach out to the  
14 owner. My apologies.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: It depends on the  
16 exact nature of the complaint, but we do have a few  
17 options. One would be to go and observe collection,  
18 or rather to observe set out prior to collection and  
19 to issue a warning if we agree that the building is  
20 non-compliance.

21 If it's a larger managed building, we may  
22 proactively reach out to management and offer to  
23 assist them. We do conduct site visits.

24 We have a team dedicated to helping buildings  
25 with their waste set out. We offer-- we call it our

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 40

2 Clean Buildings Training, which is a regular training  
3 program for building management about how to comply  
4 with sanitation regulations that includes a  
5 substantial module about the source separation of  
6 compostable material.

7 So, we would-- I guess I would say that it's a  
8 case by case, but that we would always try to begin  
9 with a positive direct contact and move into an  
10 enforcement mode if necessary.

11 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: According to the latest MMR,  
12 Mayor's Management Report, over 400 smart bins were  
13 deployed in fiscal year 2024. How did DSNY decide  
14 which prioritize the sidings of these smart bins?  
15 And how will DSNY ensure that businesses which are  
16 required to sort their organic waste do not misuse  
17 the smart bins?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: So I'll take the  
19 two questions separately.

20 The smart bins have been an incredibly successful  
21 program. In FY23, they were opened 300,000 times.  
22 In FY24, they were opened more than 1.2 million  
23 times, which is amazing. I mean, it's just so  
24 gratifying to see this program used so widely.

25



2 The placement follows a couple of different  
3 models because this rolled out in phases and because  
4 we're basically, you know, examining best practices.  
5 In certain parts of the city, they are clustered.  
6 OK, there's several in the neighborhood. The idea  
7 was to see, is it effective to use it as sort of a  
8 part of a neighborhood service. And in other areas,  
9 they are placed along commercial corridors. And the  
10 idea was, you know, where people are commuting on  
11 foot. We've actually seen success with both of these  
12 models. You know, the bins on the west side of  
13 Manhattan and on the Upper East Side follow sort of  
14 the commercial corridor model and are widely used.

15 The bins in Prospect Heights and Astoria follow  
16 the cluster model and they are also very widely used.

17 So we're happy to see this is a program that  
18 people really enjoy using and also one thing that I  
19 don't want to speak for the department, I'll say that  
20 on this, that I'll say that I was personally  
21 surprised that the tonnage didn't really go down  
22 after curbside service became available. People were  
23 still using the bins quite widely. Or I shouldn't  
24 say tonnage, because we can't measure the separate  
25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 42

2 tonnage from the smart bins, but the usage, the  
3 unloads did not substantially change.

4 To your question about business waste. The  
5 opening is sized for household individual use. A  
6 business that produces sort of this much compostable  
7 material per day, it would be illegal for them to use  
8 them. And if we caught them, we would fine them for  
9 it.

10 But it's a small amount that they can put in at  
11 one time. And so it's not a phenomenon I'm familiar  
12 with, a business trying to use one.

13 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Is there a plan to order more  
14 smart bins?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: There is no funding  
16 for additional smart bins at this time. No.

17 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Local law requires that the  
18 city's next local solid waste management plan  
19 emphasize reduced landfilling and incineration of  
20 organic waste. How will the city maximize the  
21 beneficial reuse of organic waste from residential  
22 collections?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: So I'll talk about  
24 beneficial use in general, and then, Jennifer, if you

25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 43

2 have anything to say about how it fits into this  
3 solid waste management plan.

4 The goal of the program is always beneficial use.  
5 And you're like, I would imagine, going to ask later  
6 about our new composting processing contract.

7 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Yes.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: But the goal of all  
9 of those contracts is beneficial use.

10 The beneficial use on the end use side is already  
11 maximized. It's at well over 95%. And the point now  
12 is to increase the amount of total waste that's kept  
13 out of landfill and sent to that.

14 Once it's given to us as part of the curbside  
15 composting program, we feel very positively about the  
16 beneficial use number broadly. And I'll talk a  
17 little bit more later about the breakdown between  
18 composting and anaerobic digestion.

19 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Yes. Does the city plan to  
20 build more composting facilities?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: We recently  
22 completed a major expansion of the Staten Island  
23 compost facility. It can now accept about 2,000%  
24 more food waste than it could prior to that  
25 expansion. There's no plan to build an additional

2 composting site at this time. But let me share  
3 something really quickly before Councilmember Nurse  
4 leaves, because I know she's going to be interested  
5 in this. I'll just say it really fast. I know  
6 you're about to ask about it.

7 Under the new paradigm we're putting into place  
8 for the processing of organic material collected as  
9 part of the curbside composting program, it  
10 drastically increases the number of districts where  
11 the material will be sent to be composted, while  
12 decreasing the number of districts where it will go  
13 to be anaerobically digested at Newtown Creek.

14 Under the new contracts, material from  
15 approximately one third of New York City community  
16 districts, 19 of the 59, will be sent to be  
17 composted. The number of districts sending material  
18 to Newtown Creek will decrease from 25 to 12.

19 Of course, the tonnage numbers are dependent on  
20 how much people put out. We set up our system by  
21 community board, but as I know this council has asked  
22 several times, the share of community districts  
23 sending material to be composted is growing  
24 substantially, and the amount sending material to  
25 Newtown Creek is falling by more than half.

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 45

2 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Does the city plan to build  
3 more anaerobic digesters?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: No.

5 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: In 2023, DEP published a RFEI  
6 soliciting potential customers for biodigester  
7 methane. Can you provide any updates pertaining to  
8 that solicitation?

9 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MCDONNELL: DEP should  
10 provide the official update, but I am aware of the  
11 RFEI process, and I believe that's just for the use  
12 of the gas that is produced at their digesters, which  
13 is produced regardless of whether or not food waste  
14 is added to the digesters. They produce it from  
15 wastewater.

16 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: That's fair. We'll ask DEP.  
17 How will the city ensure that the food waste,  
18 which New Yorkers will work hard to separate and  
19 recycle, doesn't end up in a landfill?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: Well, it doesn't  
21 end up in a landfill, which is great news, right?  
22 The material is either composted into finished  
23 compost to be used in our gardens and parks.

24 The city has produced an average of about 42  
25 million pounds per year over the last decade, and we

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 46

2 expect that number to climb substantially or to heat  
3 and power homes, particularly in Brooklyn, through  
4 anaerobic digestion.

5 Are you going to add something to that?

6 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MCDONNELL: I could add  
7 that the new contracts actually have a requirement  
8 that 90% of the material is beneficially reused after  
9 accounting for contamination.

10 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: This July, we asked the  
11 mayor's office to help us learn how much it costs to  
12 run the city's anaerobic digesters. We are still  
13 waiting for that information. Does the agency have  
14 any pertinent information to provide now?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: DEP runs the  
16 anaerobic digestion at Newtown Creek, so they would  
17 be best to answer that.

18 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: All right, well, we'll ask  
19 them.

20 According to City Harvest, a New York City food  
21 rescue organization, average monthly visits to local  
22 food pantries and soup kitchens are up to 80% this  
23 year compared to 2019. There are laws in place to  
24 require certain establishments to donate their  
25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 47

2 leftovers. But many restaurants routinely throw away  
3 perfectly edible food.

4 To what extent do food donors use the city's food  
5 donation portal? And are there improvements that can  
6 be made to the portal to increase its use or  
7 alternative ways to facilitate food donation?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: So the city has  
9 operated the DonateNYC donation portal, which  
10 includes a food section as well as textiles and  
11 durable goods for many years now. And in FY24, that  
12 portal processed over 43,000 tons, so 86 million  
13 pounds of food for donation.

14 Always happy to work with Councilmembers on  
15 outreach around that to businesses, organizations  
16 that may have additional material to donate or  
17 organizations that may be looking for donation.

18 And Kate, do you have anything to add? I would  
19 say that's it.

20 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Are there ways improvements  
21 can be made to the portal to increase its use? And  
22 do you think that the portal is used sufficiently or  
23 would you like to be used more?

