

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE
MANAGEMENT

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April 26, 2017
Start: 1:13 p.m.
Recess: 2:21 p.m.

HELD AT: Committee Room - City Hall

B E F O R E: ANTONIO REYNOSO
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

ANDY L. KING
VANESSA L. GIBSON
COSTA G. CONSTANTINIDES
STEVEN MATTEO

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

Bridget Anderson
Deputy Commissioner for the Department's Bureau
Of Recycling and Sustainability

Molly Hartman
Deputy Mayor's Office for helping Human Services
On Food Policy

Corinne Schiff
Deputy Commissioner of the Division of
Environmental Health

Will Thomas
Director of Research Policy and Advocacy at
Hunger Free America

Gretchen Roth
Bowery Mission

David DeVaughn
Director of Policy and Community Engagement
Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste
Management

Bonnie Lane Webber
Vice Chair of the New York City Group of the
Sierra Club

Jacquelyn Ottman
Serves on the Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory
Board or Manhattan SWAB as Secretary

Damon Versagsi
Started Scrappy Meals

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[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Good morning or good afternoon. Welcome to this hearing concerning Intro number 1439 which would require agencies to notify at least two food rescue organizations prior to disposing of food that is safe for human consumption and Intro number 1514 which would require the city to create and maintain a web portal to help facilitate food donations. Approximately 40 percent of all food grown in the United States is thrown away. This means that our country spends over 200 billion dollars every year to grow, transport, and dispose of food that is never eaten. While most of the food can be donated, currently only small... a small fraction of this food reaches food banks and other food rescue organizations. This has a real cost to New York City. In Fiscal Year 2016, the Department of Sanitation spent approximately 1.1 billion dollars to dispose of the city's residential waste. since about 20 percent of the materials composed of food waste the cost of land filling residential food waste was approximately 200 million dollars pursuant to Local Law 77 and 146. The city has established residential and commercial organics programs. While

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it goes that these programs are laudable I fully support them and I fully support them. they are expensive to implement and maintain, reducing the amount of safe edible food that is ultimately thrown away means less cost for city tax payers and importantly for my district fewer garbage trucks on the road. In addition, even though millions of pounds of edible food are thrown out every year, the city faces a growing hunger crisis. For many years organizations such as City Harvest, Food Bank of New York... of New York City, and other groups have been feeding millions of New Yorkers. Despite the enormous impact of these organizations... these organizations have had there's still a large number... a large need that is not being met. Encouraging and facilitating more food donations would serve a dual purpose of reducing food waste while at the same time feeding hungry New Yorkers. To this end, Intro 1439 sponsored by me would require agencies when confiscating food for a safe... that is safe for human consumption to notify at least two food rescue organizations that may retrieve such food at their own expense at least 24 hours before disposing of the food. In addition, Intro 1514 sponsored by Council Member Espinal would

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require DSNY in conjunction with DoITT to continue...
to create and maintain a web portal that would allow
perspective food donors to post notifications
concerning the availability of that food that would
otherwise go to waste and to arrange for food rescue
organizations to retrieve this food. We look forward
to hearing from DSNY, food advocacy, and food rescue
organizations and other witnesses about their
thoughts on these bills and ways that we can both
reduce edible food waste and help food insecure... help
food insecure New Yorkers. So, thank you and now with
us we have Bridget Anderson from the Department of
Sanitation, Corinne Schiff from the, the Deputy
Commissioner of Environmental Health, thank you for
being here, Richie O'Hara from the Department of
Consumer Affairs, and Molly Hartman from the Mayor's
Office of Food Policy. Thank you all for being here
and Bridget take it away.

BRIDGET ANDERSON: Well good afternoon

and thank you Chair Reynoso and members of the
senate... Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste for
inviting me and the Department of Sanitation to
appear at this hearing and for your ongoing
commitment and support to our recycling and

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sustainability programs. As you mentioned I am
Bridget Anderson, Deputy Commissioner for the
Department's Bureau of Recycling and Sustainability.
I'm also joined today by Representatives from the
Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the
Department of Consumer Affairs, and the Mayor's
Office of Food Policy. I have some opening remarks
and will address each bill under consideration today
after which I'm happy to answer your questions as are
those at the table. Households and businesses in New
York City discard approximately one and a half
million tons of waste... food waste each year, equating
to roughly a quarter of the city's waste stream. Food
loss and food waste that happen are... across the broad
food supply chain, in manufacturing, at distribution
facilities and supermarkets, during transportation,
and in preparation at homes and in commercial food
establishments. While our primary goal must be to
prevent food waste from occurring in the first place,
donating surplus wholesome and nutritious food for
human consumption diverts food waste from landfills
and puts food on the table for individuals and
families in need. The issues of food waste and food
loss are gaining attention in New York City as well

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as across the country. The Department is working to build on the energy, motivation, and innovative ideas to tackle these issues. The Department's goal is to maximize the capture of excess food that would otherwise be discarded by restaurants, caterers, stadiums, corporate dining rooms, hotels, and other such sources of excess food. DonateNYC is the Department's program to support and expand the reuse sector in NYC. The donate website and mobile app connects residential and commercial donors of reusable or salvageable goods to appropriate outlets, the website's NYC dot gov slash donate for anyone who wants to know. In addition, it facilitates capacity building for nonprofit organizations that rescue and redistribute goods including food rescue organizations such as City Harvest, Food Bank NYC, Salvation Army, Bowery Mission and others some of whom are here today with us. Typically, these and other food rescue and food bank, bank organizations each maintain their own distributed systems with call centers for donors to schedule pick-ups of food suitable for donation. Some of these organizations provide both rescue and distribution services. Although there is a wide range of logistical

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capabilities in performing this work, capacity and technological assets vary from operation to operation and it can be a challenge and there is an, an opportunity to improve the coordination between these organizations so that food not usable by one group can be redirected to another. Turning now to today's bills, I would like to first address Intro number 1514 that would require; within six months, the department or an agency or office designated by the Mayor, to work with DoITT to create and maintain a portal to facilitate food donations between potential donors such as food service establishments, grocers, produce markets, and food rescue organizations and potential recipients. The department supports the objective of this intro and believes that with sufficient development, DonateNYC could be.. could support an innovative and expanded food rescue effort that streamlines and improves connections between donors and organizations that best meet their respective logistical needs, rather than developing a new and separate portal. We have concerns, however, that the six-month time line proposed under the bill may be insufficient to adequately study what is needed and also then to implement the solution.

