

**Testimony of
Javier Lojan, Acting Commissioner
New York City Department of Sanitation**

**Hearing before the New York City Council
Committee on Sanitation & Solid Waste Management
Monday, March 16, 2026 10:30 A.M.**

Preliminary Budget Hearing for Fiscal Year 2026-27

Good morning Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee on Sanitation & Solid Waste Management. I am Javier Lojan, Acting Commissioner of the New York City Department of Sanitation, and I am joined today by Joseph Antonelli, Deputy Commissioner, Management and Budget, and by Joshua Goodman, Deputy Commissioner, Public Affairs & Customer Experience.

I have worked at the Department of Sanitation for 27 years, and even with that level of experience, it can still be a challenge to grasp the enormity of our work. The 10,000 members of service at DSNY are responsible for three primary areas, which I will list and then explain in as much detail as time allows, with an emphasis on new innovations and strategic initiatives. Broadly speaking, our three core functions break down to collection, cleaning, and snow removal.

Beginning with collection, New Yorkers set out 24 million pounds of residential trash, recycling, and compostable material each day. That's 24 million pounds today, 24 million pounds tomorrow, 24 million pounds the next day, and so on. It is a job that by its nature can never be completed; at the end of our third shift of the day, the next day's material is already waiting at the curb. We run a massive house-to-house operation, traversing every part of the city each day to get this waste off the sidewalks.

While collection operations have been at the core of our work for over 140 years, there have been remarkable innovations in just the last few years. We bring trash to a network of transfer stations and processing facilities where increasing shares are put to beneficial reuse in the form of recycling, composting, and anaerobic digestion.

The export of waste out of the city accounts for roughly one quarter of the Department's budget, and this is a fixed cost that is extremely difficult to adjust. We are making long-term changes, though, by reducing the amount of waste that cannot be reclaimed, most notably with our citywide curbside composting program. The largest and easiest composting program in the country, this was long derided both inside and outside the Department as impossible. We got it done by making it simple: no sign-ups, no opt-ins, no special rules or bin restrictions, and this universalist approach has worked, with record-setting tonnage diverted from landfill multiple times last year. While outreach and education around this program will continue for years to come, it is now fully normalized in keeping with Local Law 89 of 2023, and failure to properly separate this material from trash can result in a fine, just like with traditional recycling. We have knocked on close to 800,000 doors to increase awareness about the program, and are giving more

of the finished compost back to New Yorkers than ever before, with millions of pounds provided free to the public and compost giveback events set to start in early April, much earlier than in past years.

There is one gap remaining in this program, and that is a universal requirement for commercial organics separation. DSNY does not collect waste from businesses, but we do regulate this industry. The expansion of Commercial Waste Zone reform, which I will speak about in more detail later, incentivizes businesses to compost by saving them money – but very few businesses are actually required to compost, unlike all residences. Local Law 146 of 2013, which regulates compostable material from businesses, is badly out of date and not aligned with the goals of the administration or this Council. We strongly urge you to set a single standard for both residential and commercial diversion by updating this law.

The other core collection innovation of recent years is, of course, containerization. For 50 years, New York was the only major city in the developed world where trash wasn't just allowed to be placed directly on the sidewalk, it was in fact required to be placed there. Visitors would come here from all over the world to gawk at our piles of trash, and New Yorkers were asked to defend this disgusting and outdated practice.

In October 2022, we began incentivizing containerization through new rules around waste set-out times, pairing this with major changes to DSNY operations and picking up more of the trash far earlier. In the Spring of 2024, container rules went into effect for all businesses of every type in New York City, requiring them to get their trash off the streets and into a secure bin. We wrote 70,000 warnings to businesses as this rule went into effect, and have written over 100,000 summonses since, gaining broad compliance and bringing bins to restaurants, delis, bodegas, drug stores, boutiques, and everywhere else on our commercial corridors.

The first containerization requirement for residential buildings in more than 50 years went into effect November 12, 2024, requiring all buildings with 1-9 residential units to use bins. This can be either their own, or the official NYC Bin, the cheapest high-quality bin available. Starting June 2026, the NYC Bin will be the only bin that 1-9 unit properties are permitted to use for trash, to facilitate safer, cleaner mechanized collection.

This program was designed thoughtfully so that these bins would be by far the cheapest of their quality on the market at around \$50, a reasonable responsibility for most New York City property owners, and New Yorkers have purchased around one million of these bins at www.bins.nyc or at NYC Home Depot locations. Still, in order to meet the needs of certain property owners, DSNY in partnership with the City Council created a bin reimbursement program for owners of one- and two-family homes who qualify for the state STAR or E-STAR tax exemption. To date, approximately \$9.1 million has been spent on these reimbursements.

These bins have fundamentally altered the look and feel of our streets, replacing piles of black trash bags that attracted the rats, impeded pedestrians, and generally made New Yorkers feel that no one cared about their neighborhoods. These bins may look like simple pieces of plastic, but they have led to fifteen straight months of declining rat sightings citywide.

About 10 months ago, we took a giant leap forward in waste collection strategies with the start of the Empire Bins stationary on-street container program in Manhattan Community District 9. Serviced by new automated side-loading trucks, this is the first European-style on-street container program in North America, taking those huge piles of trash bags that are generated by the largest buildings off the streets and, instead, storing them in secure containers. West Harlem is home to approximately 1100 Empire Bins, covering more than 80% of their apartment units. Unlike in other parts of the world, the bins are not shared by the entire block. Bins are assigned to a single large building, using our density, which had long been thought of as the Achilles' Heel of containerization, to our advantage, by allowing for greater oversight.

Property owners and residents have responded extremely well to this program, and the second district has already been announced, with planning underway to have Brooklyn Community District 2 fully containerized later this year. Funding to continue this program appeared in last year's November plan, and we are currently working to estimate costs and timelines for a citywide expansion plan.

Collection may seem like a solved problem, particularly considering how much of it happens outside of public view, but it is something we are refining and reinventing each day.

Turning to our second core function, cleaning public spaces, we are also continuously expanding our approach. When I began my career, no one was sure which agency was responsible for cleaning medians, step streets, underpasses, and other areas of public property in a sustained and ongoing way, a result of a Koch-era interagency memo that has long created confusion about agency roles around cleaning. As a result, DSNY was not then resourced to clean these areas.

That began to change a few years ago with the formal recognition of DSNY as the only agency with a dedicated competency around cleaning, and program design and funding to match that skill set. Since the creation of the first-ever DSNY Highway Unit in 2023, we have added specialized highway cleaning equipment and implemented important highway safety trainings. We now clean every single highway, the areas that visitors to our city often see first, on a regular basis.

Another new unit, our Targeted Neighborhood Taskforce, provides regular cleaning to over 1700 areas that had been left out of prior plans. There are most certainly several in every one of your districts – areas where your constituents are finally seeing results, from Snake Road to the West 230th Street steps to Conduit Boulevard.

We additionally took management of the City's graffiti removal program, increasing the number of 311 Service Requests closed by 80%.

We are also using new technology and tactics to streamline public space cleaning. While this has always been a data-driven agency, for decades, cleaning condition logs were maintained manually and locally. We have removed barriers between districts and created one single digital log that is used across the agency. This allows for far greater pre-planning around chronic conditions, and the valuable data produces an ongoing analysis that means more areas of your district serviced in an even more timely manner.

And we have heard concerns from members of this Council on two major cleanliness issues: median cleaning and – of course – dog waste.

Pedestrian malls, or medians, that are not properly weeded and maintained can attract and catch litter. To address this, we are working with a new mall-spraying contract to ensure in a cost-effective way that the grass in these areas does not become overgrown. We expect to spray across the City this spring to avoid summer overgrowth, and will notify your offices and Community Boards as we do so.

Before I discuss our dog waste strategy, let me be clear about the issue here: Dog owners know they have a legal responsibility to pick up dog waste, regardless of the weather or conditions on the ground. It is irresponsible and just gross to leave this behind anywhere, whether it's a sidewalk, a patch of grass or a snow pile.

At the same time, all property owners are legally required to keep their sidewalks clean, as well as 18 inches into the roadway, and this would include removing dog waste from their sidewalks. All 311 complaints related to dog waste are investigated daily. And we do issue summonses to property owners for dirty sidewalks and surrounding areas – 8,999 this calendar year alone, although that was for any kind of dirty sidewalk area, not just dog waste.

Summonses for dog owners are much, much more difficult to issue, because our enforcement officer would have to catch the owner in the act of leaving a pile behind. We have done many special patrols in areas with high rates of 311 service requests for dog waste, and they have yielded almost zero summonses. In 2024, we did a 3-day stakeout in Mott Haven that yielded just one summons. Then, in 2025, we did special weeklong patrols in Washington Heights, Harlem, Morningside Heights and Flatbush – all in response to 311 service requests – and none of them yielded any summonses.

The chances of someone not picking up after their dog while an enforcement officer is watching is very, very slim. So slim, that we issued just two summonses for failure to remove canine waste in 2025. It is clear that people only leave piles behind when they know no one is watching. We have also done – and continue to do – several ad campaigns and educational outreach on the issue of dog waste. But really, every dog owner knows what they are supposed to do. In consideration of their neighbors, they should do the right thing and pick up after their dogs.

That said, we are working with members of this Council to add dog waste bag dispensers to some of our litter baskets. This dispenser pilot is now underway, with dispensers affixed to our new BetterBin corner litter baskets.

Unlike the old green wire baskets, which forced New Yorkers to look at trash all day and leaked garbage juice onto our corners, the new baskets have no holes for the first eight (8) inches, and much smaller openings throughout. They are harder to misuse, take longer to fill up, and are far easier for Sanitation Workers to service. This is in addition to a modular design that means only the least expensive part ever needs to be replaced. We appreciate our Council partners who have purchased BetterBins over the past two fiscal years with their discretionary funds. We are excited

to work with your offices in the next year to keep BetterBins rolling out, and are proud to today be servicing baskets at the highest level ever. Whereas for decades litter basket service was the subject of political negotiations, the highest level is now baselined, yet another innovation in cleaning.

Last among our three core functions is something that all new Council Members have already learned a great deal about: snow removal. We train year-round for snow, and as discussed at last month's snow oversight hearing, this was a challenging winter, with the most snow in a decade and a top-ten blizzard, but it was also a winter that has bred innovation at the Department. Heading into next year, we will continue to look to improve, including by expanding our fleet of brine flushing trucks, by refining the brand-new geocoding of pedestrian infrastructure, and by formalizing successful pilot expansions of the Emergency Snow Shoveler program

Given that we spoke about snow at great length at a recent oversight hearing, I will leave this topic there for now, except as it relates to budget. The City's snow budget is unusual among municipal budget lines, in that the formula for determining it is set by the City Charter, outside the bounds of political negotiations. That formula calls for budgeting an average of the actual amount spent on snow removal the last 5 years, and given low snow totals over the last several seasons, the budget has generally been in the \$80-100 million range for the last several years. This winter required an adjustment of approximately \$100 million to reflect spending thus far, made in the January plan.