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: You know, look,  
25 I'll put it this way. The portal was-- The amount of

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 48

2 material coming through the portal now is  
3 historically high. It's higher than it's ever been,  
4 with one exception, which is FY21, when it was a  
5 major component of the city's emergency food program.

6 Barring a citywide response to a global  
7 emergency, it is currently used more than it's ever  
8 been used before. I would love to work with the  
9 council on ways to expand it, but it's from sort of a  
10 user friendliness side, from an operations side, we  
11 believe that it's functioning as it should.

12 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: DSNY has been involved in the  
13 enforcement of street vendor regulations. Local law  
14 requires that when an agency seizes food, when the  
15 Department of Health employee or an agent of the OHMH  
16 is present, and certifies that the food meets local  
17 sanitary requirements, the agency shall, prior to  
18 disposing of the food, notify a food organization  
19 about its availability. Has that been happening?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: It has been. I  
21 have outdated numbers about it. We could get you a  
22 better number. It would probably take me a few  
23 minutes to pull it up here. I had seen a report about  
24 it some weeks ago, so I don't want to give you data,  
25 but I can say for certain that it is happening. Both



1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 49

2 donation if the food is safe and composting if the  
3 food is unsafe.

4 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Do you know how often it  
5 happens, the notification to food rescue  
6 organizations?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: Any time food is  
8 confiscated and a Department of Health certification  
9 person is available, it happens enough that I've seen  
10 data on it before.

11 We can get you more reliable.

12 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: I would like to see examples  
13 of those.

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: Yeah, I mean, on  
15 street vending enforcement, I think it's important to  
16 remember that seizure of material is sort of-- That  
17 means we've already gone through a few steps anyway.  
18 We try to take a warnings-first approach to our  
19 vendor enforcement. There's a lot of discretion  
20 involved. If a seizure is necessary, then we try to  
21 get an inspector there to guarantee food safety.

22 So we're already a little ways down the process.  
23 It's not an extremely common use case, but it does  
24 happen. And we are complying with the law.

25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 50

2 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: What percent of street vendor  
3 enforcement interactions involve at least one DOHMH  
4 employee?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: I don't know  
6 whether they are present for the actions or called  
7 after the fact as needed, but we can get back to you  
8 with that.

9 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: And I would also like to know  
10 the percent of food seized during street vendor  
11 enforcement operations is donated to food rescue  
12 organizations. You said you would send that?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: Yes, we can get  
14 that and the amount that's composted.

15 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: All right. I don't want to  
16 hold on-- I have more questions on organics. But if  
17 my colleagues have questions, I think now would be a  
18 good opportunity.

19 COUNCILMEMBER BANKS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And  
20 to the Sanitation Department and to the Deputy  
21 Commissioner. Thank you.

22 My questions pointed towards where-- I want to go  
23 back to the bins. Is there a limit on the amount of  
24 bins that a person can order?

25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 51

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: Thank you very  
3 much, Councilmember. On the brown bins for  
4 composting, any address can get one free one. And  
5 then they can purchase as many as they need at  
6 bins.nyc.

7 And on the other bins, the wheelie bins for trash  
8 containerization and recycling, there's no limit.  
9 They can purchase as many as they need.

10 COUNCILMEMBER BANKS: Since it's the law that  
11 they have to have them, when it comes to vandalism or  
12 it being stolen, how is that dealt with? Do they  
13 have to get a police report? Because I know there's  
14 a certain amount of time it takes for the garbage man  
15 to get back to them if they have to reorder one.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: So there's a few  
17 things on this. First thing I'll say about it is the  
18 rules around residential waste containerization don't  
19 mandate the use of our bin until June of 2026.

20 COUNCILMEMBER BANKS:

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: You must use a bin  
22 starting November 12th of this year. If you already  
23 have one, as people in many parts of the city have  
24 been using bins for years, you're certainly welcome  
25 to continue to use yours. We're not saying you have

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 52

2 to get rid of it the first day and replace it with  
3 ours, as long as it meets the current rules, which  
4 are 55 gallons or less and with a secure lid.

5 But if they've been using it all along, I'm sure  
6 they can keep using it.

7 The NYC bin will be required in June of 2026 and  
8 is available now for anyone in a one to nine unit  
9 building who is containerizing for the first time.  
10 We always like to point out that it is by far the  
11 cheapest bin of its quality available. It's about a  
12 third the price of those similar bins you would see  
13 in stores.

14 So on the points about theft and vandalism, there  
15 are sort of a few points I want to make around that,  
16 which are: New York City is not the first place to  
17 require the use of bins for trash. In fact, we're  
18 just about the last among developed cities.

19 When you think about other places that use bins,  
20 Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, Atlanta, you know,  
21 Skokie, I mean, everywhere, right? There is not some  
22 sort of like perpetual bin theft epidemic. It's not  
23 as if every week in Chicago, you go to put your trash  
24 out and your bin has been stolen. We certainly-- And  
25 when also related to that, businesses in New York

2 City have been required to put their trash in bins  
3 since March of this year.

4 And while there have been some anecdotal reports  
5 of bin theft, you also see a tremendous amount of  
6 commercial bins in use. They stay on the street and  
7 they get used properly. But obviously we know it is  
8 the sort of thing that can happen.

9 I just always like to talk about-- We're talking  
10 about a hypothetical here.

11 COUNCILMEMBER BANKS: Right, in those situations.

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: So in those  
13 situations, we've done a few things to try to  
14 minimize it.

15 There's a big white space on the side of the bin  
16 to write your address. They all have a serial  
17 number, and they have an RFID. Now that's not a  
18 tracker, but it does mean that if we find one that's  
19 been misplaced or moved, it is likely going to be  
20 easy to replace, to get it back to where it's  
21 supposed to go.

22 If your bin is stolen or vandalized, we would  
23 recommend getting a police report and use-- If you  
24 receive a summons, which of course, if the  
25 supervisor-- We talked about the supervisors who do

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 54

2 the enforcement, if they know that a building uses a  
3 bin every day and then one day the bin is gone, they  
4 obviously are, they have the ability to use their  
5 discretion about it. "Oh gee, I wonder what  
6 happened? They always use their bins. They don't  
7 have it." They can use discretion. But if someone  
8 receives a summons for uncontainerized trash because  
9 their bin has been stolen, there's an existing  
10 process to contest that.

11 They can go down to OATH and they can bring the  
12 police report and they can say to the judge.

13 COUNCILMEMBER BANKS: Okay. Moving on to another  
14 topic, the electronic disposal program.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: Yes.

16 COUNCILMEMBER BANKS: Particularly, I know  
17 there's some items that still have to go through 311.  
18 You have to call and get it, I guess, marked. But  
19 those items that are not eligible for that: What  
20 reasonable accommodations are being done for elderly  
21 or people with disabilities who can't make it to  
22 those sites?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: So, you're correct  
24 that there is no curbside program today for those  
25 items.

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 55

2       There have been small scale curbside programs in  
3 the past. The options are to drop it off at one of  
4 our pop-up events, to take it to a special waste  
5 site, which we have one in every borough. Certain  
6 items can be brought back to the retailer from which  
7 they were purchased.

8       And then also we have, starting this year, I  
9 believe is the first time, one community recycling  
10 event per community board. So, there should be, and  
11 I understand some people can't go anywhere--

12       COUNCILMEMBER BANKS: But listen, the reality is  
13 that there are some seniors and people with  
14 disabilities who never leave their home, but  
15 obviously have items that they want to get rid of.

16       DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: Of course.

17       COUNCILMEMBER BANKS: What reasonable  
18 accommodations are made for them to assist them so  
19 they're not left in the dark?

20       DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: Kate, you have  
21 something to add?

22       ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER KITCHENER: Yeah, I was  
23 just going to say that any building in the city  
24 that's over 10 units can sign up for a free  
25 electronics recycling program. And that it'll be in

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 56

2 your building. So, you just have to bring it  
3 downstairs and it will be-- It's free pickup. It's  
4 free for the city, and it's free for the building.

5 COUNCILMEMBER BANKS: So that information is  
6 being distributed--

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: Yes.