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DonateNYC could also consider a communication tool to assist donors and organizations with direct coordination and allow the city to track donations data to measuring waste reduction impacts and other outcome metrics. The department would like to examine this concept further to understand the need and scope of this program and what is necessary to develop such a system. This would include engaging stakeholders, both non-profit and for profit, reviewing and assessing existing technologies and systems in place to understand their strengths and weaknesses and evaluating the development needs to best leverage and expand on existing tools and operations and we would be very happy to report back to the committee and the council on what we believe could work successfully to meet this mutual objective. The second bill on today's agenda, Intro number 1439, would amend Title 17 of the New York City Administrative Code by requiring any agency at least 24 hours in advance of confiscating food and disposing food from a business, to notify at least two food rescue organizations of the food's availability which it may retrieve at its own expense. While several food confiscation processes exist within other agencies, the Sanitation

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Department does not make the determination of what businesses are subject to enforcement action... what businesses are subject to enforcement action from where food will be confiscated, although we will provide the ancillary service of disposal when requested by another sister enforcement agency and could assist other agencies and partners in data tracking food recovery and waste reduction assessment. Other agencies are present here today and can help explain their agency protocols. For example, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene currently works to facilitate rescue of confiscated food so long as the food is safe for, for consumption. However, the process requires a food rescue organization to pick up the food immediately after confiscation and often without prior notice. That is because the city has no facility to store confiscated food and we typically do not know in advance that an enforcement action will result in food available for rescue. For these reasons, complying with the 24-hour notice period set out in this bill would not be possible. We look forward to working together with the council and all involved agencies to discuss some of these obstacles and to craft a practical way to

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enable more food rescue. We certainly applaud the goals set forth in this bill and want to note that the city has a strong working partnership with several food rescue organizations that already pick up access food from restaurants, grocers, manufacturers, wholesalers, greenmarkets, and deliver the food to local soup kitchens, food pantries, daycare and senior centers, homeless shelters throughout the five boroughs. Efforts to maintain food waste... to minimize food waste and loss, raise awareness of food waste and facilitate food recovery that helps provide nutritious foods for New York families and individuals that need it, saves consumers and businesses money and reduces our overall carbon footprints. The department supports creative solutions to address food waste and recovery and we look forward to hearing from the other stakeholders here today in order to continue this important conversation with this committee and with the council. I would like to thank Chair Reynoso and the Sanitation and Solid Waste Committee for its continued leadership in helping to improve solid waste management, for your interest in reducing food

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loss in the city, and for holding this hearing this afternoon. We are now happy to answer your questions.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you Bridget, thank you. I want to acknowledge that we've been joined Costa Constantinides in the committee and I wanted to ask edible food waste prevention how does that fit the administration's goal for zero waste by 2030 and, and just I guess a plan and what the plan is obviously we're trying to tackle an issue that we think is important, that is expensive and we think there's a solution to, to try to, to get there on diversion... [cross-talk]

BRIDGET ANDERSON: Right... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...so, what is... what is the, the administration's goal regarding food waste?

BRIDGET ANDERSON: Molly would you like to talk to the administration's role?

MOLLY HARTMAN: Sure.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: And just make sure you state your name and title every time you, you get on... [cross-talk]

MOLLY HARTMAN: Sure... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...the mic.

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MOLLY HARTMAN: I'm Molly Hartman, I work in the Office of the Deputy Mayor for helping Human Services on Food Policy. So, food waste as you said is an important part of our zero waste by 2030 goal and as Bridget mentioned in her testimony preventing food waste from occurring in the first place is obviously the primary goal and there are a couple of things that the city is doing to support businesses and residents in doing that. We provide a technical assistance to businesses, we're holding events including additional events that... foundation for New York strongest is holding this summer and we do have an active partnership with City Harvest, with lots of other rescue organizations to encourage businesses to divert more of their food... usable food for donation, the organics regulations as well are a large piece of that for commercial businesses because they work with the businesses that produce the most food waste.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: And, and you feel confident that the work that you're doing with prevention and assisting these businesses is going to help us get to zero waste, right, zero waste is a... it's, it's a... it's a... it's nothing? So, I just want to... is there confidence there or do you think that

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bill is like this and just more conversation and partnership with the city council will help us achieve, you know zero waste eventually?

MOLLY HARTMAN: Yeah, I... we share your interest in doing more in thinking through more creative ways to work with businesses as well as residence, it is an ambitious goal but it's one that, you know we want to continue working with council on.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Are there other diversion plans for food waste outside of... both commercial and residential outside of composting for example that, that we have?

BRIDGET ANDERSON: Yeah, so we, we are partnering with the Department of Environmental Protection to turn some of the food waste into a bioslurry to turn into anaerobic digestion into energy through the waste water treatment plants in Newtown Creek. This is one of our attempts to leverage existing infrastructures so can... we're in the testing phase to figure out can we make this work and succeed without having to build something new, how can we leverage existing infrastructure.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: I'm very familiar with the biogas in, in, in Greenpoint for example and

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think it's a great idea just we haven't been able to turn that gas into methane and sell it yet to, to national grid I guess, would be excited to see that happen soon and whether or not that could generate some fund... some money for the city or at least for the residents of the city of New York. You... the web portal, you made mention in your testimony that the timeline was an issue and that you don't think in six months we would be able to have something put together that really speaks to the intention of the bill, is there a timeline that you have internally that might make more sense so that we can accommodate and modify the bill to, to give you that time?

BRIDGET ANDERSON: We'd be happy to, to

discuss that more with the committee and the council. What we think is most important is to really understand what exists already, we don't want to reinvent the wheel, we don't want to spend money on a portal that's not needed, if something already exists so we're, we're thinking that this first phase should be to really understand, engage all the stakeholders, understand what the barriers are, you know some of the systems in place now are very analogue, it's people literally calling on a phone and, and you know

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messaging that way, some people do have more database systems, we want to understand what's, what's there, how can we leverage what's there and, and make better connections.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: So, I'm picturing a, a screen at... you know at, at Food Bank and every time the city does something and there's food that could be become waste and a red... a red notice pops up and... with an address of where to pick up food and then they run and get the food or, or try to get the food if they need it and that just continues to happen and it's an automated process. We're just trying to use technology to try to assist in, in, in seeing these, these goals achieved and I would love to hear I guess you, you kind of mentioned it in your testimony but more in detail as to how... there are things you said analogue by phone, every one saw the video of the cops throwing the garbage... the, the food into the garbage truck we want to prevent that from happening. Our agencies, other agencies are on notice that these are things that need to happen or the protocols by which you're supposed to handle the potential food waste to, to, to preserve it and... for example every single officer knows that that's the

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case that they can't just call the Department of Sanitation and take the, the, the trash. Hopefully the Department of Sanitation knows but interagency I guess communication on how that's happening.