Commercial Waste Zones

Earlier, I mentioned Commercial Waste Zones, the program being implemented under Local Law 199 of 2019 to reform the commercial waste hauling system by establishing new safety standards for workers in the commercial carting industry, improving service for businesses, increasing diversion rates, and reducing vehicle miles traveled as well as harmful emissions from waste hauling vehicles.

When fully implemented, we are looking at about 12 million fewer miles traveled by commercial carting vehicles. And, making good on a promise from when this program was created, businesses will pay less for the collection of recyclables and compostable material than they do for trash at a citywide average of 32% less for recycling and 18% less for compostable material. That means businesses will have a meaningful financial incentive to separate their waste properly.

This program is a major change for every one of the city's 200,000 businesses, and we are committed to rolling it out thoughtfully, with detailed and culturally-competent outreach. The program is now fully operational in five of the City's 20 zones, and we will complete full citywide implementation by the end of 2027. Staffing for the DSNY Bureau of Commercial Waste will continue to expand to meet the needs of this program over the next 20 months.

Special Enforcement Programs

The expansion of DSNY regulatory and enforcement authority is not restricted to Commercial Waste Zones; since April 2023, Sanitation has been the lead agency on enforcement of the City's laws around street vending. Our Sanitation Police Officers enforce these laws with a focus on cleanliness and pedestrian access, and they conduct routine enforcement operations rooted in the belief that all New Yorkers, across every neighborhood, in every borough, deserve clean, safe sidewalks.

I have mentioned different forms of camera technology multiple times today, and one of the most successful recent deployments of camera technology by the Department of Sanitation is our illegal dumping program. With a network of 334 cameras citywide, set in places that illegal dumpers consider "out of the way," we are now busting people for this crime hundreds of times every year, impounding their vehicles and issuing summonses that start at \$4,000.

New Yorkers can even send a video to IllegalDumpingTips@dny.nyc.gov and potentially get paid. We have issued about a dozen summonses to people brought to our attention via this tip line in the last year.

We also continue to seek authority up in Albany to operate cameras on our mechanical brooms to encourage compliance with Alternate Side Parking regulations. We thank the Council for your partnership in passing a home rule message in support.

I know this was a tremendous amount of information – after more than a quarter century at DSNY, I am still amazed by the breadth and depth of our work. We are in every community, every day, and if the time ever came that we didn't show up, people would notice immediately.

Fortunately, thanks to the work the Council and the administration do to keep this agency running, that day will never come.

FY2027 Preliminary Budget and Recent Budget Plans

I will now provide a more detailed budgetary update. The Preliminary Budget includes \$2.25 billion in expense funds in Fiscal Year 2026 and \$2.08 billion in Fiscal Year 2027, reflecting increases of \$261 million and \$38 million, respectively, from the budget adopted last June.

The Fiscal Year 2026 budget includes \$1.33 billion for personal services to support a total budgeted headcount of 9,625 full-time positions, including 7,957 uniformed positions and 1,668 civilian positions, and \$905.4 million for other than personal services, or OTPS.

DSNY's Fiscal Year 2027 Preliminary Capital Budget includes \$3.26 billion in capital funding in the 10-year plan, \$1.09 billion of which is for garages and facilities, \$2.04 billion for equipment, \$59.28 million for IT, and \$70.22 million for solid waste management infrastructure.

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

- \$488 million in funding for the construction of a new garage for Bronx Districts 9, 10, and 11, with demolition;
- \$284 million in funding for the construction of a new garage for Queens District 1, which is slated to begin design later this year;
- Upgrades to the facility that serves as the home for the Bronx District 12 Garage, which has an overall budget of \$52.5 million and began construction this year;
- And the \$10 million finishing touches on the \$223 million build out for the brand-new home for Staten Island District 1 and 3, which is slated to be completed this year.
 - That project, along with the new BK3, means we will be opening three new districts at two buildings this calendar year, a rare milestone for this Department and a sign of this administration's serious investment in the safety and well-being of Sanitation Workers and the neighborhoods they serve.

Thank you for your advocacy of a cleaner, more sustainable New York City, and we look forward to taking your questions.



All SWAB Testimony

Sanitation Committee: March 16, 2026

Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and congratulations to the new and returning members of the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management.

After nearly forty years of relying on the same strategies to increase diversion, without meaningful progress, it is time to try something different.

New York City now regularly spends roughly **\$500 million per year** to export the majority of its residential waste—about **3.2 million tons annually**—to landfills and incinerators outside the city. For fiscal Year 2027 **\$480 million is currently budgeted**, and almost certainly will increase through modifications by the end of the fiscal year as export costs are reconciled with actual tonnage and market conditions.

Increasing diversion to recycling and composting will not eliminate nor significantly reduce these costs. Funding follows the material, and diversion programs require investments in collection and processing. However, approximately **75 percent of the material currently exported is recyclable or compostable**. Diverting that material away from export to recycling and composting can generate important benefits in two critical areas.

First, every dollar spent diverting material away from landfill or incineration reduces the negative environmental and social impacts associated with exporting waste to communities such as the Ironbound district in Newark, New Jersey; the Seneca Meadows landfill in Seneca Falls, New York; and Chester, Pennsylvania. Those impacts—including truck traffic, air pollution, and disposal burdens—are currently borne by communities both within New York City and in other regions where our waste is ultimately disposed. At the same time, diversion activities such as recycling and composting have the potential to retain more economic activity, jobs, and public investment within the city and region. We should consider what spending \$500 million within the five boroughs on recycling and composting could mean for New York City.

Second, diversion directly improves conditions on our streets. Cleaner streets depend on greener streets. When recyclable materials and organics are removed from the trash stream, the volume of bagged refuse placed on the curb declines significantly and is no longer attractive to rats.

For this reason, achieving or exceeding the diversion targets outlined in the Draft Solid Waste Management Plan—**30 percent residential diversion and 54 percent commercial and**

construction waste diversion—is critically important. Improving diversion is not only a crucial quality of life and sustainability issue; it is also an urgent environmental justice issue.

Participation by residents and businesses ultimately drives diversion performance. Based on our review of the Draft SWMP, historical diversion data, and DSNY program experience and budgets since 2017, we recommend that collection schedules be restructured and phased in to prioritize diversion: organics collected at least twice per week, recycling at least once per week, and what remains in the trash collected once or twice weekly. This approach will lead to changes in behavior and reduce the amount of material entering the trash stream, leading to fewer bags on the curb, fewer opportunities for litter and vermin, and less waste requiring export from the city.

We also recommend a commitment to **consistent, predictable, and fair enforcement**, particularly focused on participation in the curbside organics program.

To reinforce behavioral changes that support increased diversion, targeted outreach, education, enforcement and other innovative strategies should be deployed in neighborhoods where capture rates are low, indicating limited participation. These efforts should include clearly defined performance metrics connected to increased or decreased material capture rates so that the City can measure progress and adjust strategies where necessary.

Finally, the City should continue the planned rollout of **Commercial Waste Zones to the remaining fifteen zones**, ensuring that the program is implemented in a way that supports both diversion and accountability in the commercial waste sector.

Without meaningful changes in policy and practice, New York City will continue exporting roughly **eighty percent of its waste to landfill or incineration while harming EJ communities** and miss an opportunity to create an infrastructure that provides economic benefits and improves quality of life.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



March 18, 2026

Support Community Composting in the FY27 Budget

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee on Sanitation,

My name is Renee Crowley, and I am writing on behalf of the Lower East Side Ecology Center, a nonprofit organization that has served New York City for over 35 years through environmental stewardship, community programming, and education.

The Ecology Center operates community composting programs that provide New Yorkers with accessible, neighborhood-based opportunities to divert food scraps from the waste stream. Through food scrap drop-off sites, public workshops, and volunteer engagement, our programs connect residents directly to composting while deepening understanding of soil health and waste reduction.

Our work is rooted in community. These programs not only reduce waste. They foster environmental awareness, create opportunities for civic participation, and build more resilient neighborhoods. Participants gain hands-on experience and knowledge that extends beyond composting, empowering them to take part in broader climate and sustainability efforts.

We are also a proud member of the NYC Community Compost Network, a coalition of community-based organizations, urban farms, and composting sites working collaboratively across the five boroughs. The Network provides decentralized composting infrastructure that complements the City's curbside efforts, while ensuring that services reach communities that are often underserved, including NYCHA residents, immigrant communities, and neighborhoods with limited access.

Community composting programs uniquely combine waste diversion with education, workforce development, and community engagement. They are adaptable, locally responsive, and able to meet the specific needs of diverse neighborhoods in ways that centralized systems cannot.

Here's the issue: community composting programs remain underfunded and uncertain from year to year.

We respectfully urge the City Council to include and expand dedicated funding for community composting in the FY27 budget. Sustained funding will allow organizations like ours and our partners in the NYC Community Compost Network to:

- Maintain and expand food scrap drop-off and processing sites
- Provide consistent, high-quality education and outreach
- Support green jobs and workforce development opportunities
- Strengthen neighborhood-based climate and waste infrastructure

Stable funding is essential to ensure continuity of service, retain experienced staff, and scale programs to meet growing demand from New Yorkers who want to participate in composting.

Investing in community composting advances the City's goals around waste reduction, climate action, and environmental justice. It is a proven, cost-effective approach that delivers multiple public benefits while centering community leadership and participation.

We urge the Council to recognize the essential role of community composting and to allocate the funding necessary to sustain and grow this work in FY27.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Renee Crowley

Deputy Director

Lower East Side Ecology Center



I am testifying for Civics United for Railroad Environmental Solutions, which formed in Queens in 2009, to address quality of life problems from antiquated freight locomotives and waste-export-by-rail. The Department of Sanitation of New York kind of brags that 85% of waste exported from New York City is hauled at some point by freight rail. And this budget supports that business-as-usual export-to-disposal. But exporting waste by rail instead of using a different transportation mode doesn't reduce the tonnage or toxicity of waste. And it doesn't eliminate quality of life, health, and environmental problems in neighborhoods within and outside New York City where all that waste is tipped, processed, hauled, landfilled, and incinerated. Using rail to export New York City's waste is nothing much to brag about. Capturing and diverting waste from export at the increased levels that are in DSNY's Solid Waste Management Plan draft would reduce neighborhood problems, and really be something to brag about. Please shift existing funding to actions that support DSNY's 30% and 54% diversion goals instead of just business as usual funding of filthy, unhealthy waste export by rail.