8 COUNCILMEMBER BANKS: So, okay. Thank you.  
9 Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Do you have any more  
11 questions?

12 COUNCILMEMBER BANKS: No, that's it. Thank you.  
13 Councilmember Carr.

14 COUNCILMEMBER CARR: Thank you, Chair. Since  
15 eCycle got mentioned, I have to mention the lack of  
16 the curbside e-waste pickup program in Staten Island.

17 And I just want to reemphasize, you know, eCycle  
18 is great. And it applies to so many parts of the  
19 city that have that kind of building stock. And it  
20 was not restored in this year's budget. And I'd  
21 really like it to be restored in the November plan.

22 Do you think there's a willingness on the part of  
23 the agency and the commissioner to bring back this  
24 program? Because, you know, landfilling of e-waste  
25 was banned by state law, as it probably should have



2 been. Although I think the timing was a little  
3 difficult for the city. But these things are sitting  
4 in people's homes or they're ending up dumped where  
5 they shouldn't be.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: Yeah, I understand.  
7 Thank you, Councilmember. I think we have to leave  
8 budgetary discussions for a budget hearing. But  
9 certainly, strongly share your goal with keeping this  
10 material out of landfill.

11 And I did just-- I'm glad we-- I figured we  
12 would get the chance to talk about this. But I just  
13 want to mention, there is one of those community  
14 recycling events that takes e-waste in Princess Park  
15 this weekend. So, if you have constituents who would  
16 like to come down on Saturday, we would be happy to  
17 take their material there.

18 COUNCILMEMBER CARR: Yeah, that's, it's a great  
19 thing. And I'm always happy to promote those events.  
20 But it's not a curbside program.

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: Right.

22 COUNCILMEMBER CARR: I mean, how much cooperation  
23 you think you get from New Yorkers if composting was  
24 only a delivery drop-off program? Virtually none.

2       So, I think that, you know, these models are fine  
3 to have as a bridge to something. But we have to get  
4 somewhere, and restoring curbside e-waste has to be a  
5 priority.

6       DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: Understood. I look  
7 forward to discussing it in a budget hearing.

8       COUNCILMEMBER CARR: Thank you.

9       CHAIRPERSON ABREU: All right. I'm turning back  
10 to organics.

11       I had a question I wanted to ask you earlier, but  
12 I didn't get the opportunity to. I kind of just  
13 forgot to ask the question.

14       How will DSNY observe compliance with organic  
15 separation mandates? Trash bags are not clear to  
16 observe if it has organic waste in it.

17       DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: It's true that  
18 they're not clear. However, there are certain  
19 telltale signs of compostable material in a trash  
20 bag, particularly the world-famous garbage juice.  
21 And certainly I don't want to get ahead of a fully  
22 developed plan, but the sanitation department has  
23 been known to open bags in pursuit of source-  
24 separated material.

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 59

2 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: I would like to have some  
3 guidance on this. I don't know if it's like a feel  
4 or if it's a hunch, it's a spot check. I would like  
5 to see what a plan looks like.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: Yes, I understand.  
7 I understand.

8 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: In your testimony,  
9 Commissioner, you spoke about commercial source  
10 separation for organics.

11 Certain commercial entities in New York City are  
12 required to separate and recycle their organic waste,  
13 but many businesses do not comply, throwing out  
14 pounds and pounds of perfectly good food on a  
15 consistent basis. Can you describe current DSNY  
16 enforcement operations on commercial organics  
17 recycling?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: They're limited  
19 because the law has so many loopholes and carve-outs.  
20 Local Law 146 of 2013 makes it so difficult to know  
21 whether a business is legally required to comply.

22 There are some places that very clearly fall into  
23 the covered bucket.

24 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: What's the covered-- Who  
25 covers that bucket?

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 60

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: It's square  
3 footage. It's number of seats. It's type of  
4 material sold. Is it a restaurant? Is it not a  
5 restaurant? It's-- All the details are at  
6 [nyc.gov/commercialorganics](http://nyc.gov/commercialorganics). But it is so-- When you  
7 look at this and you go, wow, this was the product of  
8 extremely complex negotiations between the Bloomberg  
9 administration and a council 11 years ago. You can  
10 look at it and just tell that it was written in a  
11 different time by a big group of people.

12 Whereas today, we all work together on universal  
13 programs.

14 We just want to say, if you have food waste, you  
15 got to separate it, just like we do for residents.

16 And then I will say -- this is a little bit  
17 different than enforcement, but it's a very important  
18 point about commercial organic separation -- you  
19 know, we're not afraid of enforcement. We'll do as  
20 much as we have to do to get compliance. But  
21 whenever we can offer a positive encouragement to do  
22 something, it's great, right? Under the commercial  
23 waste zone law, a business source separating its  
24 organics will actually save money.

25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 61

2 Every pound of material that they put in their  
3 organics bin instead of their trash bin, that is less  
4 money they are paying to their carter. So that's  
5 huge. And it will really help mitigate the need for  
6 enforcement, although we are certainly willing to do  
7 enforcement as needed.

8 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: How many businesses are  
9 currently subject to the requirement for organic  
10 waste separation? Do you have any idea?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: No. We'll have to  
12 get back to you on that.

13 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: And of those businesses, how  
14 many of them have been issued violations?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: We do have that  
16 number.

17 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Can you tell us the number?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: Yeah, I don't have  
19 it today, but we can get it.

20 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: I mean, it's important for us  
21 to know that information, because as the agency seeks  
22 to expand its enforcement authorities on all  
23 commercial businesses, what good would it be without  
24 us having that information of what your current  
25 inspection is like? Are you dedicating resources to

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 62

2 enforcement? How many staffers? This is something  
3 that I know that in every hearing so far, the last  
4 three or four, maybe I don't want to be exact. The  
5 commissioner has spoken about wanting to expand this  
6 power, but I'm not getting information on what that  
7 enforcement currently looks like.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: We can get that to  
9 you. I do want to emphasize that one of the reasons  
10 that we want the law expanded is because it will make  
11 enforcement simpler. I mean, you think about, for  
12 example, if I can just give an example from another  
13 one of our programs: Before the set out time change,  
14 businesses could put out their trash an hour before  
15 close and let them completely escape enforcement by  
16 going, "Oh, yeah, we're closing early today." Like,  
17 what it meant there was like no way to know.

18 And so right now, the commercial organics law is  
19 so full of holes that there are some that we know--  
20 Yeah, there are some that we know have to comply and  
21 we do enforcement. And there are some where it's so  
22 easy for them to go, "Oh, no. I don't have seven  
23 Chairs. I only have six." You know, and the other  
24 Chairs like in the back, being leaned over.

25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 63

2 You know, so really eliminating those loopholes  
3 will drastically improve our enforcement ability.

4 And that's-- We can get you the existing number.

5 But I do just want to emphasize that a change in the  
6 law will fundamentally change the nature of the  
7 enforcement.

8 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: All right. I'm going to  
9 still ask these remaining questions on this issue  
10 just so that it's on the record, and so that we can  
11 get those documents.

12 What is the process by which DSNY detects a  
13 potential violation for these commercial businesses  
14 that are subject to the source separation  
15 requirement?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: We have enforcement  
17 staff who focus on commercial violations.

18 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: When does commercial organics  
19 enforcement take place?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: It can take place  
21 at any hour of the day. We have enforcement-- I  
22 don't believe it is one of the requirements that's  
23 only limited to the two routing times per day because  
24 if the waste is set out, it can be observed.

25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 64

2 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Which areas of the city are  
3 most often covered by organics enforcement officers?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: Well, yeah, it  
5 would primarily be commercial corridors, but we can  
6 see if there's any specific trends.

7 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: How many violations related  
8 to commercial organics recycling did DSNY issue in  
9 fiscal year 24? You say you would get that for us?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: We'll get that for  
11 you.

12 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: What percent of the  
13 violations related to commercial organics recycling  
14 issued have been given to repeat offenders?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: It's a good  
16 question. We can look into that.