BRIDGET ANDERSON: We've been discussing between the various agencies present here and NYPD just to make sure we're improving coordination and, and protocols on how we manage any scenarios where enforcement action might require food to be disposed of if it's deemed not safe for consumption. I will defer it to my... the other agencies here to talk more about their protocols for doing that but we really defer to the agencies to decide if something is safe for consumption if it's not then we're available to assist in the disposal and the transportation to disposal of that material and I think with the web portal the idea is exactly what you said which is let's have a one stop place where people can, you know list food for donation and then seamlessly move that into each organization's existing, you know systems so that... the idea is... what's it going to take to, to link those systems to a centralized portal that's what we want to understand better so I don't know if you'd like to..

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CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: We have been joined by Council Member Andy King from the Sanitation and Solid Waste Committee and also by one of the bill's sponsors, Rafael Espinal Junior from Brooklyn and actually want to give him some time to make a statement regarding one of the pieces of legislation, Rafael.

COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Thank you

Chairman Reynoso and thank you for all the work you do on behalf of the New York Sanitation Committee and also for being a co-prime sponsor of Intro 1514 but I just came here just simply to show my support for the bill, I think it's a... it's a great way to connect our hungry New Yorkers to food that is actually being tossed out. We know... we know the number, 16 percent of New Yorkers are going to bed hungry, you know over 40 percent of the food in this country gets tossed out that's produced, it gets tossed out and you know I, I think this is a simple way to connect those hungry New Yorkers who... to this food. We, we do know that there are already organizations that are doing food rescues and we already do have food banks but I imagine this is being a way for even small organizations and maybe businesses that don't

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participate already to be part of that process and find ways to get that food to, to, to smaller food banks locally, I can imagine this being a local way of making that connection. So, you know I'm, I'm really proud of, of this legislation, hopefully we can come to an agreement on what this will look like. I know a lot of us have spoken about this looking like a Craigslist kind of style application so we're... you know we're, we're, we're looking forward to hearing to what the administration has to say and how we can best move forward on passing this legislation so thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you Council

Member Espinal and just to.. for the Department of Health what protocol do you use to.. how do you know you have.. you can confiscate then after you do that how do you check whether or not it's, it's... the food is healthy and so forth like just speak to the process you go through to, to, to confiscate the food?

CORINNE SCHIFF: Sure, good afternoon,

Corrine Schiff from the New York City Health Department. I want to say first that the department shares the, the goals that are implicit in these.. in

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these bills and I'll just talk through a little bit about how this issue arises for us. Really this comes up when we are in an enforcement action, really an enforcement action in the mobile food vending context and when we are in the process of closing a mobile food vending unit because it's violating for example a location law, one the council... where the council has specified where vending can occur it may be that the vendor is unable to take the food that is on that unit and we have determined that it's safe for consumption that food belongs to the vendor so the vendor can take it but if the vendor is unable to do that and that food is safe for consumption we do make every effort to try to contact a food rescue group to pick up that food and, and so that it can be made available to people. I will note as Deputy Commissioner Anderson said in her testimony that we... unfortunately we don't have a facility to store food and so that's why we just wanted to highlight for you a practical consideration for us that if, if no one is available to pick that food up really sort of... very quickly we have... we have nowhere to, to put it and we don't because these are part of enforcement actions we don't necessarily know ahead of time that

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there will be food available. So, that's just sort of practical consideration we, we hope to work with you to... as we further think through this bill.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: So, this food storage issue seems to be a big deal, if we want to get to zero waste it seems like we need a food storage location, right I want to be perfectly honest this is an obstacle to the, the zero waste by 2030, it's not necessarily an obstacle to this bill so there has to be a solution or some type of, of alternative that can... that can be presented to the public so that we can get to zero waste by 2030, has, has that been a conversation that the agencies or the administration has had as to, to achieve their goals?

BRIDGET ANDERSON: One of the things we've been doing is, is talking with the existing food rescue organizations to understand their capacities because partly it, it's also if, if there's more food that we're able to then identify and we, we get the logistics together to transport that food, you know who has the capacity to manage it and so we're, we're trying to figure that out both with the existing organizations and also internally is there a path to find food storage options. It's...

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it... at this... at this time it's, it's look... sanitation specifically does not have locations where food safe for consumption is appropriate... it's appropriate to put food safe for consumption, you know we don't have refrigerated rooms, we don't have... you know we have sanitation garages where we manage waste and we, we don't want to mix safe food with waste. So, it's, it's been something we've been discussing, we don't have an answer yet and we'd love to continue that conversation.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: That makes... it's

extremely concerning but also... and I guess a business owner has too much food or ordered too much food and has no place to put it, what happens to that food, does it automatically get thrown out and how is that business owner held accountable for, you know over purchasing I guess and having... and attributing to... I guess there's, there's a private carding company there as opposed to the, the Department of Sanitation handling it but still are there repercussions for excess food waste in the city of New York at this moment?

BRIDGET ANDERSON: There, there are no

repercussions if a business owner chooses to over

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2 purchase food, it's something where a business can
3 save a lot of money and a lot of restaurants know...
4 operate at the margins and so we've been doing a lot...
5 a lot of our outreach is about how do you reduce the
6 food waste in the first place and so not over
7 ordering your food, finding more efficient mechanisms
8 to, to store your food on site before you even talk
9 about donating food is something that we've been
10 doing a lot with our outreach.

11 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Okay, I want to
12 allow for Council Member Andy King to ask a couple of
13 questions, Council Member King?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Thank you Mr.
15 Chair, I appreciate your strong passion when it comes
16 to making sure that the sanitation in New York City
17 is done correctly so I appreciate it. Excuse my
18 tardiness, I was on the other side listening to the
19 Mayor explain his executive budget and rolling it
20 out. So, I'm not sure... we have the Health Department
21 and we have the administration here as well, someone...
22 no sanitation, no.