Why do I say filthy and unhealthy?

- With few exceptions the locomotives that haul waste are high-polluting 1970's diesel technology.
- Especially during the warm weather months, Municipal Solid Waste rail containers too often emit the stench rats love, because so much organic material is still in the black bag trash.
- Construction & Demolition Debris, C&D, can contain heavy metals, PCBs, asbestos, and other toxics. Yet C&D is crushed, dumped, and hauled in open top rail cars with floor drains, resulting in emissions of toxic blowoff, leachate, and gas. To protect public safety a 2023 New York State law mandates solid covers for these rail cars. However, the National Waste and Recycling Association - New York State Chapter, Association of American Railroads, and American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association filed a lawsuit to stop this modest public protection. The case will be heard by Judge Ronnie Abrams in the Southern District of New York some time after July 1, 2026.

Again, please, shift existing DSNY funding to actions that result in less waste export tonnage, by whatever transportation mode. Thank you.

Mary Arnold, CURES Board Member, civicsunited@gmail.com, March 16, 2026



Committee on Sanitation

Support for funding for community composting

To: The Honorable City Councilmember Justin Sanchez, Chair

From: Justin Green, Big Reuse

Date: May 12, 2025

Testimony – Support for Ongoing Community Composting Funding

Chair Sanchez and members of the Sanitation Committee—

I'm Justin Green, Executive Director of Big Reuse.

Thank you Chair Sanchez for the opportunity to testify. We are grateful to the City Council for restoring community composting funding in FY25 and FY26 to 13 community environmental based groups across NYC.

I am here to strongly support **ongoing, stable funding for community based waste reduction efforts in DSNY's budget**. DSNY direct funding for community based composting, compost outreach, and education for composting was eliminated during the Adams administration. Currently all community based waste reduction work is funded through the Schedule C Council Initiative for Community Composting and administered by DSNY. DSNY has dramatically cut its direct funding for community based waste reduction, outreach, composting and education. The only community programs currently funded by DSNY's own funding are recycling events in each community board as required by City Council.

Mayor Adams FY24 cuts eliminated all community based programs in DSNY's budget. City Council stepped in and saved decades olds programs that supported community composting, composting education and outreach at NYC environmental orgs.

City Council community composting funding now supports 13 groups across NYC — including Big Reuse, Cafeteria Culture, Red Hook Farms, East New York Farms, Compost Power, BK Rot, NY Botanical Garden, Queens Botanical Garden, Snug Harbor, Earth Matter, LESEC, GrowNYC, and Brotherhood Sister Sol. These are some of the primary organizations that built the base of

community support that led to curbside composting collection in NYC. These groups all still provide very innovative community based efforts on waste.

Curbside composting needs outreach and education and community composting provides. DSNY is currently limited in their efforts to provide ongoing outreach efforts by OMB limitations on outreach spending.

Community composting and community based outreach is a *proven, community-powered climate solution*. It reduces landfill waste, lowers emissions, enriches our city's soil, and strengthens our resilience.

NYC currently sends most of the curbside organic waste to be digested with sewage- unfortunately not composted. The remaining biosolids from sewage digestion need to then be landfilled or land applied where PFAS and microplastics contamination remain a major concern.

Community composting offers an alternative approach - creating jobs, improving NYC soils in gardens, parks, street tree beds, and having the lowest impact on the climate.

For example at Big Reuse with City Council support, we have currently:

- **Re-opened and operate a mid-scale Gowanus community composting** facilities in partnership with DSNY
- **Open and operate an new innovative Central Park composting site** with Central Park Conservancy for composting landscaping waste - creating compost for the park right in the park.
- Support and collect from over **+20 food scrap drop-off sites** in Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx, and Roosevelt Island - 157,270 lbs food scraps collected & processed locally in partnership with Earth Matter and DSNY
- Installed metal rat-proof compost cubes in 40+ community gardens and parks across the city collectively capable of processing almost 500,000 lbs of material annually across all 5 boroughs. For example **we are working with New Roots Community Farm - installing rat-proof compost bins and educating volunteers on composting.**
- Supporting compost use across parks and gardens through **55 volunteer events with 5,608 lbs browns and 4,875 lbs compost distributed.** Empowering over 25,000 community members in composting through work with community partners
- Delivered **400 bags of compost to 60 schools** and through a partnership with PS 456, Big Reuse provided four hands-on compost education days connecting first-grade students to soil health and local green spaces
- **Provided 121 composting workshops & tabling events**

- Training Master Composters in Brooklyn
- **Hosted 185 curbside outreach events** across NYC
- 8,440 residents spoken with directly about curbside composting
 - 5,754 kitchen containers & 271 leaf bags distributed
- Support street tree care for over 1,000 trees annually with 2,000 volunteers
- Partner with Gowanus Canal Conservancy to expand local composting and education

And this is just our organization. Community composting funding from City Council supports **13 groups across NYC**, including:

- school composting and food waste programming at Cafeteria Culture;
- youth composting at urban farms like Red Hook Farms and East New York Farms
- composting at NYCHA with Compost Power;
- Youth composting social enterprise at BK Rot;
- composting education at NY Botanical Garden, Queens Botanical Garden, and Snug Harbor;
- community composting for Governours Island at Earth Matter;
- curbside outreach and composting work at LESEC, GrowNYC, and Brotherhood Sister Sol.

At a time when we face growing climate threats and Trump led attacks on climate programs, City Council funding helps New Yorkers act locally — with solutions that are clean, just, and empowering.

This isn't just about compost.

It's about environmental justice and climate resilience.

It's about green jobs.

It's about *investing in a better future*.

I urge the Council to continue funding community composting. Let's keep growing a cleaner, more resilient New York City — together.

Thank you.

-

-



**New York Lawyers
for the Public Interest, Inc.**
151 West 30th Street, 11th Floor
New York, NY 10001-4017
Tel 212-244-4664 Fax 212-244-4570
www.nylpi.org

Testimony of Justin Wood, Director of Policy at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest to the New York City Council Committee on Sanitation on March 16, 2026, regarding the New York City FY27 Budget

My name is Justin Wood, and I am the Director of Policy at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI). Thank you Chair Sanchez and members of the Council for the opportunity to testify today.

After more than one year in power, the federal administration continues to create unprecedented threats to the rule of law and to New Yorkers’ freedoms, civil rights, access to public services, and access to a healthy environment. In recent years, the City Council has played a critical role in defending vital city services, investments, and infrastructure from budget cuts and flatlining.

We continue to view reform of the sprawling solid waste management system as one of the most immediate, and tangible improvements City government can make for environmental justice communities, for historically exploited workers, and for our shared environment.

We offer the following recommendations for the FY27 budget:

1. DSNY’s Budget Should Enable Full and Robust implementation of the Commercial Waste Zones Program.

We urge the Mamdani administration to realize the vision for the landmark Commercial Waste Zones (CWZ) system by simultaneously uplifting historically exploited workers, eliminating millions of unnecessary truck miles from our streets, and diverting millions of tons of commercial waste from landfills and incinerators.

With nine of the City’s 20 commercial zones now scheduled for implementation by August, we strongly support the continued rollout of this landmark reform.

However, we are deeply concerned that DSNY’s annual 2025 CWZ report showed that almost three quarters of commercial waste in the initial zone in Queens is being landfilled or incinerated, a far higher rate than cities with robust commercial diversion programs. Moreover, the vast majority of commercial waste continues to be trucked in and out of a few outer borough environmental justice communities.

We urge the new administration and the Council to make commercial diversion a core focus of the CWZ program, and to harness the expertise and resources of DSNY and other relevant agencies including MOCEJ, the Mayor’s Office Food Policy, and the Department of Consumer

and Worker Protection to achieve greater source reduction of waste, donation of edible food to hungry New Yorkers, and recycling of remaining materials such as metal, glass, plastic, and paper.

We stress that the CWZ program is largely revenue, funded by the approximately \$7 million in administrative fees charged to CWZ awardees, and support additional program expenditures as necessary to scale up diversion programs and customer education during this transition

2. Fulfill the waste equity goals of the Solid Waste Management Plan by fully utilizing public marine and rail transfer stations.

In tandem with the rollout of Local Law 199, DSNY should further mitigate the disproportionate impacts of the commercial waste system on environmental justice communities where private transfer stations, recycling facilities, and truck yards are concentrated.

The 2006 Solid Waste Management Plan and accompanying Environmental Impact Study explicitly proposed that the City utilize its state-of-the-art municipal marine and rail transfer stations for both commercial waste and residential waste to reduce the number of diesel long-haul export trucks in environmental justice communities.

While the per-ton costs of DSNY's transfer stations are higher than tipping fees at private, truck-based facilities, strategic use of these facilities could also reduce vehicle miles traveled, labor costs, and bridge and tunnel tolls for commercial haulers and/or subcontractors operating in nearby zones. DSNY should rapidly assess the marginal costs to the department and level of subsidy that might be necessary to incentivize CWZ awardees and their subcontractors to use marine and rail-based transfer and recycling facilities – especially in locations like Manhattan where an MTS is close to large commercial districts.

3. Reduce waste by investing in composting infrastructure, public education, and enforcement.

We applaud the debut of citywide organics collection, and urge that the City build composting capacity to keep pace with new residential and commercial programs requiring source-separation of organic waste. We urge that the FY27 Budget include funding for DSNY to begin planning and permitting for large and medium scale composting facilities across the five boroughs, replicating the success of DSNY's Fresh Kills compost facility. Such facilities could substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with landfilling, co-digestion, and incineration of organic waste, could make truck routes more efficient and reduce VMT, and have the potential to create hundreds of good, local jobs.

We were concerned by sparse recycling and organics enforcement and public education under the previous administration. For example, after the rollout of citywide curbside organics collection, the amount of source-separated residential organics collected by DSNY increased after the City began issuing fines to non-compliant buildings and then decreased significantly

after the Adams Administration ordered DSNY to suspend most enforcement of these recycling laws in April 2025.

The FY27 budget should provide for a targeted and progressive approach to recycling and organics enforcement, beginning with the largest generators such as large residential and commercial buildings, large food markets and grocery stores, large restaurants and cafeterias, and corporate chains. **During and following implementation of each commercial zone, DSNY should ensure that businesses generating the most waste are connected with qualified waste auditors, food rescue and food donation organizations, and appropriate commercial organics and recycling service.**

The CWZ program must have sufficient monitoring and enforcement resources to ensure that waste zone haulers with a history of safety, labor, and environmental violations are meeting the highest performance standards in these areas throughout their ten year contracts or face penalties - including cancellation of their contract - in the event of poor performance.