17 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Yeah. When DSNY notices that  
18 a business is a repeat offender, does DSNY do any  
19 additional work to speak with the business to provide  
20 education?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: Right. We do often  
22 encourage repeat offenders on all violations to  
23 attend info sessions, but I'll see if we have  
24 anything specific to add.

25



1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 65

2 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: OK. All right, so those are-  
3 - I personally share the goal of increasing compost,  
4 or rather source separation of organic materials at  
5 businesses, but I need to know to what extent has,  
6 under the law that passed many years ago, how  
7 enforcement has looked like for those businesses  
8 subject to that before we decide, you know what,  
9 everybody should be subject to this.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: Right.

11 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: That's an important piece  
12 that we're going to need as a committee.

13 All right, I'm going to turn over to talk about  
14 plastics really quickly.

15 Actually, before I do that, let me just dive into  
16 the Mayor's Management Report.

17 The Mayor's Management Report was recently  
18 released and we have some additional questions on  
19 what we read: 56.8% of refuse trucks and 26.2% of  
20 recycling trucks were dumped on shift in fiscal 2024,  
21 resulting in a need for staff overtime for dumping of  
22 over 40% of DSNY collection trucks.

23 DSNY paid \$158.3 million in overtime pay during  
24 FY24 and \$176.2 million FY23.

25

2 Acknowledging that the agency has made a  
3 significant improvement in this area over the last  
4 year, 15% or so, how will DSNY continue to improve  
5 this number to reduce staff overtime costs?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: So dump on shift,  
7 just to provide some definitions for everybody in the  
8 room, is an efficiency metric. In sort of an ideal  
9 world when you're not dealing with the actual reality  
10 of life on the streets of New York City, a sanitation  
11 worker would go out on a route, fill up their truck  
12 with material and take it to the dump and empty it on  
13 the same eight hour shift, bringing the truck back to  
14 their garage empty so that it's ready to be used.

15 However, in many parts of the city, that is not  
16 possible. Filling up the truck alone takes a full  
17 eight hour shift because of the geography of the  
18 city. So dump on shift has seen a substantial  
19 increase, particularly on the refuse side, thanks to  
20 creative planning by Commissioner Tisch and our  
21 collections office around the destinations of some of  
22 the districts.

23 OK, instead of going to this dump, you'll go to  
24 this dump because it's, you know, the people from  
25 here will go there. Moving things around has seen a

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 67

2 big increase. It remains one of our most important  
3 efficiency metrics and we're continuing to analyze  
4 options and discretion that we may have within our  
5 contracts.

6 Because, of course, you know, one of the things  
7 that sort of protects the city's waste stream broadly  
8 is our contracts for waste transport. And so those  
9 contracts protect us and they protect the city from  
10 having trash piling up everywhere. But they also  
11 come with some sort of, "OK, this much material has  
12 to go here, this much has to go there." So we're  
13 looking for ways within those contracts to continue  
14 to increase that efficiency metric. And we're happy  
15 to say we've made a lot of progress.

16 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: So you would say that dumped  
17 on shift has increased because of the reduction in  
18 time travel or distance travel?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: Yes, that's a major  
20 piece of it. There is some change to the collection  
21 routes themselves, although the biggest change is  
22 creative thinking about where within the city the  
23 truck is taken to be dumped.

24

25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 68

2 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: And have you identified other  
3 opportunities in the upcoming year or so to continue  
4 dump on shift?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: I don't want to say  
6 anything that could potentially conflict with current  
7 or future procurements. I'll just say that this is a  
8 goal that's important to us.

9 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: All right. Well, we would  
10 like to see that improvement continue. I appreciate  
11 your answer on that.

12 The average proportion of collection trucks that  
13 were out of service in fiscal 24 increased from 26  
14 percent in FY23 to 28 percent in FY24, a five year  
15 high. As DSNY refreshes its fleet, to what extent is  
16 it looking to electrifying its fleet?

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: So electrification  
18 is-- First, let me say that you are absolutely right  
19 that the amount of trucks out of service increased.  
20 As the MMR points out, this was due to budget  
21 reduction for the amount of mechanics that we have.  
22 It just is what it is.

23 The electrification, we are making substantial  
24 progress on electrifying everything except the  
25 collection trucks. We are planning to electrify, and

2 are actually making a lot of progress, the bike lane  
3 sweepers, the full size street sweepers. We have the  
4 first-- That truck is called a class seven street  
5 sweeper. That's what the full size is called. We  
6 have the first fully electric class seven street  
7 sweeper in the world. And we are continuing to  
8 electrify that fleet. All of our passenger cars, our  
9 pickup trucks, all of that stuff. We are making a  
10 lot of progress and we are on track to meet the  
11 city's aggressive goals around fleet electrification.

12 On the collection truck, our heavy duty fleet,  
13 there is currently no viable electrification option.

14 We piloted an electric collection truck, and it  
15 worked great for picking up the trash. It was really  
16 good at that, but it was not able to handle the work  
17 of plowing the snow. Obviously, we've gotten less  
18 snow than most of our lives over the last couple of  
19 years. There is no way to know whether that will  
20 continue or not.

21 But the electric technology for heavy duty  
22 vehicles that exists today is not sufficient for the  
23 dual use of our fleet, trash collection and snow  
24 clearing. So, we're electrifying everything else.

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 70

2 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: So we're not transitioning to  
3 electrification right now because of the limitations.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: That's correct.

5 However, in the meantime, we did complete a  
6 transition to 100% renewable diesel, using diesel,  
7 which is not a produced in the traditional way, but  
8 it's made from renewable sources.

9 And we are the largest-- The Department of  
10 Sanitation is the largest user of renewable diesel of  
11 all city agencies. It's better for the environment.

12 It's actually also substantially better for the  
13 sanitation workers. It doesn't smell nearly as bad  
14 in the garages.

15 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Why do you think that there's  
16 no market for these electrifying fleets? I mean,  
17 that just surprises me.

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: It's a niche use  
19 case. There are very few places that need a fully  
20 electric 65,000 pound collection truck that can also  
21 plow snow. Because New York is sort of unique in so  
22 many ways, but one of them is the combination of  
23 geography and density, right? We're in a place that  
24 gets snow, and we have a finite amount of storage  
25 space for our fleet.

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 71

2 In Toronto, for example, they can have a separate  
3 snow plow fleet that just kind of sits there six  
4 months out of the year because space is not as  
5 expensive as it is here. There's places to put it.  
6 We don't have a space for another 2,500 trucks in New  
7 York City, right? So, it has to be a truck we  
8 already have.

9 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Unless it was replaced in  
10 real time with the existing truck.

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: But where would it  
12 physically be? That's what I mean. Like when it's  
13 not in use.

14 If we had a fleet of 2,500 heavy duty trucks that  
15 were only used for the four to five months that it  
16 might snow, where would we physically keep them? The  
17 collection truck is already here and it's already in  
18 every neighborhood, right? Even if we had like a big  
19 depot somewhere in New Jersey, you know, and then all  
20 of a sudden there's a freak snowstorm and they can't  
21 get over through the tunnel, right? This is a model  
22 that's worked for us for the quick reopening after a  
23 snowstorm. But it means that it has to be a specific  
24 kind of heavy duty truck.

25

2 And I know like in Miami, their collection trucks  
3 are also used for storm debris removal when they get  
4 hurricanes.

5 But it's still a different thing than the dual  
6 use that we have around snow removal, where these  
7 trucks always carry a lot of weight. They pick up,  
8 you know, 10, 12 tons of trash. But pushing that  
9 snow for miles and miles and miles, that's a whole  
10 different drain on the battery.

11 We hope the technology gets there. It would be  
12 great.

13 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: If a market existed-- This  
14 is a hypothetical-- If a market existed, would  
15 storage be a limitation?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: Storage would be a  
17 limitation in some of our facilities. And we've  
18 looked at this before. You're talking about not just  
19 a fleet upgrade, but a substantial upgrade to many of  
20 our facilities.