23 [off-mic dialogue]

24 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Okay, so at the
25 risk of sounding dumb but I was taught a long time

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ago there's no dumb questions as opposed to just a question being asked and once it's asked it's no longer dumb. So, here we go, food waste and we want to figure out how do we preserve it with a portal that allows us to feed more New Yorkers. My question is, one, how... is there a system already in place being able to handle whatever capacity that we have if there's going to be a number of... an influx of donations, how do we differentiate because what I'm hearing so far if someone's food is expiring on May 1st and they donate it to you and it's about to expire on May 1st but you're not getting it back out in the public till May 13th, how does that work, how do we make sure that... we talk about the words edible how do we guarantee what's edible in a time frame because unfortunately some things get mislabeled in stores. So, how do we... how do we set a criteria to make sure that the food that we get are protected and there's a quick turnaround because if I'm hearing you don't have places really to store it with that much... for long periods of time how is there a quick turnaround but then you got to assess if this is really food good enough that we're able turn around that quickly so while this is a great piece of

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legislation to make sure that New Yorkers don't go hungry in the wealthiest country on the planet, one of the wealthiest countries on the planet no one should ever have... should be going hungry and we know Americans and we know New Yorkers, we waste a lot of food whether it's restaurants or not but how do we make sure that we're... whoever is going to consume phase two of a food that they're still getting quality food at the same time?

CORINNE SCHIFF: Hi, Corinne Schiff from the Health Department. It's, it's an important question and I, I can... I can set a little bit of context which is that the health codes... the New York City Health Codes Food Safety Rules do apply to food that would be donated, that would be at the time of the donation so in the same way that you... the, the rules apply to food that is sold, it applies to food that is donated so food that has been left out of temperature for a, a long time is that it's no longer safe for example, you, you can't sell that food, you can't donate that food but I think you asked a different question which is an important one which is what happens once that food leaves the restaurant and

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it's in whatever sort of holding for, for food donation in that... in that facility.

BRIDGET ANDERSON: And... well we... luckily, we have some food rescue organizations here who hopefully can answer that question for you of how they manage food that may be on the margin or food that they need to move more quickly than other food, they'll be better positioned to give you the real sort of on the ground examples of how they manage that. One thing that is a larger policy thing is, is the idea of date labels on food, they are quite inconsistent and I don't know if... Molly if you have more information about efforts... there are efforts to try to create better consistency and a date label on food, what does that mean, is it a... is it a... the expiration date, does that mean you can't sell it, does it mean that it's not safe for consumption so we're trying on the sort of broader policy level to get more consistency with labeling food appropriately from when it... when it is and is not safe.

MOLLY HARTMAN: I just want to clarify that's federal policy... [cross-talk]

BRIDGET ANDERSON: Yes... [cross-talk]

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MOLLY HARTMAN: ...there's no current federal policy around what is on a label, I'm sure people will speak to that as well and there are advocates on this issue and that's something where I think the, the federal government has expressed interest in leadership on clarifying what's on the date label to better inform consumers. I think just sort of anecdotally there's a lot of things where it says like use by May 1st but that doesn't actually mean that it's going bad or unsafe but I, I do think that that... it does raise concerns for people, you know when you see that it's concerning so.. that's something that has to be handled.

CORINNE SCHIFF: I did want to add one other thing to, to provide a little more context which is that some of these providers do have to meet health code standards themselves if they're a soup kitchen for example they need a, a food service establishment permit from us. So, there are some, some protections but I, I do think you ask a good question and it's something we should continue to talk about.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: I would like for you to also help me as you're continuing to talk

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about this currently those who donate food has there..
I heard there's no punishment for donating bad food
but is there a punishment or criteria to say hey,
your organization has donated repeatedly food that's
not edible, we're taking you off the list of
receiving food from you, what kind of plan can you
put in place to make sure that there's no bad actors
who want to participate because I understand at this
point we're saying it's donating, is anybody going to
figure out how to make money in the future or for
donating food so whether it was tax breaks or
whatever it is but how do we make sure that we weed
out the bad actors if there isn't a system like that
in place something.. future conversations, more
conversations but how do we have that on the table as
well.. as well because like again I think it's a great
idea I just want to make sure that we're talking
about something that you can't take back once you
digest it into your system, you know if it isn't
right there's a whole other issues that come out
other than me just being hungry, alright so my
concern is making sure that whatever we bring in that
we're able to manage it, make sure it is clean, the
lettuce isn't brown and whatever it is that, you know

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we, we, we're delivering to phase two to those individuals who don't have food that we do it right, we do it the correct way and do it in ways that people stay healthy and not get ill from the food that we're giving them. So, I just... those are my questions and I want to thank... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: So... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: ...and I thank Espinal... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...so I'll, I'll... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: ...for the legislation... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...Council Member King I actually want to let you know that a lot of folks are not necessarily concerned about... well it's not about the food that people are receiving it's that folks that donate food that are doing it in good faith are concerned about getting fines or getting in trouble for donating that food so they just don't donate even good food, right, they just don't take the risk and in not taking the risk it goes into the dumpster and then we pay up to 200 million dollars give or take for the city to manage that, to, to

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handle that waste. So, is many obstacles also a federal... no, no clear federal guidelines as to what date is on something sometimes is best used by not necessarily means that it's expired or expire... expiration dates or this is the date that it's... when it's freshest not necessarily... you could eat it... so we don't have any consistency and with all this lack of consistency and, and no clear messaging as to how we're supposed to handle this people just don't take any risks at all and we end up having to pay for it.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: At the risk of a... at the risk of offending any activist animal groups is there any start of any conversation of some of the food that would be that it... that could feed some of our animals who would be able to digest this with... that maybe might save us money and the city of New York to go in this sanitation and landfills, I'm, I'm just, just saying I don't know but I'm just putting it out there other options of livestock that could... that can digest the food that could still save the money or save the city money on processing anything we got to do it, I'm ask... just, just throwing it out there.

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BRIDGET ANDERSON: When you look at the..
sort of the hierarchy of, of options to manage food
waste, you want to prevent it in the first place and
you want to feed people and you also want to feed
animals. So, there is.. there is a place for that, for
live.. feeding livestock, for using farms, pig farms
and things like that, absolutely.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: No problem. There's
a.. if there's apples to be donated we could send them
to Staten Island to feed the deer. I would like to
make mention that Council Member Steven Matteo from
Staten Island is here, present. I want to thank you.
I, I guess for me the concern I'm having is that
there are lot of this grey area here, many unanswered
questions to no fault of your own, it's just a, a, a
development strategy, right, we're what I call like
the embryonic stages of development to really try to
figure this out but that is a.. my big.. that's my
concern is that if 2030 is real then we have to have
a plan for this already and we're not.. don't
necessarily have one so what Council Members like
Rafael Espinal and I are doing are trying to fill the
gap and fill that void temporarily so we would
actually appreciate it if we would come to a place

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where we modify legislation to help you reach your goals but I do think these are two pieces of legislation that can help us get there. So, I'm excited to see where this goes in the future and don't know if Council Member Matteo if you have any questions. I... and I hope you guys can stay to listen to the, the food... the food rescue organizations and the businesses that are going to be here because hopefully they can help us answer a lot of these questions but thank you so much for your testimony and your time. Thank you. Okay. Darid DeVaughn from City Harvest, Will Thomas from Hunger Free America, and Gretchen Roth from the Bowery Mission. Or, or David maybe, David. Oh, I'm sorry, you didn't go... you didn't go to catholic school. No, it's alright. It's David DeVaughn, Will Thomas, and Gretchen Roth. Thank you so much and these are food rescue organizations and... that are going to speak to this issue, the agencies are here as you can tell we're like at the first floor of, of making this happen in a real way and just really want to get your perspective on, on what can be done and what you're already doing. So, take it away in any order that you guys see fit.