4. Reducing Export Costs and Impacts

The continued growth of waste export costs to almost \$600 million annually is a major fiscal burden for New York City taxpayers and poses an ongoing harm to the health of communities where transfer stations, incinerators, and landfills are unjustly sited.

We urge the City to advocate for the immediate passage of state legislation that would significantly reduce waste and support local recycling economies and good jobs:

We support creation of an Extended Producer Responsibility program that would shift responsibility for the costs of disposing of plastic and other single use packaging from City taxpayers to manufacturers of these products, while incentivizing reductions of plastic, and requiring removal of toxic substances from packaging.

We similarly support using revenue from the State's long overdue Cap and Invest program to develop local composting, recycling, and other waste reduction programs.

Finally, NYLPI respectfully requests the following support from the City Council:

Immigrant Health Initiative

We ask the Council to continue and enhance support for the Immigrant Health Initiative, which continues to save lives and improve health across our city. This program supports more than 20 nonprofits, including NYLPI programs aimed at improving the health and well-being of New Yorkers and their families through direct legal representation, litigation, community education, strategic partnerships with public hospitals, and non-legal advocacy. Through vigorous client and

community advocacy and wraparound services, NYLPI improves health outcomes, increases access to healthcare, and provides critical and timely education for communities, healthcare providers, and legal service advocates.

Such access to essential healthcare often results in cost savings for the City, the State, and our safety net health care system when people can resume work and productive lives.

As increasing numbers of New Yorkers are detained in immigration jails, we remain one of few organizations focused on medical advocacy and the acute health hazards of immigration detention. In addition, in the face of continued attacks on the asylum process, we have offered culturally competent legal representation, including to those who identify as transgender, gender-expansive, or live with HIV.

Nonprofit Rapid Response Network

The federal administration has focused tremendous power on mass deportations, revocation of racial justice initiatives, claw backs of climate and environmental justice funding, and retribution against those standing up to it. The human cost to New York's disadvantaged communities has already been staggering. Nonprofits and CBOs serving or employing immigrants and other marginalized groups continue to form a critical shield but are also becoming direct targets of federal agencies attempting to conduct raids, chill advocacy, and cut services to people in need.

With continued support from the Speaker and the Protect NYC Families Initiative, our Nonprofit Rapid Response Network will strengthen and protect New York City's nonprofit sector by providing legal resources, relationship-building, practical training, and legal advice and representation to nonprofits and CBOs. It will foster collaboration, build capacity, and distribute essential resources and legal advice to help nonprofits survive attacks by the federal administration.

Nonprofit Contracting Reform

Legal services providers continue to face significant challenges related to timely payments for our contracts with the City. When non-profit legal services organizations take on such contracts, we commit to providing high-quality services, supporting marginalized individuals and communities. We urge the Council to invest adequate resources towards fixing the city's flawed contracting and procurement systems to ensure providers are paid on time. This entails filling long-empty agency vacancies for contracting positions and reforming the payment process, so providers are no longer completing the critical services they are contracted for and then waiting years to receive already allocated funding.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. We look forward to working with you to making these priorities a lived reality for New Yorkers.

Sincerely,

Justin Wood
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest
151 West 30th Street, 11th floor
New York, NY 10001
jwood@nylpi.org

For 50 years, NYLPI has fought to protect civil rights and achieve lived equality for communities in need. Led by community priorities, we pursue health, immigrant, disability, and environmental justice. NYLPI combines the power of law, organizing, and the private bar to make lasting change where it's needed most.

For more information visit: www.nylpi.org



**Testimony of Alia Soomro, Deputy Director for New York City Policy
New York League of Conservation Voters
City Council Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management
FY27 Preliminary Budget Hearing
March 16, 2026**

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

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

The City needs to be doing everything in its power to reduce our waste output and improve recycling rates, including allocating robust funding for staffing, enforcement, and outreach for all types of recycling programs. Additionally, NYLCV supports efforts to containerize our waste and urges the City to continue implementing the Commercial Waste Zones law.

Residential and Commercial Organic Waste Recycling

First, we encourage the City to increase funding for education, outreach, and robust enforcement of the citywide residential curbside organics program. NYLCV welcomed the [news that the Mamdani Administration resumed enforcement](#) and fines for the residential organics program. Doing so will ensure that residents are learning to change their behavior and compost food scraps. In fact, [the Mayor's Preliminary Management Report](#) shows an increase in tons of organics diverted over the past three fiscal years. Now that DSNY has restarted enforcement, we urge the Council and Administration to commit robust funding for outreach and education in multiple languages so all residents and superintendents can utilize this program.

Moreover, NYLCV believes that the City can do better when it comes to incentivizing and enforcing commercial organics. **We urge the City to expand commercial organic separation requirements to all food businesses in concert with the implementation of Commercial Waste Zones.** The City should ensure that small businesses and large businesses alike have access to recycling and food donation programs that are accessible, easy to use, transparent, and which would result in cost savings compared to landfilling and incineration. We echo [DSNY's February 27, 2024 testimony](#) calling for the Council to consider updating Local Law 146 of 2013 that would allow DSNY to have source separation at all commercial establishments, in line with the residential curbside program.

NYLCV has long advocated for the equitable siting of regional capacity for processing residential and commercial organic waste, including continuing to invest in more City-owned composting facilities and community composting programs, to the extent feasible, marine transfer stations to ultimately avoid the use of landfills and incinerators. It is imperative that the emissions reductions achieved from diverting this waste are not diluted by transporting it long distances, and does not compound poor air quality in environmental justice communities by siting additional capacity that will increase truck traffic in these already overburdened districts.

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

Community Composting

NYLCV supports funding community composting programs across New York City. We are grateful to the City Council for restoring funding for community composting in FY25 and we urge the Council to continue to financially support this critical program. As emphasized above, in order for the citywide residential organics program to be successful, awareness and participation must improve. Community composting is one tool to help New Yorkers change their behavior to compost food scraps. Community composters are educators and facilitators that can help DSNY increase composting efforts across the city. We believe that the community composting program can and should [complement](#) the City's residential organics program, especially when it comes to workforce development, and outreach and education to spark behavior changes.

Recycling

NYLCV supports DSNY's overall goal of improving and expanding residential and commercial recycling recovery efforts. Most importantly, this means the City must increase funding for DSNY staffing to educate and enforce in order to increase the diversion of materials collected curbside.

We encourage the City to invest in residential and commercial recycling and waste diversion programs, including enforcement and education programs, with an emphasis on reduction and reuse to bring New York City closer to its Zero Waste by 2030. DSNY

must leverage connections to local organizations, elected officials, and Community Boards to educate residents about this program in order to change behaviors when it comes to recycling organic waste.

When it comes to textiles, **NYLCV supports increasing funding for outreach and accessibility of textile recycling efforts**, including DSNY's ReFashion NYC program. We encourage DSNY to establish textile collection options for all city households and institutions, with additional events and appointment-based pick-up for low-rise buildings (buildings with fewer than 10 units); moreover, improve enforcement of the recycling requirement for businesses whose waste is made up of more than 10% textiles.

Waste Containerization

NYLCV recommends that DSNY can move towards a comprehensive containerization program that includes residential and commercial, as well as trash, recyclables, and organic waste to increase diversion rates. Going forward, the City will also need long-term funding for Automated Side-Loading Trucks and more Empire Bins. These bins, which are made in Spain, sit at the curb, can only be opened by building staff or sanitation workers with special electronic keycards issued by the city, and are emptied by [new \\$500,000-a-piece garbage trucks](#) purchased by DSNY that are equipped with lifts.

However, as the [Sanitation Committee Report](#) states: "the Preliminary Plan does not appear to include dedicated funding for the specialized truck fleet required to operate this system, the expansion of the Brooklyn Community District 2 pilot, or a broader citywide rollout to additional community districts. Without a clear funding commitment, the timeline and scale of the containerization program remain uncertain, raising questions about the City's ability to deliver on its promise of cleaner, bag-free streets."

We urge the City to get on a path of long-term funding a citywide waste containerization program. Providing permanent, on-street sealed containers throughout the City will improve quality of life, improve the rodents problem, and also creates more opportunities for beneficial use of public space like bioswales, bike corrals, sidewalk seating, bus shelters, and pedestrian plazas.

Commercial Waste Zones and Truck Electrification

NYLCV urges DSNY to release an implementation timeline for the entire CWZs system by the end of 2026 to improve the safety of workers, pedestrians, and cyclists, and bring the city closer to its zero waste goals. We also support expanding commercial organics separation requirements to all food businesses in concert with the implementation of Commercial Waste Zones.

We also call on the City to provide continued funding for the electrification of light-, medium-, and heavy-duty DSNY and commercial sanitation trucks. Additionally, the City must continue working with DCAS, utility companies, and industry professionals to ensure adequate charging infrastructure is installed and available for sanitation trucks and give extra

consideration for CWZ carters with the most aggressive plans to do so. Requiring cleaner fleets as part of the City's move to CWZs is also the best way to bring measurable air quality improvements to neighborhoods that house a disproportionately high number of haulers and waste processing facilities. It is not good enough to require citywide emissions reductions. We should also strive for more localized benefits.

NYS Efforts

NYLCV strongly supports DSNY's work advancing an EPR for packaging program at the state level, which would require companies to reduce packaging, increase the recyclability of their products, and increase the use of post-recycled content. **We also urge the State to develop the EPR program for lithium-ion rechargeable batteries enacted into law last year as quickly as possible and for the State and DSNY to collaborate on battery EPR program development in New York City's unique context.**

Conclusion

While the City Council and Administration made strides over the past year prioritizing zero waste bills and policies, they are only as effective as the funding and political support they receive. NYLCV underscores the importance of robust funding for the citywide residential organics program, community composting, and other sanitation initiatives.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.



**Testimony on 3/16/26 Preliminary Budget Hearing,
Sanitation and Solid Waste Management Committee**

Open Plans writes today in regard to the Preliminary Budget hearing on 3/16. Open Plans believes that containerized trash is vital, and urges the Council to continue to fund and pave the path forward in ensuring our sidewalks stay clear of trash.

The containerization of commercial and residential trash has been a resounding success. By containerizing our trash and placing it in the curb lane, we keep rats at bay, we clear our sidewalks for pedestrians — particularly those using mobility devices or parents with strollers — and make our city more livable.