21 You know, there are some sanitation garages that  
22 are coming up on 100 years old. And they were not  
23 built to process that kind of electrical load.  
24 Obviously, any kind of problem like that is  
25 theoretically solvable. But that pushes it-- The



1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 73

2 process of fully electrifying the heavy duty DSNY  
3 fleet, that pushes it from a multi-million dollar  
4 fleet upgrade to a multi-billion dollar facilities  
5 upgrade.

6 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: So storage is a limitation.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: I would say so.

8 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: OK. How many auto truck  
9 mechanics does DSNY have on staff?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: You know, we have  
11 that. I'm sorry, I didn't know that would be on the  
12 agenda for today. We can get that back.

13 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: All right.

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: But it is-- That is  
15 a number that was impacted by the vacancy reduction  
16 in the November plan.

17 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: How many DSNY mechanics are  
18 uniquely assigned to each sanitation district?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: The mechanics-- And  
20 we can include that breakdown, but just so you know,  
21 the mechanics can be assigned to a borough repair  
22 shop or to our central repair shop.

23 And then depending on the size of a repair need,  
24 it either goes to the local place in the borough, or  
25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 74

2 it goes to the big shop which is in Woodside,  
3 Maspeth, depending on who you ask.

4 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Are there any DSNY mechanics  
5 required to staff multiple sanitation districts?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: Yes, because the  
7 repair shops serve a borough.

8 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: How many DSNY mechanics have  
9 resigned or otherwise left DSNY employment during the  
10 last 12 months?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: We should be able  
12 to show change over time in our mechanics.

13 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Is DSNY actively engaged in  
14 hiring additional mechanics?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: Yes, we are engaged  
16 in hiring a number that I don't have in front of me,  
17 but I know it was still lower than recent historical  
18 numbers.

19 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: How soon can you get us this  
20 data?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: When we receive the  
22 formal request from committee council, we should be  
23 able to turn it around relatively quickly.

24 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Within a week?

25 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: Okay.

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 75

2 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: What is the overall overtime  
3 cost attributable to wages paid to DSNY mechanics  
4 during the last 12 months? Same thing?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: Yeah, I would  
6 suggest including that. And that would be only the  
7 cost of the mechanics and not the cost in sanitation  
8 worker overtime that may be due to equipment outage,  
9 right? When a truck is not functioning and then  
10 suddenly have to use a different truck instead, and  
11 that can lead to overtime as well.

12 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Okay. Commissioner, this one  
13 is interesting to me. DSNY reports that it missed  
14 0.0% of collections in FY23 and 24, yet  
15 Councilmembers and 3-1-1 regularly receive complaints  
16 about missed collections. How can the agency  
17 reconcile?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: The missed  
19 collection number is one of the great accomplishments  
20 of the last few years.

21 I have to-- Can I just like be really honest  
22 about the missed collection thing for a second? I  
23 hate to admit that I was once cynical about this, and  
24 believed that like the one-point-- you know, because  
25 I think of myself as a very like-- like I believe

2 the government can solve all of our problems, that  
3 kind of person. But I felt like the 1.4% missed  
4 collection rate was like amazing. And then it turned  
5 out we could go so much lower. And I was shocked by  
6 this.

7 And we are at the point now where missed  
8 collections round down in the MMR to 0.0. Of course,  
9 there are some, although the absolute number is  
10 actually still-- It was a 0.0 last year, and it's a  
11 lower 0.0 this year. And we did that through a few  
12 things.

13 Let me first talk about a big operational change  
14 we made at the agency, which you are familiar with,  
15 which is TrashDash. TrashDash is the Department of  
16 Sanitation's version of CompStat. It is a weekly  
17 data report that goes to everyone in the department  
18 on the uniform side with the rank of supervisor or  
19 above. So, a substantial number of people. And it  
20 drills down on a tremendous amount of metrics, many  
21 of which are customer-facing, in particular, missed  
22 collections.

23 It shows missed collections by number by-- and  
24 then you can go-- you can look at it online and look  
25 at more, you know, on our intranet and look at it in

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 77

2 more detail: Where they are in your district, where  
3 they were on which route, how many are repeats have  
4 reported before, what sanitation worker was working  
5 the truck that day, exactly what, you can see them  
6 mapped out, you know, all this stuff.

7 And so the supervisors, and then the  
8 superintendents who run a district have really put a  
9 tremendous focus on stopping this at the  
10 Commissioner's direction.

11 It is astounding the change we've been able to  
12 make on it. And then I'll just say one other thing  
13 about it that we've done is we did a lot of public  
14 education to clarify certain things that would  
15 previously or likely would previously have produced a  
16 missed collection complaint.

17 So, for example, many people didn't realize that  
18 bulk items like a couch go out on the night that  
19 you're just putting out trash, not the night you're  
20 putting out your recycling. And, so we did a  
21 citywide mailing about that to just let people know,  
22 like, we will get it if you just put it on the right  
23 night. The reason for that is because on the  
24 recycling night, we might be running a dual bin truck  
25 and there's no space for a bulk item.

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 78

2 It's not like just we're being difficult.

3 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: It needs to be carried by two  
4 individuals. That's the policy, right?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: Yeah, yes. And but  
6 it needs to go in the in the rear loader. That's one  
7 chamber in order to fit. So letting people know  
8 about that.

9 We also empowered the supervisors with a sticky  
10 pad. They have a new sticky pad new in the last year  
11 that lets them explain to the resident with  
12 checkboxes why their item might not have been picked  
13 up. Hey, you put out a mattress, but we couldn't  
14 take it because it wasn't wrapped in plastic. It's  
15 not safe, you know.

16 Or you put out a bulk item and it's not your bulk  
17 day or-- you know-- You're-- There's a five or six  
18 reasons listed on there. And that's helped that two-  
19 way communication, letting residents know.

20 So then to the last part of your question, you  
21 hear about missed collections.

22 I have kind of two-- two opinions on this,  
23 because I hear them, you know, I monitor the  
24 Department of Social. I monitor community events  
25 where people say-- One of the things that I often

2 hear is that old cynical, "They never pick it up  
3 anyway." And I think that some of what  
4 Councilmembers hear sometimes is not actually a  
5 specific missed collection complaint.

6 It's someone who lived in the city at a time--  
7 has lived in the city since a time when the  
8 department was not as focused on customer service as  
9 it is today. And they have that old mindset. And I  
10 often-- People say to me, "Well, they don't pick up  
11 my trash anyway." And I go, "Really? On what day  
12 was your trash not picked up?" And all of a sudden  
13 it's like, "Well, I guess recently it's been pretty  
14 good." So I always ask people for specifics. And  
15 then if they do have specifics, please, 311.

16 As I said at the beginning of this answer, it  
17 goes right into a report that the Commissioner on  
18 down looks at every week. So if you report it to  
19 311, believe me, you're going to get special  
20 attention.

21 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Let me ask you a question.  
22 So if an individual says that they didn't get a  
23 missed collection and that becomes a 311 complaint,  
24 they can't file the missed collection on the same  
25 day, right? It needs to be within 24 hours.

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 80

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: That's right,  
3 because they don't know which shift of the day their  
4 trash will be collected on. There's general  
5 consistency--

6 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: So within 24 hours-- Or can  
7 they file the complaint at a minimum of 24 hours? Is  
8 that the policy?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: That's correct.

10 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: And so if then sanitation has  
11 the opportunity to correct for a missed collection  
12 and let's say someone calls you, there's no missed  
13 collection. They do it after the 24 hour period.  
14 DSNY then comes to cure what the complaint was. The  
15 way that's calculated, that's not a missed collection  
16 because you guys were able to cure it.

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: There's been no  
18 change on that side of it as far as I know.

19 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: So that probably explains the  
20 0%.

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: Well, except that  
22 it was always like that, even when it was 2% or 5%.

23 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: I just want to make clear  
24 that the public knows that-- So that's probably the  
25 reconciliation here is that there are missed



1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 81  
2 collections, but whenever someone submits a complaint  
3 after the 24-hour period and DSNY cures it, they're  
4 not adding that cure as part of a missed collection,  
5 right?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: Oh, no, I don't  
7 believe that's-- I don't-- Well, let me say I don't  
8 believe that's correct. I think that if it was  
9 reported as a missed collection, it still goes into  
10 that number. That what the MMR is reporting is  
11 reported missed collections.