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GRETCHEN ROTH: It's Gretchen Roth from the Bowery Mission. Thank you so much for having me. I just wanted to come and represent the Bowery obviously we do rescue food and we receive a lot of donations from people who don't... directly donate to the Bowery Mission but we also... the bulk of our food donations come from City Harvest and Food Bank who are already doing a great job rescuing food in New York and my concerns with both of these bills are there are a lot of... a lot of food products that we can't receive because of health regulations as Corinne mentioned the same code for a soup kitchen like we have at the Bowery Mission health code would... it's just the same as a restaurant and we get inspected we have the same standards for all the food that comes through so what often happens is people say oh I don't want this to go to waste and they will bring food that has... that's partially, partially eaten or like leftovers from a catering event that have already been... you know that's, that's contaminated to us so it's food that we end up throwing away and it ends up costing us time and money and we already spend about 1,500 dollars a month on extra trash pick-ups because the city can't

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handle the volume that we go through. So, that plus the manpower that we have obviously, staff at a non-profit is on the low... we definitely staff very carefully and we don't have the resources to say go pick-up food from a restaurant who might call at two in the morning or pick-ups basically for us after seven p.m. are just unrealistic. So, there's a lot of issues and it... I used to work in the restaurant side of things and I know how... there's just a lack of understanding and education for a lot of restaurant tours in New York and I think what you said earlier about the hesitation of getting in trouble for donating something so they're like oh it's just too much trouble. I think that plus not knowing what qualifies as something appropriate for City Harvest to pick up, something for Food Bank or even something for us to pick up. I think that is where there's a gap and if we could use, I don't know the web portal as an... as an opportunity to provide that information and then really... I think if people saw that it would really help determine where their food went and what they did with it and providing them with that resource would really stand in the gap. So, that's kind of what I wanted to, to say mainly about that

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2 but that I do think the systems that are in place
3 right now that we have, the relationships that we
4 have with the Food Bank and City Harvest they..
5 they're very constant and continual and the
6 communication is.. it's pretty constant and they've,
7 they've made it so that we.. they can customize
8 basically the, the donations that we get from them
9 based on what our needs are and based on what our
10 manpower is and, and the community that we serve and
11 obviously those things are something to take into
12 consideration because it's not a one size fits all
13 and mainly when it comes down to it storage is also a
14 huge part of why we can only take so much and in New
15 York obviously we know storage space is limited and
16 we're unable to afford a warehouse at this time so
17 our soup kitchen serves as our, you know drop site
18 and it's a.. it's a challenge to keep everything
19 stored properly and safely and in.. up to health
20 department.. you know code as well so.. all of those
21 things kind of come into play. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: I was wondering if
23 in, in the food portal there could be, you know what
24 qualifies as, as, as food that can be donated and
25 maybe that.. we streamline it that way the food.. what

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are the systems that the Department of Health currently uses to determine whether food is, is something you can donate and if that is a... if that's consistent or that's... [cross-talk]

GRETCHEN ROTH: Yeah... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...that's... there's like a, a plain language understanding of what that is maybe in the portal these restaurants and other folks that do want to be helpful could actually see it and use it to, to help us get to our goal.

GRETCHEN ROTH: Absolutely, City Harvest actually has some donor guidelines that they shared with us which plainly explain kind of what the food has to be at a certain temperature and needs to be in certain type of packaging and as Corinne also mentioned, you know if it's been sitting out for more than a certain amount of time it's no longer acceptable but food that's prepared but has been frozen and not served even if it's hot has to be at a certain temperature when it arrives. So, all of that information I know we've, we've gotten it from City Harvest and I give it to our, our front desk staff so they can help when they're taking phone calls about direct donations they can kind of share that

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information but that... I know that it does exist and I think putting it out there would be hugely helpful.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you, thank you for your testimony, next.

DAVID DEVAUGHN: Alright, thank you for having me. If you'll forgive me I want to read through because I think a lot of the questions that have been asked today are going to be answered. So, I want to thank the, the committee and, and Chairperson Reynoso for having us. I just want to say first that thinking about insecurity and alleviating hunger we also need to think about what's happening right now in the nation, the national... the national budget, the scrutiny placed on social services programs, thinking about SNAP, Meals on Wheels, the WIC program that... it's put a lot of pressure on the communities that we're serving and so places like City Harvest, Bowery, others that are doing great work are, are really needed during this time and so just... and I say this at the end of my testimony just keeping in the back of our mind that hunger is not going to be solved through food rescue and food donation, we also need to look at other policies and other systems affecting families. So, I'll kind of skip through the

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first part, I just wanted to say that we will collect about 55 million pounds of food this year, 18 million of that from within the city from about 2,000 different partners. So, we do a lot of work in the city to rescue as much food as possible that again meets food safety guidelines and I'll go into what those look like. So, we accept fresh food, refrigerated food, dried food, foods in boxes, cans, and bottles. It must be prepared by a regulated or licensed food business such as a restaurant, caterer, wholesaler, or bakery; we do not accept products containing alcohol, food that has been previously served, food that does not meet our food safety standards and I'm happy to share our food safety guidelines with the, the committee. We've been really energized by the efforts by the administration and the council around food waste, we participated in the Zero Waste Challenge last year in collecting data and reengaging with our donors to say what else can you be doing, can you be doing more and we saw an increase in donations which was great. When we think about food waste and donation another thing that comes to our mind is thinking about what are we doing in our agencies so, we're thinking about businesses