The City must continue to invest in trash containerization, and focus its efforts in the curb lane. To this end, funding for continued expansion of the multi-unit residential pilot programs should be increased, allowing for more neighborhoods to reap the benefits of this kind of collection. Further, the City should continue to look into using shared curbside containers for smaller apartment buildings.

Respectfully,
Open Plans

Sara Lind
Co-Executive Director
sara@openplans.org

Jackson Chabot
Director of Advocacy and Organizing
jacksonchabot@openplans.org

Michael Sutherland
Senior Policy & Legislative Analyst
michael@openplans.org



1/12/2025

**TESTIMONIAL:
INNER CITY GREEN TEAM ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEVELOPMENT**

**PUBLIC HEARING:
NYC DRAFT 2026 SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**RE: RECYCLING OUTREACH/EDUCATION, WASTE DIVERSION, RAT MITIGATION,
REMOVING ON-SITE OPERATIONAL BARRIERS, EXPANDING RESIDENTIAL
RECYCLING PROGRAM AT NEW YORK CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY**

Greetings To All,

Thank you for the invitation to testify.

I am Brigitte Charlton-Vicenty, Founder and CEO of Inner City Green Team Economic & Environmental Development (ICGT), and life-long NYCHA resident.

THE PROBLEM

1 in 17 New Yorkers live in New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) developments. Yet, nearly four decades after the 1989 NYC recycling law was passed, NYCHA residents continue to be excluded from equitable access to recycling services due to outdated infrastructure, inconvenient bin placement, capacity challenges within the Authority, and chronic under investment in sustainability solutions. Like other New Yorkers, NYCHA residents need and deserve access to NYC recycling programs to successfully tackle the city's waste problems in the country's largest public housing community.

NYCHA communities have some of the highest unemployment rates and are in critical need of jobs—56% of all working-age residents do not report income from employment. According to estimates, as many as 100,000 residents are without jobs.

BACK STORY

In 2006, I thought I was doing my civic duty as a law abiding citizen when placing my recyclables in the designated bins at my development until I witnessed my recyclables being thrown away with the garbage. I was shocked to learn that all my efforts over the years were in vain, because recycling at NYCHA was nonexistent and had not complied with the NYC Recycling Law established 30 years earlier. After my revelation, I began taking my recyclables outside of NYCHA to be recycled, but my lone efforts were just a drop in the bucket. I knew more had to be done.

I had a vision to create an opportunity to establish a recycling program and submitted a proposal to the Authority when I came across a NYCHA posting urging residents to get involved with then Commissioner Lopez's "Green Agenda". Consequently I activated the Resident Green Committee (RGC) at Mott Haven Houses with the vision of fulfilling the Commissioner's agenda to "help green public housing."

Towards that end:

- I held public meetings and events to raise awareness and educate NYCHA residents about recycling and energy efficiency.
- Conducted door to door surveys to ascertain residents interested in learning and participating in a recycling program.
- Partnered with Mother's On The Move and organized a recycling rally to mobilize residents around the issue
- Created the Right to Recycle Collection Initiative which proposed a unique solution for NYCHA to comply with the recycling law.

THE PILOT

In 2018, ICGT won the international competition, **NYCx Co-Lab Challenge; Zero Waste in Shared Space** demonstrating the potential of resident-led solutions. During the six-month pilot in Brownsville, Brooklyn, recycling rose from 0% to 8% in four months, with over **sixteen tons** of recyclables diverted. Although the pilot proved to be successful no further support was offered from the long list of City agencies who sponsored the competition. Only through my crowdfunding efforts, operations continued for an additional year proving the model's scalability and expandability.

For over 14 years, ICGT's mission has focused on cultivating climate awareness and waste equity on (NYCHA) public housing campuses. My [non-profit] organization has been committed to protecting the environment, advancing residents rights to recycle, and transforming the lives of residents through green job training, and paid work that can lead to a lifetime of employment and civic engagement.

ICGT's environmental justice service model directly addresses the disproportionate environmental burdens in low-income communities and empowers residents to participate in sustainability on a hyper-local level in **every age group**.

One of our many accomplishments includes earning formal recognition that helped inform legislation under the NYS Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) and New York City's Local Law 49 -2017 (LL49), sponsored by then-Sanitation Committee Chair Letitia James. These policies helped address long-standing recycling inequities and establish a more just framework for the Right to Recycle Collection Initiative.

Despite our contributions to environmental justice legislation and demonstrating success in advancing sustainability initiatives on NYCHA campuses, our frontline expertise has been largely excluded. This misalignment contradicts the CLCPA and LL49 mandates to prioritize disadvantaged communities and has failed to invest in resident-led solutions, workforce development, and scalable models grounded in our lived experience. If DSNY's waste management draft is serious about achieving the City's sustainability goals, these agencies must be accountable, invest in, and partner with frontline organizations who can translate policy into measurable outcomes.

ICGT WASTE DIVERSION INITIATIVES

Recycle to Right Collection Initiative offers **free** weekly at-your-door recycling collection year-round. To enroll residents, we provide speedy yet comprehensive educational workshops, distribute reusable Sort 'n' Store bags to sort materials, and literature to reinforce the practical skills in the comfort of their own homes. The closed-loop, zero-waste education system diverts a variety of materials from the waste stream, including metals, plastic, glass, paper, e-waste, textiles/household items, and organics. Our "service delivery" approach provides residents with **the most convenient, accessible, and engaging** at-your-door recycling collection experience. To date, over **125 tons** have been diverted from landfills, but it could be so much more.

"Mini MRF" - manually sorting recyclables plays a critical role in decreased contamination in high-density residential settings such as NYCHA campuses. Our on-site localized sorting process allows for 100% contaminate-free materials before entering the broader waste stream. This process prevents materials from being sent to landfill or incineration. Additionally, manual sorting creates opportunities for resident employment and hands-on education, reinforcing proper recycling behaviors while building accountability and local stewardship within the community.

Workforce Development trains and hires residents to engage their fellow residents. When fully expanded, our program can create hundreds of livable-wage jobs. Our community-rooted approach

has created 24 green jobs, with five residents currently employed, reflects our commitment to community-based leadership. This approach has created buy-in by being accessible to residents, maintaining consistent engagement at their doors, and fostering good relations with tenant leaders. Living and working within the communities establishes ICGT as a trusted advocate for change.

Re-Use-A-Palooza-Thon™ collects, recycles, upcycles, and **donates gently used clothing, household items, books, toys, and shoes.** To **address the high rate of textile disposal,** we transitioned from two clothing swap/donation events per year to a weekly at-your-door service model. This service was sorely needed to amplify our closed-loop practices and reduce the amount of textiles being thrown in the trash. Since launching, the program has diverted over 30 tons of materials.

Other Peoples Plastic™ - processing and marketing post-consumer plastic to artists who transformed the recovered plastics into lighting, furniture, outdoor equipment, sculptures and art installations.

Scrape-Ur-Plate™ allows residents to take ownership of their food waste by providing an **at-your-door food scrap pick-up service** and/or a free in-home food “pre-composter”. The program’s goal is to distribute devices at several NYCHA campuses in every borough. The pilot program will promote our mission to strengthen community involvement and awareness about food waste reduction and composting.

sRATegy™ Mitigation (“U Bred ‘Em, When U Feed ‘Em”) is a program and tagline that’s coupled with the Scrape-Ur-Plate organics program. It was designed to mitigate the rodent population by placing the onus on every citizen who disposes food waste improperly. The education workshop combines the strategic solution for rat reduction, coupled with the necessity to redirect food waste from being on the curb.

Rescuing Leftover Cuisine - as volunteers, we rescue fresh and healthy leftover food from commercial businesses and distribute it to communities struggling with food insecurity.

Plastic Bottle Waste Reduction - to reward participation and reduce plastic water bottle usage, we provide donated ZeroWater filtration systems.

E-Waste Collection - due to the lack of storage space on campus, we currently transport the e-waste to the LES Ecology Center events

WE ARE THE BLUEPRINT

What sets us apart is that our model is more than just waste diversion—it's a system change. We've created the ability to tackle **one of the most persistent challenges in increasing recycling rates in New York City and NYC public housing.**

With nearly half a million residents, this community is one of the most challenging environments to implement effective recycling. While local agencies and officials have attempted narrow interventions and failed, ICGT has developed a solution that transforms barriers into opportunities- turning residents into environmental leaders. We are uniquely positioned because we have built an ecosystem for families who see themselves as the driving force of environmental justice in their communities.

No where does a door-to-door recycling model like ICGT exist, combining service and intensive community engagement at this scale. Since our inception, ICGT has positioned itself at the forefront of innovation in recycling and community engagement. Our work is not just rooted in local impact and on-the-ground experience; it's backed by global research studying organizations worldwide that target specific materials or communities.

THE ASK

We respectfully urge DSNY to:

- Precise details as to what recycling strategies DSNY has specifically implemented on NYCHA campuses.
- Execute **formal MOUs** between DSNY, NYCHA, and community-based implementers to clarify roles in recycling education, compliance support, and enforcement readiness.
- Create a dedicated line item in the NYC waste management budget to fund and implement ICGT's community-based scope of work.
- Fully invest in recycling programs that combine on-site education, meaningful resident engagement to support compliance, and attainable workforce pathways to expand employment opportunities.
- Track and publicly report **Local Law 49 -2017** compliance metrics, including recycling participation rates, contamination reduction, and diversion levels.

The oxymoron presents itself when New Yorkers are asked to make a difference, but are met with incredible resistance and disenfranchisement. A quote from the great physicist and civil rights advocate Albert Einstein states, "insanity is doing the same thing over and over, but expecting a different result."

The outcry for justice took place long before city agencies came to the realization that environmental noisemakers would only get louder. Despite presenting solid legislation and providing innovative

solutions to increase sustainability on NYCHA campuses, our stance on the frontlines has been mostly disregarded. Without intentional inclusion of community-based solutions, those agencies will continue the practice of implementing ineffective climate policies that reinforce systemic inequalities rather than dismantling them.

Your time, attention, and considerable action are appreciated.

Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am Alejandra Torres, with the Ironbound Community Corporation. ICC is a community-based non-profit organization in Ironbound, Newark, New Jersey, with over 50 years of environmental justice expertise.

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

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

Approximately 75% of the waste that NYC currently exports is recyclable or compostable. Diverting that material away from export to recycling and composting is crucial. Every dollar spent diverting material away from landfill or incineration reduces the negative environmental and social impacts associated with exporting waste to communities such as the Ironbound district in Newark, New Jersey. Those impacts—including truck traffic, air pollution, and disposal burdens—are currently borne by communities in New York City *and* others. At the same time, diversion activities such as

recycling and composting have the potential to retain more economic activity, jobs, and public investment within the city and region. We should consider what spending \$500 million within the five boroughs on recycling and composting could mean for New York City.