12 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Okay.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: That said, it's a  
14 good sort of reminder that this is not necessarily  
15 the right group to discuss that issue. This was the  
16 Waste Diversion Hearing. Happy to talk about it when  
17 we can make sure we have the right folks here,  
18 because I do want to make sure I'm giving--

19 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: I would like to know if the  
20 missed collection is calculated when someone makes  
21 the call, or this is also taking into account the  
22 opportunity to cure.

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: I believe it's a  
24 report of what was reported, but we will confirm for  
25 you.

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 82

2 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Okay. Thank you. I'm going  
3 to turn it over now to-- to Plastics.

4 And these are, I believe, will be my last set of  
5 questions. DSNY puts recycling revenue at only \$15  
6 per ton and recycling cost at \$779 per ton. What are  
7 some things DSNY would like to see to make recycling  
8 more profitable? And how can the city support  
9 increased profitability?

10 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MCDONNELL: A diversion of  
11 paper is by far the best way to increase our revenue.  
12 We actually have thresholds in some of our contracts.  
13 The more tons of paper we divert per month, the  
14 higher payment we get from our vendors. So focusing  
15 on really capturing as much paper as possible.

16 And then on the metal, glass and plastic side,  
17 it's based on market commodity indices that  
18 fluctuate. So, the department has no control over  
19 those market prices, but continuing to divert  
20 material can help by having more tonnage run through  
21 that system. And every ton has a credit based on  
22 that market value.

23 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: What does the city support  
24 look like for that increased profitability?

25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 83

2 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: Yeah, I think it  
3 comes back to outreach and education always, right?  
4 I mean, we-- For what it's worth, when you're  
5 talking about the market forces involved in  
6 diversion, it's good to remember that those of us who  
7 are sort of really interested in this issue probably  
8 read a lot of the national press coverage about like,  
9 "Oh, there's a market collapse," whatever. I always  
10 think it's important to remind people that New York  
11 City is protected by long-term contracts. So we were  
12 not hit by the same sort of huge market changes in  
13 2017 and 18 that happened nationally.

14 That said, you know, we would love to see the  
15 costs come down and the revenue go up. So that's one  
16 of many reasons why we push people to follow the law.

17 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Recently, governments have  
18 been involved in litigation against private companies  
19 over claims that the companies falsely promoted their  
20 plastic packaging as recyclable, when in reality,  
21 much of the material could not be repurposed.

22 What percentage of plastic materials that make it  
23 into the residential and institutional recycling  
24 streams are landfilled?

25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 84

2 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: You know, I just  
3 read about this litigation, this California case. I  
4 wouldn't have comment on that specifically, because I  
5 know it's sort of breaking news. But on your  
6 question about how much is ultimately put to  
7 beneficial use, that's something we have to check on.

8 Yeah, right. I mean, we know it's a 50-- It's  
9 about a 50% capture rate out of the waste stream.

10 If your question is about ultimate--

11 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Yeah, my question, sorry--  
12 My question is, what percentage of plastic materials  
13 that make it into residential and institutional  
14 recycling streams are landfilled?

15 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: OK, that's not  
16 something that's currently reported to us by our  
17 vendors.

18 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: OK. What percentage of  
19 plastic materials that make it into residential and  
20 institutional recycling streams are sent for  
21 incineration at waste to energy plants?

22 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: Same, right?  
23 Yeah, also not reported to us by our vendors.

24 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: And what are the percentages  
25 for metals and glass? Same?

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 85

2 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: Yeah, just I  
3 would say, remember that they have a financial  
4 incentive. Their goal is to sell the material. So  
5 they try to keep those numbers as low as possible.

6 They don't report it to us, but their whole  
7 business model is dependent on getting that number as  
8 low as they possibly can.

9 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Does DSNY have any plans to  
10 reduce its use of waste to energy as a form of  
11 recycling?

12 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: We use waste to  
13 energy as an alternative to landfilling. It's not  
14 something we currently use as an alternative to  
15 recycling.

16 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: I want to turn briefly our  
17 attention to dining sheds. This summer, many  
18 restaurants had to deconstruct their outdoor dining  
19 sheds. Was DSNY involved in a collection of waste  
20 produced as a result?

21 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: We were in some  
22 cases. Some of it was collected by DOT and possibly  
23 other agencies, but we were occasionally called in to  
24 work.

25 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Why the distinction?

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 86

2 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: I think it was  
3 just about crews available.

4 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Availability? Did DSNY  
5 consult with DOT about the massive number of  
6 deconstructed dining sheds?

7 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: I'm not sure. I  
8 wasn't involved in those conversations. I don't  
9 believe so.

10 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: I'm starting-- You know, at  
11 least my offices-- I'm imagining some offices are  
12 starting to deal with complaints that there's going  
13 to be a lot of deconstructed dining sheds. You know,  
14 one is removing it, and also how we are disposing of  
15 it as well. So is there a plan there?

16 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: You know, with  
17 respect to this, it gets at-- Well, first of all, I  
18 mean, it's commercial waste, right? The ones where  
19 DSNY is involved are mostly-- not always, but mostly  
20 ones where the shed is abandoned, where it belonged  
21 to a business that no longer exists.

22 The ones that may be coming down as a result of--  
23 Where the business is active and they've chosen to  
24 get rid of it, they would need to be working with  
25 their private carter.

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 87

2 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: All right. My last question  
3 is a question from Councilmember Nurse.

4 She would like to know if the administration  
5 would be supportive or is open to including  
6 commercial waste as part of the waste  
7 containerization study.

8 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: As part of the  
9 waste characterization study?

10 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Sorry, characterization  
11 study.

12 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: The first thing  
13 I'll say about that is that we are going to be  
14 getting so much more data than we ever have before  
15 about commercial waste through the commercial waste  
16 zone program.

17 For example, I'll tell you, we've never actually  
18 had a way to calculate a commercial diversion rate.  
19 There's estimates that come out of the commercial  
20 transfer stations. But under the commercial waste  
21 zone program, we get so much data as that program  
22 comes online by zone about tonnage per stream and  
23 all-- It's going to be great to have that material.

24 So I think that after we look at full citywide  
25 rollout of that program, which of course does not

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 88

2 have a specific timeline at this point, we're just  
3 doing the first zone now, and we see what sort of  
4 data we're already getting, then it would be  
5 appropriate to discuss whether that's a separate  
6 report, whether that comes into the waste  
7 characterization study, what it might look like. And  
8 let me just turn it over to Assistant Commissioner  
9 McDonnell to add one point.

10 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MCDONNELL: There is a  
11 requirement for the vendors to provide waste audits  
12 to all of their customers in the new contracts that,  
13 although not on a global level, can provide very  
14 detailed information about the waste at each  
15 commercial entity, and what's in it. So that is a  
16 new provision that's included in these contracts that  
17 I agree with Deputy Commissioner Goodman will provide  
18 really excellent data about the commercial waste  
19 stream in New York City.

20 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: So if commercial waste was  
21 added as part of the characterization study, would  
22 that possibly be in violation of contract?

23 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MCDONNELL: I don't know  
24 if that's the case. I just think that we already  
25



1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 89

2 have a mechanism to get that information through the  
3 commercial waste zone contracts.

4 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: All right, my colleague  
5 Crystal Hudson couldn't join me today, but I do want  
6 to ask some questions on textiles. Textile waste can  
7 take hundreds of years to break down in a landfill,  
8 creating harmful emissions in the process. In 2023,  
9 textile waste comprised about 5% of residential  
10 curbside waste, down from 6.3% in 2017, and 6.2% in  
11 2013, but up from 4.8% in 2005.

12 What does the department see as its greatest  
13 challenges with creating and potentially even  
14 expanding local textile waste recycling resources?

15 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: So, Kate is the  
16 expert here. I'll turn it over in a second. But a  
17 few things. Textile waste is a challenging stream on  
18 the operations side, because curbside collection of  
19 textiles for recycling is extremely limited by the  
20 fact that if the material gets wet, it's basically  
21 not recyclable. So we've looked at options around  
22 curbside, and we ran a pilot of textile-- curbside  
23 textile collection on Staten Island that was based  
24 on-- you had to schedule the pickup and we would  
25 reschedule them if there was rain in the forecast.