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so when we're thinking about what's going through and happening at NYCHA, what's happening at school food, are there new... are there other opportunities we could be thinking about where we're sending food to landfill that could be rescued. So, that's something that we're, we're thinking about but getting to the bills themselves. So, 1514 we're really encouraged by the introduction of the bill and I know I've been contacted by a lot of people so thank you. reenergizing conversations around food waste and food donation this piece of legislation can be another touch point to bring together food rescue partners and emergency food providers across the city and has the potential for public education we were just talking about. Alleviating hunger in our city must be a collaborative effort and we appreciate that, that... this initiative aims to bring together agencies, non-profits, businesses, and individuals for a common goal of reducing food waste and helping to feed hungry New Yorkers. With that said we are not currently seeking a new city run portal to facilitate food donation as you've heard we've been working closely with the Department of Sanitation, existing portal DonateNYC and helping to ensure that that

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portal works for food rescue organizations like ourselves and EFP's we serve so that the quality type and quantity of food that they need. In addition to thinking about if this web portal will... were implemented we want to ensure as we've just talked about that donating... that those donating and receiving rescued food through it understand what kinds and amounts of food can be rescued and how that food needs to be stored to ensure food safety. We ensure that all our staff, donors, and emergency food providers we work with are trained in food donation... or in food safety around donated food but we know because we've had many conversations with people that we're not working with that the general public and excess food generators may not know these pieces of information and like I said we're happy to share that information. We also want to ensure that anything that comes out of this bill we're to leverage existing systems processes and investments that have been made by us, emergency food providers, people across the city one piece that we've been working on pretty closely that I think Molly mentioned is the New York City Food Assistance Collaborative where United Way, Food Bank for New York City, HRA, and

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HPNAP at the state level are thinking a lot about food distribution equity, how food can be distributed equitably, efficiently, where the infrastructure needs are in this city. So, as, as was just mentioned we really also need to think about the infrastructure piece. So, a lot of kitchens and pantries have refrigerators or freezers, some don't, some have space, some don't, there are inconsistent hours of operations, many of these organizations are volunteer run, many are not as robust as Bowery or you're thinking Bedside Campaign Against Hunger or Westside Campaign Against Hunger. So, we need to think about things like jacks, pallet jacks, trucks, staff, refrigerators, and how that goes into the determination of, of what food they can receive. So, with 1439 I was like everyone was appalled by the footage in... by the Williamburg bridge of the food being thrown into the DSNY truck but we know that from that incident and the Mayor making a change and saying we need to change the city policy, we have rescued over 63,000 pounds of fresh produce through the confiscation process and so we're speaking on a consistent basis with the Department of Health, with the Department of Sanitation whenever a retailer or

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produce cart is in violation and that food is safe for consumption. So, we do our best depending again on the timing of the confiscation, what emergency food providers are open to get that on a regular route so we'll reroute a truck to get there and just from our side because we're obviously not in the NYPD... we're not in the Department of Health, not in Consumer Affairs, not in Sanitation but from our side this is what it looks like. So, the NYPD is conducting investigations on whether vendors or produce cart vendors are in question with compliance with city laws, they contact the Department of Health, Sanitation inform them of a probable confiscation, the Department of Health will then determine if the product is safe for consumption and either that Department of Health or official or sanitation will reach out to us and inform us of that, we will then start our internal processes, we figure out where the location is, who's route is, is that location near, can we reroute a truck to make it there in time because as they talked about there's a short window before that food may need to be disposed of but we've been pretty successful in getting there and, and picking up the food. So... and then we also

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make sure to issue a receipt when that food is, is
picked up and then depending on the amount of time
that we have we then distribute that food along the
route so all the EFP's that we're going to with that
truck and if there's an advanced amount of time and
it's a lot of amount of food... or it's a large, large
amount of food we'll then bring that back to our food
rescue facility and distribute it more widely. So,
we're definitely open to explicitly including more
food rescue organizations in that process that I
described, I actually don't have the details on what...
who, who the agencies are contacting outside of us,
that would be interesting to know but there are short
time windows and we definitely don't want to see food
wasted so... if anything could be done to notify more
people, people I think that makes sense but I also
heard a lot about there isn't the infrastructure to
store that food at temperature before a... an
organization like ours could pick up. So, in closing
I just want to say and we, we've talked about this
with a bunch of our partners, we really want to make
sure a bunch of things are considered when we move
forward with legislation like this; the food safety
piece, public education, data and tracking, process

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simplification, we want to make sure that this is actually leading to less logistical nightmares for organizations like ours by having new legislation, new portals, things like that. Food rescue organization and EFP so these emergency food.. emergency food provider's capacity, we need to think about that if they are parallel processes so the, the food assistance collaborative, we're doing a lot of work thinking about technology and what's needed and we don't want to be duplicating those things. Donor relations, so thinking about how this relates to the people we're picking up food from and then also disaster resiliency. One thing that I'm sure you've heard about during Sandy that made things difficult is that we would hear this is available at this lot, this many pallets and then it was really who got there first, was it actually a food rescue organization or was it someone else who got there and picked it up and moved it. So, that's something that I know we're talking, we have continued to talk with Sanitation about when... you know god forbid the next storm comes what sort of processes do we have in place to make sure that food moves in the way that it should around the city getting to people who need it

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but yeah, overall thank you for, for bringing up
this, this topic of conversation.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you and just...
it's okay... I guess what, what my biggest concern here
is that that... not to be... this is what hearings are
for is so we can educate ourselves as to how we want
to move forward and I'm learning a lot while I'm
sitting here but what I'm learning is that we, we, we
do very little, you, you... not your rescue
organizations, I mean when... in trying to support this
food waste movement I think we do what we can but
what we can is, is, is insignificant in... to the
greater picture about... of the amount of food that we
actually waste but we also have a hunger problem and
a lot of... I know in my district for example the food
pantry has a line around the block almost, almost
touching itself around the block, going around the
full circle and they never have enough food for
everyone that comes up so I know they need more, they
have an issue with storage, right, there's, there's
the most food we can put in this little pantry that
we have, it's... everything is filled to the... to the
top and it's gone by days' end and we still haven't
fed everyone. So, is, is there an opportunity for

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someone with less expertise regarding how that food is managed like City Harvest and, and instead the food pantries who get this food from places like City Harvest and these larger, larger organizations like Food Bank can they go get that food, right, can... do they have an opportunity to maybe do a second round before days' end to fill up their pantry and allow for the last bit of people that were there to get food. I just know people who need the food... [cross-talk]

DAVID DEVAUGHN: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...there's

opportunities out here to link them and I need that to happen, I want it to be a full zero and everyone that wants food can go to a food pantry and get it and that we don't waste any food, how do we achieve that?