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



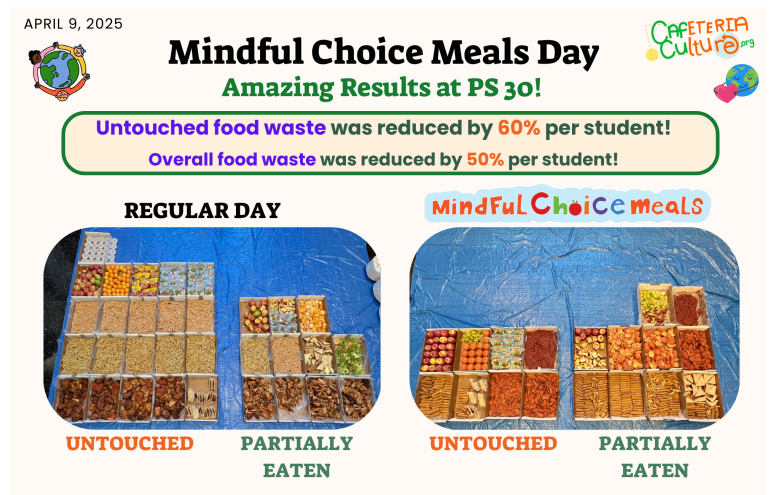
Reimagining school cafeterias as climate action hubs where students drive equitable zero-waste solutions: reducing food waste, supporting local composting, and eliminating plastics through science, civic engagement, media, and the arts!

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

Good afternoon and thank you, Chair Sanchez and the Sanitation Committee for this opportunity to speak.

I am Rhonda Keyser, Program and Policy Director for Cafeteria Culture. We are an environmental education organization. Our students become climate leaders and bring about systemic change by taking hyper-local action in their own school cafeterias. We catalyzed the elimination of styrofoam from school cafeterias in New York City and across the country. Our students started monthly Plastic Free Lunch Days in New York City Public Schools and twice a year nationwide. And now these monthly events have led to measurably significant reduction in single-use plastics in school lunches on REGULAR lunch service days from 2022 to now.

Cafeteria Culture is deeply grateful to you, New York City Council for your investment in FY25 and FY26 that funded us to teach our compost education curriculum and to develop and pilot our latest systemic waste reduction initiative, Mindful Choice Meals, a program that has reduced cafeteria food waste by 50% and increased student consumption by 15-46% in our pilot schools just by allowing students to choose what they want to eat within the USDA guidelines.



Our trusted partners, NYC Public Schools' Office of Food and Nutrition Services, are collaborating with us this spring to scale Mindful Choice Meals this year to 32 schools – one school per district.

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

This is a moment for New York City to invest in scaling solutions that work. With greater investment from the City Council, we can move from district pilots to citywide implementation - dramatically reducing cafeteria food waste and our climate footprint, while saving millions in school food costs and giving students a meaningful voice in how their cafeterias operate.





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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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



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

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

info@cafeteriaculture.org  CafCu Media  @cafeteriacu  @CafCu  CafeteriaCulture  @cafeteriacu

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Thank you for your time!



March 16, 2026

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

Good morning! Thank you, Chair Sanchez and the Sanitation Committee for allowing us to speak today. We are 4th graders from PS15 in Red Hook, Brooklyn. We live in an Environmental Justice Zone in Red Hook, Brooklyn with a lot of truck traffic. Cafeteria Culture taught us that there is no “away” for our trash. We learned that when our trash leaves our homes or our school, first it goes to the Hamilton Avenue waste transfer station nearby. Then it goes by truck to a barge at the Marine Terminal in Elizabeth, New Jersey. Then it gets trucked to a landfill all the way in Virginia!

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

We started the Mindful Choice Meals program in our school two years ago. This year we reduced our cafeteria food waste at the source by almost 45%. Cafeteria Culture is doing Mindful Choice Meals in a lot of other schools now.

We want ALL schools to have this program. It’s a no-brainer!

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

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



From: [Info HoGD](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Written text and documents accompanying Leon Feingold's testimony to Sanitation Committee today
Date: Monday, March 16, 2026 1:35:58 PM
Attachments: [HoGD-1Pager.pdf](#)
[HoGD 2024 Impact Report.png](#)

[REDACTED]

The text below and attached documents represent my testimony today. Thank you.

Leon Feingold, Esq
Executive Director
House of Good Deeds

[REDACTED]
EIN 36-4859482
HouseOfGoodDeeds.org
Ig: @theHouseOfGoodDeeds
Facebook.com/theHouseOfGoodDeeds

We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give. YOU can help us help others!

Venmo: @Altruists
PayPal: @HouseOfGoodDeeds
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/donate/1863549537857443>

--

The House of Good Deeds is a 501(c)(3) dedicated to building community, leading by example, and improving the world through Altruism, one Good Deed at a time: everyone, everywhere, every day.

Good afternoon! My name is Leon Feingold. In 2017 my late wife Yuan and I co-founded the House of Good Deeds to pay forward the help we received when she was diagnosed with terminal cancer. We have grown drastically since then, recently opened our first permanent headquarters, manage 4 rescue transport vehicles, and serve all five boroughs. Our volunteers partner with businesses and community members to rescue and redistribute essential goods at no cost to donors or recipients, and we do it bigger and better than anyone else. In 2025, we rescued 5 tons every month, more than half of it food. We run Manhattan's largest free store, offer free classes, and a volunteer hub which has trained thousands of community volunteers, including those running our weekly food pantry which I'm missing in order to be here. We also organize blood drives, neighborhood cleanups, electronics recycling, and are limited only by our funding.

Based on the numbers we've heard today, 60 tons away from the waste stream each year actually makes a dent. Keeping useful items in service is a win/win, and building community

and changing attitudes among New Yorkers is the cherry on top. In 2023, the NYC Council spent \$3M on GrowNYC and its Stop and Swap program which offered many of the same services now offered by the HoGD like free collection and free redistribution of clothing, shoes, housewares, and accessories, 85,100lb that year.

In 2024, the funding was pulled by the Adams administration, and Stop and Swap no longer exists. House of Good Deeds has filled that gap, yet we've received under \$50,000 from the City Council, while having a significantly greater rescue impact.

I ask this council and committee to recognize the massive win/win impact House of Good Deeds has in reducing waste, promoting sustainability, and building community through volunteerism in each of your districts. Give us the money to replace our ancient vehicles, hire drivers, and pay our key people, maybe exempt us from congestion pricing, and we will grow. We've applied for discretionary funds from each of you on this committee, and need your support. We're more efficient than anyone else who does what we do, we are NYC's best direct link between those who have and those who need, and the bigger and better we can be, the less cost and stress for the amazing people of the DSNY who keep our city running.

Thank you.



OUR MISSION:
To build community, lead by example, and improve the world through Altruism: everyone, everywhere, every day.

WHO IS HOUSE OF GOOD DEEDS?

A retiree finding new purpose in life. Free classes and events in NYC’s poorest areas. Rescuing and sharing through free stores and food pantries. Learning the beauty of building community through helping others. At House of Good Deeds, the journey IS the destination.

NOT JUST CHARITY: ALTRUISM

House of Good Deeds fosters a culture of mutual aid and collective support. Rather than trickling resources down from those who have to those who need, we build communities where all people are encouraged to both give and receive: exchanging resources, knowledge, and sharing efforts through service opportunities like cleanups and blood drives, strengthening the fabric of our city through Altruism.

COMMUNITY SERVICE & VOLUNTEERISM

Since 2017, House of Good Deeds has been a volunteer-driven nonprofit dedicated to spreading kindness and generosity throughout New York City. From our new 3400sf HQ in Alphabet City’s NYCHA, we mobilize hundreds of community members each month to participate in resource rescue, neighborhood cleanups, leadership and skills training, social events, and direct service initiatives that uplift all in need.

GOOD DEEDS GIVEAWAYS & SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

Unlike thrift stores, we don’t sell items or charge donors—we collect donations and give them away for free! House of Good Deeds runs Manhattan’s largest Free Store, collecting and distributing literal tons of clothing, shoes, housewares, appliances, hygiene products, and more to those in need every month. In 2024 alone, HoGD rescued and distributed over 102,000lb of useful resources, converting potential waste into actual resources for those in need.

FOOD RESCUE & DISTRIBUTION

We believe that no one should go hungry. House of Good Deeds rescues and redistributes thousands of pounds of fresh and non-perishable food items every month with our drivers and vehicles, running our own weekly food pantry, filling community fridges throughout NYC, and ensuring that individuals and families facing food insecurity receive nutritious meals - all at no cost to donors AND recipients.

MASSIVE IMPACT, MINIMAL COST

House of Good Deeds is proud to be NYC’s most impactful 501(c)(3) operating under \$250,000/year. We have taken on immense projects and done more with less than organizations receiving millions of dollars in funding. Our opportunities, our volunteer base, and our communities are growing. Will you help us help others?



Want to get involved? Visit HouseOfGoodDeeds.org, text/call (917) 325-4548, or email volunteer@HouseOfGoodDeeds.org. Together, we can change the world. *Really.*

Connect with us! [Instagram](#) [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [YouTube](#)





Environmental Impact Report 2024



Materials Reused*

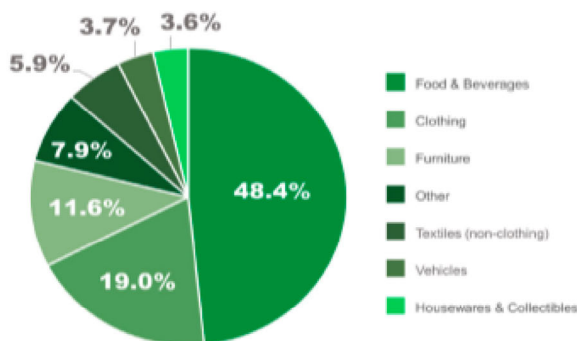
102,565

pounds of materials

39,330

total items

Total Weight by Overall Category



Environmental Impact**

The energy saved through recovering these materials is equivalent to:

250.05

metric tons of CO₂E

1.50

billion BTUs

This emissions reduction is equivalent to...



Charging
31.9 million
phones



Switching
to **9,508**
LEDs



Taking
54 vehicles
off the road

* Not all materials are currently classified in the Reuse Impact Calculator, so this may not be a complete representation of the total weight reused by the organization.