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 90  
2 It's the only stream like that where the weather that  
3 day can ruin its ability to be recycled.

4 And so that's why we've focused so far on things  
5 like the RefashionNYC program, where it's a bin in  
6 your building. It's inside the building, and when  
7 it's full, a vendor comes and picks it up and  
8 recycles it.

9 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: I have one in mine.

10 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: It's a great  
11 program.

12 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: It is. And where does it go  
13 after a resident deposits it into that refashion bin?

14 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER KITCHENER: Yeah, so the  
15 city has a contract with a local non-profit called  
16 Housing Works. You might have seen them. And so,  
17 you know, as much as they can, they resell the  
18 clothing in their stores, and then some of it goes  
19 for recycling or other uses.

20 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Would DSNY consider  
21 facilitating a clothing reuse platform to allow for  
22 the free exchange of products such as shoes that are  
23 clearly reusable?

24 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: So, there is a  
25 textile option on the DonateNYC platform now. In

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 91  
2 FY24, it collected almost 4,500 tons of textiles for  
3 donation. So, we do that and we'd be happy to work  
4 with you and continue to outreach around it.

5 Ah, and that 4,500 tons through DonateNYC is in  
6 addition to donations through Refashions. Completely  
7 separate, which were even more.

8 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: So, thank you. I have no  
9 further questions. This panel is hereby excused.

10 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: Thank you very  
11 much.

12 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thank you very much for your  
13 testimony.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: If you have not already  
15 filled out a white slip with the sergeant, please do  
16 so if you wish to testify.

17 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: I now open the hearing for  
18 public testimony. I remind members of the public  
19 that this is a government proceeding and that decorum  
20 shall be observed at all times. As such, members of  
21 the public shall remain silent at all times.

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

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 92

2 as testimony, but may submit transcripts of such  
3 recordings to the sergeant at arms for inclusion in  
4 the hearing record.

5 If you wish to speak at today's hearing, please  
6 fill out an appearance card with the sergeant at arms  
7 and wait to be recognized. When recognized, you will  
8 have two minutes to speak on today's hearing topic.  
9 Waste diversion or any of the legislation on our  
10 agenda.

11 I'd like to repeat. Waste diversion or any of  
12 the legislation on our agenda. That is the topic for  
13 today's hearing.

14 If you have a written statement or additional  
15 written testimony you wish to submit for the record,  
16 please provide a copy of that testimony to the  
17 Sergeant At Arms. You may also email written  
18 testimony to [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov), within 72  
19 hours of this hearing, audio and video recordings  
20 will not be accepted.

21 I'm now going to call the first panel We have  
22 Jessica Schreiber, Madeline MacGillivray Wallace, and  
23 Christopher Leon Johnson.

24 And thank you for joining us today.

25 Jessica, you can start.

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 93

2 MS. SCHREIBER: Okay. Um, hello, Sanitation and  
3 Solid Waste Management Committee. My name is Jessica  
4 Schreiber. I'm the Founder and CEO of FabScrap, a  
5 nonprofit that provides textile reuse and recycling  
6 service to over 800 fashion companies in New York  
7 City. Prior to starting FabScrap, I worked at DSNY  
8 in the Bureau of Recycling and Sustainability. I  
9 oversaw the RefashionNYC program for five years after  
10 its launch in 2012. And as part of my role, I  
11 organized and conducted a pilot of curbside  
12 collection of textiles in 2015.

13 I'm here in support of Councilmember Hudson's  
14 bill to require DSNY to complete a household textile  
15 recycling mandate feasibility study. Textiles make  
16 up 5% of the city's total waste stream, the largest  
17 segment after traditional recyclables and organics.

18 The current DSNY textile programs are only  
19 voluntary. I'm wondering if the department knows how  
20 much of the city's 200,000 tons of annual textile  
21 waste is actually captured and diverted by the  
22 voluntary programs.

23 There are potentially significant challenges in  
24 mandating collection, sorting and responsible end-of-  
25 life options for textiles. And I think these

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 94

2 challenges should receive appropriate attention and  
3 be explored. And this study is a first step.

4 And since DSNY already mentioned that commercial  
5 textile waste is a problem, I'd like to note in  
6 working with 800 fashion and interior design  
7 companies, none of them were aware of the 10% textile  
8 waste recycling law. There is no enforcement of this  
9 law. I believe it would currently fall under BIC.  
10 And besides FabScrap, there is no infrastructure in  
11 place for businesses to actually comply with that  
12 law. And I would suggest that that be included in  
13 the study as well.

14 Some additional context and insights just to make  
15 the study as effective as possible: That textile  
16 recycling is really downcycling. There are no fiber-  
17 to-fiber technologies ready to take real volume.

18 Most material that is recycled is shredded into  
19 insulation, carpet padding, furniture lining, et  
20 cetera. The study should consider the practical and  
21 available end-of-life options.

22 [BELL RINGS]

23 And I'll submit the rest in writing, I guess.

24

25

2 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: I'm going to give you all  
3 another minute. I'll give you guys three minutes  
4 each.

5 MS. SCHREIBER: Thank you. Yeah, I'll finish in  
6 that time.

7 At this time, shredding of leathers and furs is  
8 not possible. Buttons and zippers must be removed.

9 And so this study should consider how common  
10 household textiles can or cannot be shredded and  
11 sorted.

12 The nearest facility available to shred large  
13 volumes is in South Carolina. The study should  
14 consider the cost and environmental impact of moving  
15 collected materials or developing similar  
16 infrastructure within the city.

17 The DSNY mentioned seasonal challenges, but this  
18 is also in the production of textile waste. People  
19 don't throw out textile waste the way they do other  
20 trash and recyclables. It's much more seasonal. And  
21 so an ongoing program may not be cost-effective.

22 Finally, thrift organizations are already  
23 overburdened by the amount of unusable clothing they  
24 receive. If textiles are banned, the study should  
25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 96

2 include how nonprofits will be supported to build  
3 capacity to sort and redistribute usable items.

4 And DSNY should be asked how they can ensure that  
5 our clothing waste is not simply relocated to become  
6 pollution or fill landfill in other parts of the  
7 world.

8 I'm very hopeful that a thorough and focused  
9 study will provide steps forward to address our  
10 city's pre- and post-consumer textile waste problem.

11 And thank you for taking action on this issue.

12 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Of course.

13 MS. MACGILLIVRAY: Hello. Hi, City  
14 Councilmembers and in memory of Richard. I'm  
15 Madeline McGillivray. I'm here to testify in support  
16 of Intro 256. I'm going to echo a lot of what  
17 Jessica just mentioned.

18 I'm a lifelong New Yorker. I'm a climate  
19 professional with a microplastics and microfibers  
20 research background. And I direct the climate  
21 justice program of a multi-lens EJ and social justice  
22 nonprofit called Seeding Sovereignty.

23 I was also part of the team at a startup called  
24 Retriever, which was an on-demand doorstep collection  
25 household textile and recycling service where I



1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 97

2 learned the challenges, nuances, technical needs, and  
3 education needs of recycling textiles.

4       So, as Chair Abreu, you've mentioned, we've come  
5 a long way with organics. We've talked a lot about  
6 that today and we should be really proud. But  
7 there's another huge material stream at play. I  
8 recognize the progress already made with textiles  
9 diversion outlined by the commissioner and Jessica.  
10 And I echo his comparison to magicians.

11       I truly view anyone working in solid waste as  
12 real life superheroes. But we're dealing with a  
13 system where we're throwing 200,000 tons per year of  
14 a material that is not waste into landfill, really  
15 questioning what the word waste means. And so we  
16 have to deal with that at some point.

17       And until then, we'll be unnecessarily allocating  
18 tax dollars and city funds.

19       Because New York's existing textiles recycling  
20 program is opt-in only, this material stream is  
21 vastly undertapped. There are people who can benefit  
22 and the city of New York financially can benefit.  
23 Our circularity goals really need to work to create  
24 clean jobs and reduce waste where no waste is sent to  
25 landfill.