DAVID DEVAUGHN: Yeah, I... and, and a number of these things are still in process but a lot of the work that's happening with the collaborative is thinking about how do we make sure that there's food available and not rely on storage capacity. So, one thing that we do is we have mobile markets at, at NYCHA Houses it's open... open air, fresh produce

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distribution twice a month, once in a weekday, once in a weekend and distributing four or five items of produce thinking about how that could be replicated in other areas whether with dry goods, other produce near emergency food providers so that we're not relying on just the refrigeration and the dry storage capacity of a lot of, you know these are in many ways faith based institution having more storage than they... than they can handle. So, that's something that's, that's a really integral part of the collaborative is thinking how do we operate outside of that capacity situation and I... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: But... so, outside...

[cross-talk]

DAVID DEVAUGHN: ...know where we're...

[cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...of NYCHA... [cross-

talk]

DAVID DEVAUGHN: ...going with that...

[cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...do you do it

anywhere else?

DAVID DEVAUGHN: The mobile markets, we,

we... so, there's now community partner mobile markets

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2 that are... that are popping up so we have on at Harlem
3 Children's Zone, there's Ebbets Field, there, there
4 is one in Pink Houses, which is NYCHA but it is an,
5 an area that we're growing, we're actually going to
6 be launching one pretty soon at the YWCA in Flushing
7 so there's a, a number of, of areas that we're doing
8 this outside of the pantry and the kitchen setting
9 and that's I think a way forward knowing that as we
10 know real estate storage buildings it's, it's tough,
11 it's tough in New York City.

12 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: So, I want to... I
13 want to link up because it in North Brooklyn, I need...
14 I think we need it there and what people forget is
15 that even in highly gentrified areas these pockets of
16 poverty we're talking about people with an extreme
17 need for, for food but I also want to see if I can
18 work on... I want to assist the city and these... the
19 organizations in trying to find a location for food
20 storage if they think that that can be helpful. The
21 Pfizer property that is now Acumen is an example of a
22 place that has a lot of storage location, they do a
23 lot of food handling, a lot of food waste there as
24 well but maybe there's an opportunity for them to
25 give back and, and this is a, a way they can do that

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so I'm going to reach out to them but I think if we all work together we can find a location that can start assisting us in this food storage situation that can help us reach our goals which I, I keep saying is Zero by 2030 and we don't have a solution for this then we're not being realistic about it but thank you for your testimony, I really... [cross-talk]

DAVID DEVAUGHN: Thanks... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...appreciate it.

WILL THOMAS: Hi, thank you so much for having me today. I'm Will Thomas, I'm the Director of Research Policy and Advocacy at Hunger Free America, formally the New York City Coalition Against Hunger. I think that a lot of the really great... I... my testimony is mostly echoing the great testimony that's already been given but I do want to start out by saying we do have a hunger problem not just in New York City but the entirety of the country and while food waste is certainly eliminating food waste and redirecting edible food to people who are in need is certainly part of the solution we won't end food insecurity in this country until we end income and asset inequality or at least, you know improve it. So, I think that we should keep that in mind this is

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part of the solution but it's not the entirety of the solution. We support these two intros in part because we do have a food waste problem in New York City however we just want to make sure that the emergency food providers who will eventually benefit from this are at the table and that adequate resources are being provided to them through the city and that the city's resources whether it's a web portal or an information campaign etcetera amplify the work that's already being done on the ground and supplement the work that's being done on the ground already and provide them resources to do or expand the great work that they're already doing. So, those are the... I mean that's generally our concern about these Intros.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: And nothing we do

will, will be without having you at the table and, and making sure we get that done now again this is the first stages of introduction, it's an idea, we need to develop it, we need to make sure that the people actually know what's happening and are doing the work are a part of that so just look at this as like a draft and that we're looking to eventually get... to, to get past the right way. We want to do good, we don't want to just make things more

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difficult oddly just to go like more logistical nightmares and so forth so, we, we agree 100 percent we also know this is not the whole solution but food waste is a, a very big problem and we need to start paying attention to it, I think... I think everyone in this room pays attention to it so I'm talk... preaching to the choir but the general public doesn't understand how, how much food waste we have in this country and in the city. Yeah, absolutely.

DAVID DEVAUGHN: And, and one thing I

just wanted to add based on Council Member King's comments, one thing that we do a lot is we speak with manufacturers of food products and we know how confusing the date labels are so one thing that we'll do when we're providing food to an emergency food provider, let's say it says April 26th, we will get a, a signed memo from the manufacturer saying this food is... does not expire until this date, this is a best if used by freshest date that's really a conversation between the retailer and the manufacturer not between the consumer and the manufacturer. So, that's something that I know people at the pantry level picking up and the pantry's themselves sometimes will have concerns and so we

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make sure to when we can especially provide that information so that no one thinks this food may actually harm me.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Absolutely. Thank you, thank you so much for your testimony and your time, we really appreciate it.

DAVID DEVAUGHN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: And our last panel; Bonnie Webber, Jacquelyn Ottman and Damon Versagsi, okay, the actual Versagsi, Versagsi?

DAMON VERSAGSI: [off-mic] It's a knockoff.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Okay, it's a knockoff. We got Damon Versagsi from Scrappy Meals, Jacquelyn Ottman from, from Manhattan SWAB, welcome and Bonnie Webber from the Sierra Club, thank you so much for being here and you guys can take it away in any order that you, you want. Also, just note that we've been joined by Council Member Vanessa Gibson from the Bronx, thank you for being here. So, yeah take it away however you... any, any... turn the... turn the mic on, make sure the little light is on in the bottom, in the...

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BONNIE LANE WEBBER: My name is Bonnie

Lane Webber, Vice Chair of the New York City Group of the Sierra Club. I'm testifying on behalf of the New York City group regarding the legislation before the committee. Thank you for holding this hearing.

Further discussion is needed to decide how these food rescue operations will operate. City Harvest knows what they are doing and how to decide whether food is usable or not; they have facilities for storing, refrigerating, and distributing the food. But they don't seem to be able to handle all the food that is available, or they cannot time their pick-ups to coincide with the hours when the food is discarded.

We see in the... in our neighborhood that they will come and pick up things at a... at a local store that has wonderful food that they put out and, and City Harvest picks it up and then an hour or two later another vast amount of food gets put out. I think allowing less structured organizations or individuals like us to get involved in this is not a good idea unless there can be substantial training that would make sure these smaller groups can handle the materials properly. We actually go and take food from the bakery on... maybe I shouldn't say where it is,

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but, but we take food that gets thrown out by a store in our neighborhood and we serve it our meetings and do it with openness, we tell the people that this is mainly discarded food so there's just a tremendous amount of waste but I'm going to get to the fact that I think what needs to happen is you have to go to the source like we're talking about how to get rid of the wasted food or the, the food that's available and this and that. I think there has to be a major campaign educating people to food waste, I mean everybody has alluded to it, it doesn't even have to be invented, it's already been done that, that the ad council one of their campaigns was food waste, they did it with NRGC you know about it, I mean money has to be spent on that to get it... you said yourself just now that a lot of people don't understand the issue of food waste. there are simple, simple things they... I'll go back to my reading instead of adlibbing it. They have a lot of information that is simple and direct, it could go into subways or on buses or people talking about it. Studies have shown that a better use of the city's time and money would be to go to the source and educate people to the amount of energy, water, fertilizer, and soil used to grow food

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and in turn wasted when the food is not consumed.