** Greenhouse gas emissions and energy savings were estimated using US EPA's Waste Reduction Model (WARM) and US EPA's Gas Equivalencies Calculator.



donateNYC
give goods. find goods. do good.

From: [OUNP Neighbors](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] In Support of Community Composting
Date: Friday, March 13, 2026 1:11:33 PM



Dear Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee,

We are a group of neighbors residing at 685 and 695 1st Avenue and we write to ask you to support and maintain our composting, which we have grown quite fond of.

Additionally, thank you to Chair Sanchez and all of the City Council for restoring community composting funding in FY25 and continuing the funding for FY26. We very much support ongoing, stable funding for community composting through Schedule C Council Initiative funding for Community Composting.

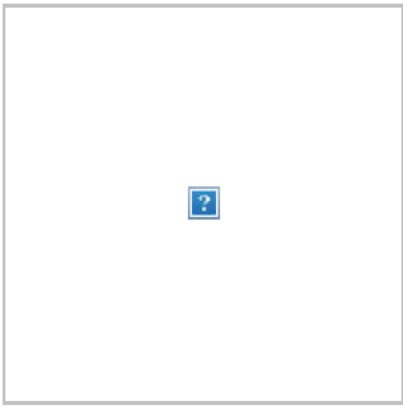
When the former mayor, Adams, cut funding to community programs at DSNY, City Council stepped in FY25 to save decades olds programs that supported community composting, composting education, and outreach through New York nonprofits. The ongoing support from constituents shows how community composting impacts and engages the community.

Community composting is a proven, community-powered climate solution. It reduces landfill waste, lowers emissions, enriches our city's soil, and strengthens our resilience. Curbside composting needs outreach and education, and community composting provides this. With EPA cuts and climate change denial at the federal level, we know that **acting locally can have a big impact**, and we've seen how the City Council can be part of that change.

EVERYTHING WE DO MAKES A DIFFERENCE AND EVERYTHING WE **DON'T** DO MAKES A DIFFERENCE, TOO. We hope you will help make a difference for the better with us.

This isn't just about compost. It's about environmental justice and climate resilience. It's about green jobs. It's about investing in a better future for all New Yorkers. I urge Council to continue to **fund community composting**. Let's keep growing a cleaner, more resilient New York City—*together*.

Thank you.



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2219805968359657>

Monday March 16th 2026 written testimony submitted to NYC City Council Committee on Solid Waste meeting on Composting

My name is Dr. Ellen Belcher and I am a Master Composter at the Morris Jumel Community Garden at 457 west 162nd Street NYC 10032 within Community Board 12 of Manhattan (Washington Heights).

Our garden composts around 4-5 tons of food waste, fall leaves and garden/yard waste in our compost bins within the garden. We use the resulting compost to amend soils in our garden and in tree pits and empty lots in our neighborhood to grow food, flowers and herbs to sustain our community. We are registered with DSNY as a certified FSDO [Food Scrap Drop Off] location and certified with their NYC Compost Project as a Community Composting location.

We also collect around 5 more tons of food waste and woody debris from the garden and community in our 4 brown bins made available 24/7 on the sidewalk outside the garden. This material used to be picked up weekly by a large scale community composter group (Earth Matter on Governor's Island) until funding for community compost food scrap hauling was dissolved by former Mayor Adams who reallocated these funds to his very expensive Orange "Smart" Bins.

These "Smart Bins" claim to divert community food scraps to "Compost" but in fact create pollution, dangerous conditions for vulnerable street users (cyclists and pedestrians) and bio-sludge full of microplastics – unusable in community gardening situations. I have testified before in front of the City Council Sanitation committee in regard to the non-union private haulers trucks which are contracted to pick up 'compostables' from the orange bins and school brown bins causing way too many fatal crashes to pedestrians, schoolchildren and cyclists on our city's streets. Perhaps the reporting of their use to replace community composting haulers by NY Magazine is outdated? Hope so.

I did for a while try to compost all of the food scraps collected in our brown bins in our garden's compost bin, after Earth Matter ceased picking up, I finally had to cease doing so because my 60 something year old body couldn't do it anymore. Those bins are very heavy when full – shout out to NYC's Strongest! When DSNY organics pickup finally began in upper Manhattan, our garden was an early participant. We regularly roll four bins of food scraps and a couple of bags of branches to the curb every Tuesday for DSNY pickup, so many in our community have thanked us for providing this service, and its something we will continue to do as long as we are able.

I do have great concerns about where these food scraps, and the plastic bags DSNY encouraged us to use are going? Are they also becoming microplastic filled bio sludge and

spewing pollution from 'digesters'? We encourage all community members to use the garden compost bins for food scrap drop-offs when we are open.

It would so much better (and cheaper for the City) to fund ready and willing micro – haulers to pick up our brown bins and create compost for remediating all growing areas of our city. We need more community driven solutions to our waste problems – that's what our community garden is trying to do. I encourage DSNY to do the same. We could use a bit of support for our efforts for a sustainable community.

From: [Adam Kridler](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony for Upcoming Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management Meeting
Date: Monday, March 16, 2026 8:06:01 PM

Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee,

My name is Adam Kridler

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Thank you to Chair Sanchez and all of the City Council for restoring community composting funding in FY25 and continuing the funding for FY26. I am writing to strongly support **ongoing, stable funding for community composting** through Schedule C Council Initiative funding for Community Composting.

When Mayor Adams cut funding to community programs at DSNY, City Council stepped in FY25 to save decades olds programs that supported community composting, composting education, and outreach through New York nonprofits. The ongoing support from constituents shows how community composting impacts and engages the community.

As a community garden member and user of various publicly-funded composting programs in NYC (BK Rot and sidewalk bins) I have grown to appreciate the value of these programs in my local community and in the city writ large.

Community composting is a proven, community-powered climate solution. It reduces landfill waste, lowers emissions, enriches our city's soil, and strengthens our resilience. Curbside composting needs outreach and education, and community composting provides this. With EPA cuts and climate change denial at the federal level, we know that **acting locally can have a big impact**, and we've seen how the City Council can be part of that change.

This isn't just about compost. It's about environmental justice and climate resilience. It's about green jobs. It's about investing in a better future for all New Yorkers. I urge Council to continue to **fund community composting**. Let's keep growing a cleaner, more resilient New York City—*together*.

Thank you,

Adam Kridler

From: [Ana Acosta](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please Keep Community Composting Alive and Thriving
Date: Friday, March 13, 2026 1:30:49 PM

Dear City Council Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Thank you to Chair Sanchez and all of the City Council for restoring community composting funding in FY25 and continuing the funding for FY26. I am writing to strongly support **ongoing, stable funding for community composting** through Schedule C Council Initiative funding for Community Composting.

When Mayor Adams cut funding to community programs at DSNY, City Council stepped in FY25 to save decades old programs that supported community composting, composting education, and outreach through New York nonprofits. The ongoing support from constituents shows how community composting impacts and engages the community.

My family and I have been dropping off our scraps at the local site for 20 years. Since we have been doing this are always amazed about how little waste we generate. We could have a garbage bag in our bin for weeks without having to dispose of it. Sending organic scraps to a landfill is shortsighted and environmentally harmful.

Community composting is a proven, community-powered climate solution. It reduces landfill waste, lowers emissions, enriches our city's soil, and strengthens our resilience. Curbside composting needs outreach and education, and community composting provides this. With EPA cuts and climate change denial at the federal level, we know that **acting locally can have a big impact**, and we've seen how the City Council can be part of that change.

This isn't just about compost. It's about environmental justice and climate resilience. It's about green jobs. It's about investing in a better future for all New Yorkers. I urge Council to continue to **fund community composting**. Let's keep growing a cleaner, more resilient New York City—*together*.

Thank you,

Ana Acosta

Support for Funding for Community Composting

To: The Honorable City Councilmember Justin Sanchez, Chair

From: Andy Kang

Date: 3/15/2026

Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee,

My name is Andy Kang, and I'm a farmer, gardener and land steward.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Thank you to Chair Sanchez and all of the City Council for restoring community composting funding in FY25 and continuing the funding for FY26. I am writing to strongly support **ongoing, stable funding for community composting** through Schedule C Council Initiative funding for Community Composting.

When Mayor Adams cut funding to community programs at DSNY, City Council stepped in FY25 to save decades old programs that supported community composting, composting education, and outreach through New York nonprofits. The ongoing support from constituents shows how community composting impacts and engages the community.

When I first started my environmental journey, it was compost that opened my eyes to how circularity works. I went on to study how technology can support community composting for my master's graduate thesis at the School of Visual Arts, took the master composter course, volunteered at many community gardens, and supported local composting organizations in NYC. I have personally taught dozens of people how to compost, and inspired them to begin composting at their own homes. Community gardens and community composting singlehandedly initiated me into my journey of apprenticing on farms, professional gardening and environmental education. I believe community composting is one the most powerful, tangible ways that New Yorkers can engage with their local neighborhoods and feel that they are making a measurable impact alongside their neighbors. This work is absolutely critical to the fabric of this city, both socially and ecologically.

Community composting is a proven, community-powered climate solution. It reduces landfill waste, lowers emissions, enriches our city's soil, and strengthens our resilience. Curbside composting needs outreach and education, and community composting provides this. With EPA cuts and climate change denial at the federal level, we know that **acting locally can have a big impact**, and we've seen how the City Council can be part of that change. This isn't just about compost. It's about environmental justice and climate resilience. It's about green jobs. It's about investing in a better future for all

New Yorkers. I urge Council to continue to **fund community composting**. Let's keep growing a cleaner, more resilient New York City—*together*.

Thank you,

Andy Kang

From: [Camila](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Master composting
Date: Friday, March 13, 2026 2:09:37 PM

[REDACTED]

Good afternoon

I have attended all the events at the master composting but it's missing 30 minutes of volunteering for me to get a certificate.

I work most Saturdays but I'll be free tomorrow.

Could attend the event and help organizing or cleaning up and have the time counted for me to graduate at the master composting?

Thank you in advance

Camila

From: [Caroline Abel](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support for Funding for Community Composting
Date: Monday, March 16, 2026 3:44:48 PM

Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee,

I'm Caroline Abel, an NYC resident.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Thank you to Chair Sanchez and all of the City Council for restoring community composting funding in FY25 and continuing the funding for FY26. I am writing to strongly support **ongoing, stable funding for community composting** through Schedule C Council Initiative funding for Community Composting.

When Mayor Adams cut funding to community programs at DSNY, City Council stepped in FY25 to save decades olds programs that supported community composting, composting education, and outreach through New York nonprofits. The ongoing support from constituents shows how community composting impacts and engages the community.