2       So, there's such an opportunity for job creation  
3 here, for workforce development programs, for saving  
4 tax dollars and ultimately more circularity in  
5 sharing this massive material waste stream. So  
6 that's why I urge all of you to expand textile  
7 recycling outside of RefashionNYC by supporting Intro  
8 256, and also to require the Department of Sanitation  
9 not only to conduct the feasibility study of the  
10 recycling of household textiles, but also include a  
11 full plan to implement the program, make sure that  
12 the plan includes that textiles are not shipped  
13 abroad, as Jessica also outlined, to folks of the  
14 global south where they unjustly have to bear this  
15 burden.

16       Include non-profit capacity building with local  
17 players to really empower folks who know their  
18 communities best and with a plan to reuse fabric  
19 scraps and work with existing local experts, some of  
20 whom are here and include NYCHA as part of the study.

21       It's a long, complicated, intricate road to zero  
22 waste by 2030, but this is a critical step that would  
23 continue to position the city as a leader in climate.  
24 Thank you both for your work as well.

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 99

2 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thank you very much for your  
3 testimony. Mr. Leon Johnson.

4 MR. JOHNSON: Yup. Hey, Chair Abreu. My name is  
5 Christopher Leon Johnson, on the record. A quick  
6 thing before I start my testimony.

7 I was here to support the other hearing Chaired  
8 by Julie Menin for the workers, worker fatalities,  
9 and I made that clear that we need double and visible  
10 turnout today. We need more people to fight for  
11 this. Instead, there's doing BS press conferences  
12 and rallies.

13 Put the put the same boost to the hearings, to  
14 the to the public testimony. That's the only way  
15 they're going to listen.

16 So back to the topic at hand, I want to advocate  
17 in support of the bill to make a requirement to store  
18 e-bike batteries into proper bins.

19 One thing then you start happening more is we  
20 need like more education first and the education  
21 needs to be implemented in Spanish, Creole, and I'm  
22 not trying to be-- in more foreign languages  
23 dedicated to the African community, because these are  
24 the main ones that are doing the research, Hispanics  
25 and Africans. These want to do the research. So you

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT100

2 need to start pushing more education in these certain  
3 languages more instead of just English.

4 That's my opinion with that. Everybody know  
5 these are the main race, the main type of people that  
6 are delivering the delivering our food. So, if you  
7 don't give them the education in their language and  
8 make it a big time priority over English, it's going  
9 to be really ineffective of a bill.

10 One more thing. One thing you start happening  
11 more with these storages is the need to make more  
12 public-- public storage and more public store for  
13 everybody, not just deliveristas. And people need to  
14 start pushing it more to the public instead of just  
15 letting one nonprofit and I'll make this clear. The  
16 Worker Justice Project, which is ran by Liggy Galapa,  
17 which is not even a real nonprofit, telling their  
18 workers to tell them their members to hack, hijack  
19 all the charging stations, and hijack all the bike  
20 racks. So, the end is here. Like, yeah, we need we  
21 need to change up with storing into the right garbage  
22 bins.

23 But if there's no real education and especially  
24 pushing for more like languages, like Spanish and the  
25 African language, like Creole and all the other

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT101

2 languages, it's going to be ineffective. It's not  
3 going to do anything. You're going to have-- I know  
4 you're I know, Chair Abreu, you care about preventing  
5 more of these fires at these-- at these apartment  
6 buildings. But if you're not pushing it to the right  
7 to the right people, you're not targeting the right  
8 people with this with these bills. And this is not  
9 going to do anything.

10 It's like-- It's like you're pushing-- It's like  
11 you're trying to tell someone that is that only  
12 speaks Spanish the stuff in English is just  
13 pointless. So I support it. But we need more  
14 education to the right languages.

15 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: I want to thank this panel  
16 for its testimony, and this panel is now excused.

17 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: On Zoom, Mary Arnold. You  
19 may may proceed.

20 MS. ARNOLD: Thank you, Chair Abreu. Mary Arnold  
21 testifying for the Solid Waste Advisory Board to the  
22 Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan and Queens. We strongly  
23 support the passage of Intro 697, which would amend  
24 Local Law 40 of 2010.

25

2       Since the passage of local laws, 19 of 89 and 40  
3 of 2010, six waste composition studies have been  
4 conducted between 1990 and 2023. Each study offers a  
5 detailed analysis of the residential waste streams,  
6 examining materials such as metal, glass, paper,  
7 textiles, and organics. These reports provide  
8 critical insights into the management of our city's  
9 waste, showing not just what materials are collected,  
10 but also why some are recycled and others are not.

11       For instance, they reveal that Manhattan  
12 residents excel at recycling cardboard, while some  
13 Brooklyn neighborhoods lead in food scrap diversion,  
14 helping policymakers refine and improve recycling  
15 programs.

16       Historically, these studies have tracked the rise  
17 and fall of various waste streams, such as juice  
18 boxes and phone books, and assess the success of  
19 policy initiatives like the bans on expanded  
20 polystyrene and plastic shopping bags.

21       In 2018, New York City used 10 billion plastic  
22 bags annually. Today, that number is dramatically  
23 reduced, thanks to insights provided by these  
24 studies.

2 Looking forward, it is crucial not only to  
3 continue these studies, but to enhance them. Future  
4 studies should present data in ways that support the  
5 elimination of non-recyclable packaging and products.

6 By reclassifying materials into durable and non-  
7 durable categories and further segmenting durables as  
8 repairable, reusable, or reducible, we can better  
9 guide efforts toward an achievable zero-waste goal,  
10 which also, to echo the last speaker, has to be  
11 supported by education. Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thank you so much. Nischan?

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

14 MS. NISCHAN: Thank you, Chair Abreu. My name is  
15 Ulrike Nischan, testifying on behalf of the SWABs,  
16 the Manhattan, Brooklyn, Bronx, and Queens Solid  
17 Waste Advisory Boards are supportive of Intro 695 in  
18 its current form, which proposes a requirement to  
19 conduct a comprehensive study of new waste policy  
20 initiatives that would reduce the sale distribution  
21 and use of single-use plastic items in the city and  
22 advance environmental justice through such  
23 reductions, with three recommendations.

2 First, a ban on toxic chemicals in single-use  
3 food packaging, particularly the 14 known toxics  
4 prevalent in plastic today.

5 Second, requiring any products intended as  
6 substitutions for single-use plastic packaging also  
7 be non-toxic.

8 Many such alternative products currently on the  
9 market contain high levels of PFAS.

10 And lastly, banning plastics that are either  
11 difficult to recycle or for which recycling is not an  
12 economically viable option.

13 Intro 695 would help build on New York City's  
14 legacy of reducing the use of single-use plastic  
15 materials. In the last decade, the city has  
16 instituted several initiatives that have undoubtedly  
17 contributed to New York's over 100-pound reduction in  
18 per household aggregate annual refuse and recycling  
19 collections from 10 years ago.

20 These initiatives include Local Law 142, which  
21 prohibits the use of single-use foam and packaging  
22 peanuts. Local Law 63, which would have banned  
23 plastic bags later enacted as a statewide ban.

24 Local Law 17, which prohibits restaurants and  
25 food delivery services from including silverware and



2 other extras and takeout orders unless customers  
3 expressly request these items, and lastly, citywide  
4 monthly plastic free lunch day where no single-use  
5 plastic packaging is served in cafeterias in New York  
6 City schools.

7 These examples of materials reduction initiatives  
8 resulted in a significant reduction in the  
9 consumption of single-use plastic in New York City  
10 and prove that these efforts are not only palatable  
11 for New York City residents, they work.

12 So, thank you for holding this hearing to  
13 introduce this important bill and for your  
14 consideration today.

15 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thank you, Nishan, for your  
16 testimony.

17 Seeing no more members of the public wishing to  
18 testify, this hearing is hereby adjourned.

19 [GAVEL]

20

21

22

23

24

25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT106

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date October 3, 2024