People could find satisfaction in knowing that they could take action to fight climate change through not wasting food and saving money, the ad council here in New York City so I have their website here. The message has been created now money must be spent to get the information out to the people. If people knew that trashing one egg is wasting 55 gallons of water, it could change their behavior. A family of four spends 1,500 dollars a year on food they don't eat, I mean if you had that in subway... can't you picture it, right, I mean maybe we should go in and just write it with magic markers in the subway. So... I'd probably get arrested for that, right? I'd have you come and protect me. Have a campaign suggesting people ask for smaller portions. The national Sierra Club Agriculture and Food Policy as of February 28th it has a section on food waste, they are... so this is something that people really do care about and that's important. So, I can go on and read this or maybe we should just go on to other people, whatever you prefer. The, the reason why I put it in my testimony that you can look at is they're in California, this is a national organization, it's an organization that

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has three tiers that it's national, state, and local but it... coming down from national they're telling us be concerned about food waste and they have sort of the normal suggestions but this is a very, very important issue that really affects climate change and, and regardless of our president climate change is really happening and people can do something about it by taking care of their food waste. thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: And I have seen one of the ad council commercials where they... someone buys strawberries and they go... they go bad and they get thrown out and I think they ate one strawberry in the packet and just letting people know how much waste is, is... how much food is wasted it's, it's a shock to many people when they find out how much it is and how much they can save. So, I'm going to challenge some organization to host a gala with zero food waste at the end of it, I want to see that happen, that would be a great... a great thing but thank you for your testimony and I think we're on the same page here and that we're preaching to the choir hopefully this gets out too many... to many more folks.

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BONNIE LANE WEBBER: And we all have to go out and preach to other people, that's the trick, yeah. Thanks.

JACQUELYN OTTMAN: Ready, okay. I've got a, a state... a statement. Good afternoon Chair Reynoso and members of the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management. I'm Jacquie Ottman, I serve on the Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board or the Manhattan SWAB for short, as Secretary. The Manhattan SWAB is thrilled to see legislation addressing food waste being introduced by this body. Food waste is a lost opportunity to feed some of the 1.1 million New Yorkers who experience food insecurity. With climate denial gaining ground in the White House and crucial programs like Meal on Wheels under attack, New York City can be a leader and inspire other cities. Given that food waste reduction is strongly aligned with Mayor De Blasio's Zero Waste Plan, we eagerly anticipate the city's action. And when the city does take action, we will join a worldwide food waste reduction movement with victories from Korea to Hong Kong to France to the US itself. The USDA and EPA have led this movement in the US via their joint US Food Waste Challenge but the future of EPA programs

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is now in question. Action by other entities, like large cities is particularly meaningful now. The EPA's Food Waste Recovery Hierarchy as I'm sure you know is source reduction, feed the hungry, feed animals followed by industrial uses and composting and then landfill and incineration. Considering that the city has focused nearly exclusively on organics collection for composting, we commend your efforts evidenced in the two proposed bills to try innovative ways to reduce wasted food via an emphasis on feeding people. And we applaud efforts to try to experiment with new digital technology to do so. That said, we encourage you in future efforts to also look into ways to address food waste through reduction strategies that incentivize residents, institutions, and restaurants and other away from home meal service to reduce the amount of food they waste. through more efficient purchasing, processing, and disposal practices including donating uneaten edible food to shelters and food pantries. We also urge the city to generate more robust data on exactly how much edible food is wasted. We know that roughly 31 percent of our residential waste and 35 percent of our commercial waste is organic material but how much of

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that edible... how much of that was eatable food that was discarded and why is it being wasted. This data can prove the value of food waste reduction programs and show us if they are not working. Indeed, we urge DSNY to track data on all reusable products that end up in the trash so that the city can design effective reuse strategies. If this committee moves forward with passing Intro 1439, we would like the council to more clearly define the term agency and include city agencies in this definition. For instance, it's our understanding that the Department of Education and Corrections do not donate any food to local charities because of legal concerns of a liability even though the Bill Emerson Good Foods... Good Samaritan Food Donation Act minimizes all donors' liability. These two agencies purchase a tremendous amount of food and therefore likely waste the greatest amount. We are asking the city to walk the... walk and make its own entities models for food waste reduction. The Manhattan SWAB strongly supports addressing food waste and thanks the committee for its work in this area and we would be glad to be a part of any future discussions. Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you for your testimony, thank you, next.

DAMON VERSAGSI: Thank you everyone for being here and like we said it's... this is a topic that we all are very passionate about. My name is Damon Versagsi and about a year and a half ago I started up a little thing called Scrappy Meals. Scrappy Meals is about bringing food appreciating to the forefront and letting people at home realize that basically what you have in your fridge shouldn't be thrown away, it could be repurposed in another way. So, it started as little dinner parties with friends and it has evolved to actually something more than that which is building communities through food waste. for example, people donate a can of food for... when they come for a dinner and then I bring that can of food to a, a soup kitchen primarily Trinity Church down in the, the Lower East Side. My whole thing with food waste is making sure that people understand that it's not waste yet, it's food appreciation and its food first and foremost. Once you throw it away it becomes the waste. So, my whole thing is to try an educate people also educate corporations on developing a relationship with whole foods and, and

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telling them that as, as a supermarket or a... where people are shopping there's no... there's little mention of food waste on your website or in your store, getting people to shop responsibly and, and not overbuy, portion controlling in this city and in, in this country, little things like that and, and then again utilizing technology; social media to, to let people first and foremost look in the mirror and see how much food you're wasting and then you could go... you know go about your day and, and stuff like that so... thank you again for, for all this and... yeah, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you so much.

We're going to do everything we can to make this something that we actually do something about here in the city of New York. we want to always be the models and the first to get things done and I want to make sure we do it the right way so I'm looking forward to continuing to partner with everyone that testified today and thank you for your time and we're... this meeting is adjourned.

[gavel]

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

May 15, 2017