Community composting is a proven, community-powered climate solution. It reduces landfill waste, lowers emissions, enriches our city's soil, and strengthens our resilience. Curbside composting needs outreach and education, and community composting provides this. With EPA cuts and climate change denial at the federal level, we know that **acting locally can have a big impact**, and we've seen how the City Council can be part of that change.

This isn't just about compost. It's about environmental justice and climate resilience. It's about green jobs. It's about investing in a better future for all New Yorkers. I urge Council to continue to **fund community composting**. Let's keep growing a cleaner, more resilient New York City—*together*.

Thank you,

Caroline Abel

--

Caroline Abel
Liaison for Representative Yvette Clarke
Member of the Environmental Justice Action Team



Citizens' Climate Lobby (CCL) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, grassroots advocacy climate change organization focused on national policies to address the national and global climate crisis.

From: [Charlotte Munson](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support for Funding for Community Composting
Date: Thursday, March 19, 2026 3:43:15 PM



To: The Honorable City Councilmember Justin Sanchez, Chair

From: Charlotte Munson

Date: 3/19/2026

Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee,

I'm Charlotte Munson, a community member born in and still living in NYC!

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Thank you to Chair Sanchez and all of the City Council for restoring community composting funding in FY25 and continuing the funding for FY26. I am writing to strongly support **ongoing, stable funding for community composting** through Schedule C Council Initiative funding for Community Composting.

When Mayor Adams cut funding to community programs at DSNY, City Council stepped in FY25 to save decades old programs that supported community composting, composting education, and outreach through New York nonprofits. The ongoing support from constituents shows how community composting impacts and engages the community.

I think composting is super important and I love the composting drop off sites! It makes me feel like we are doing good things in NYC!

Community composting is a proven, community-powered climate solution. It reduces landfill waste, lowers emissions, enriches our city's soil, and strengthens our resilience. Curbside composting needs outreach and education, and community composting provides this. With EPA cuts and climate change denial at the federal level, we know that **acting locally can have a big impact**, and we've seen how the City Council can be part of that change.

This isn't just about compost. It's about environmental justice and climate resilience.

It's about green jobs. It's about investing in a better future for all New Yorkers. I urge Council to continue to **fund community composting**. Let's keep growing a cleaner, more resilient New York City—*together*.

Thank you,

Charlotte

Support for Funding for Community Composting

To: The Honorable City Councilmember Justin Sanchez, Chair

From:

Date:

Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee,

My name is Dana Chan, Queens Resident and home owner

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Thank you to Chair Sanchez and all of the City Council for restoring community composting funding in FY25 and continuing the funding for FY26. I am writing to strongly support **ongoing, stable funding for community composting** through Schedule C Council Initiative funding for Community Composting.

When Mayor Adams cut funding to community programs at DSNY, City Council stepped in FY25 to save decades old programs that supported community composting, composting education, and outreach through New York nonprofits. The ongoing support from constituents shows how community composting impacts and engages the community.

I have attended Master Composting course at Queens Botanical Gardens where very educational and informational to help and best way to reduce NYC organic waste and how composting benefits our community gardens and my own garden. I also contributing my organic food waste via Astoria Pug, an organization collecting waste and deliver to Queens Botanical Gardens, where I then receive their organic compost soil for my own garden. A beautiful local cycle. This cycle is terrific way locally run organization to get organic compost and continue green spaces in our city. Also, I want stress these programs produce ORGANIC compost minus meat/bones where I truly want to save.

Community composting is a proven, community-powered climate solution. It reduces landfill waste, lowers emissions, enriches our city's soil, and strengthens our resilience. Curbside composting needs outreach and education, and community composting provides this. With EPA cuts and climate change denial at the federal level, we know that **acting locally can have a big impact**, and we've seen how the City Council can be part of that change.

This isn't just about compost. It's about environmental justice and climate resilience. It's about green jobs. It's about investing in a better future for all New Yorkers. I urge

Council to continue to **fund community composting**. Let's keep growing a cleaner, more resilient New York City—*together*.

Thank you,

Dana Chan

Support for Funding for Community Composting 2026-2027

To: The Honorable City Councilmember Justin Sanchez, Chair

From: Ellen M. Cooper, Manhattan District 2

Date: March 16, 2026

Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee,

From: Ellen M. Cooper, Master Composter 2023, Trash Academy graduate 2024, member of MSWAB Organics committee, former member of Manhattan SWAB

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Thank you to Chair Sanchez and City Council for restoring community composting funding in FY25 and continuing the funding for FY26. I am writing to strongly support **ongoing, stable funding for community composting** through Schedule C Council Initiative funding for Community Composting.

As a master composter, I had the opportunity to visit many composting sites around the city. I have seen first-hand the dedication, energy, extraordinary expertise and power of the composting community around the city, both paid and volunteer. It is inter-racial, inter-generational, knowledgeable and passionate.

I urge you to continue funding Community Composting. This is an essential part of New York's city-wide composting programs and would have a destructive effect on our environment if cut. These programs took decades to build and are now part of the fabric of our clean, just and healthy environment. It is such a tiny part of the budget, but the impact is huge. The city benefits from the thousands of dedicated citizens – both paid and volunteer - who make the compost program run, and from the millions of pounds of high-quality compost that makes our parks, gardens, street trees, air and neighborhoods healthier and flood-resistant. We should be INCREASING community composting, not eliminating it.

Curbside Composting in NYC is still in its infancy, but Community Composting is the beating heart of the program. They work hand in hand. The citizen outreach & education provided by hundreds of community composters is irreplaceable. There is a volunteer army who support the small staffs and help build the curbside program. The additional help and expertise, to educate and inspire citizens, provide food scrap drop-offs and compost giveaways, is essential. The more people who learn about composting through community composting advocates, the MORE likely they are to support the curbside program and spread the word about it.

If community compost ecosystem is destroyed/eliminated, it would take many years to restart it and build it back. If we are to address our climate crisis then community composting is one of the most basic, and non-negotiable programs we have. Thank you.

Ellen M. Cooper, Manhattan

From: [Emily McBride](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony for Sanitation Budget
Date: Friday, March 13, 2026 1:49:03 PM

Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee,

I'm Emily McBride, a resident of Community Board 2 in Downtown Brooklyn.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Thank you to Chair Sanchez and all of the City Council for restoring community composting funding in FY25 and continuing the funding for FY26. I am writing to strongly support **ongoing, stable funding for community composting** through Schedule C Council Initiative funding for Community Composting.

When Mayor Adams cut funding to community programs at DSNY, City Council stepped in FY25 to save decades-old programs that supported community composting, composting education, and outreach through New York nonprofits. The ongoing support from constituents shows how community composting impacts and engages the community.

Every Saturday, I carry my scraps from the week to the Ft Greene farmers market for drop off. This weekly ritual is one of my favorite parts of the week -- it allows me to make a tangible difference in the fight against climate change (as we know, food waste contributes ~10% of global greenhouse gases).

A few years ago, I also completed the Master Composter certification course. As a lifelong learner, this course was invaluable in connecting with my community and understanding the systems that allow for safe, accessible community composting in our city.

Community composting is a proven, community-powered climate solution. It reduces landfill waste, lowers emissions, enriches our city's soil, and strengthens our resilience. Curbside composting needs outreach and education, and community composting provides this. With EPA cuts and climate change denial at the federal level, we know that **acting locally can have a big impact**, and we've seen how the City Council can be part of that change.

This isn't just about compost. It's about environmental justice and climate resilience.

It's about green jobs. It's about investing in a better future for all New Yorkers. I urge Council to continue to **fund community composting**. Let's keep growing a cleaner, more resilient New York City—*together*.

Thank you,

Emily McBride

From: [Erin Stewart](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support for Funding for Community Composting
Date: Monday, March 16, 2026 4:55:41 PM

To: The Honorable City Councilmember Justin Sanchez,
Chair

From:

Date:

Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee,

I'm Erin Stewart -

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.
Thank you to Chair Sanchez and all of the City Council
for restoring community composting funding in FY25 and
continuing the funding for FY26. I am writing to strongly
support **ongoing, stable funding for community
composting** through Schedule C Council Initiative
funding for Community Composting.

When Mayor Adams cut funding to community programs
at DSNY, City Council stepped in FY25 to save decades
olds programs that supported community composting,
composting education, and outreach through New York
nonprofits. The ongoing support from constituents shows
how community composting impacts and engages the
community.

Community composting is a proven, community-powered climate solution. It reduces landfill waste, lowers emissions, enriches our city's soil, and strengthens our resilience. Curbside composting needs outreach and education, and community composting provides this. With EPA cuts and climate change denial at the federal level, we know that **acting locally can have a big impact**, and we've seen how the City Council can be part of that change.

This isn't just about compost. It's about environmental justice and climate resilience. It's about green jobs. It's about investing in a better future for all New Yorkers. I urge Council to continue to **fund community composting**. Let's keep growing a cleaner, more resilient New York City—*together*.

Thank you,

Erin Stewart

From: [Gabi Moore](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support for Funding for Community Composting
Date: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 2:06:03 PM

To: The Honorable City Councilmember Justin Sanchez, Chair
From: Gabi Moore
Date: 3/17/26

Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee,

I'm Gabi, concerned Brooklyn resident.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Thank you to Chair Sanchez and all of the City Council for restoring community composting funding in FY25 and continuing the funding for FY26. I am writing to strongly support **ongoing, stable funding for community composting** through Schedule C Council Initiative funding for Community Composting.

When Mayor Adams cut funding to community programs at DSNY, City Council stepped in FY25 to save decades olds programs that supported community composting, composting education, and outreach through New York nonprofits. The ongoing support from constituents shows how community composting impacts and engages the community.

Community composting is a proven, community-powered climate solution. It reduces landfill waste, lowers emissions, enriches our city's soil, and strengthens our resilience. Curbside composting needs outreach and education, and community composting provides this. With EPA cuts and climate change denial at the federal level, we know that **acting locally can have a big impact**, and we've seen how the City Council can be part of that change.

This isn't just about compost. It's about environmental justice and climate resilience. It's about green jobs. It's about investing in a better future for all New Yorkers. I urge Council to continue to **fund community composting**. Let's keep growing a cleaner, more resilient New York City—*together*.

Thank you,

Gabi

Support for Funding for Community Composting

To: The Honorable City Councilmember Justin Sanchez, Chair

From: Isaac Clerencia

Date: March 13th, 2026

Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee,

I'm Isaac Clerencia,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Thank you to Chair Sanchez and all of the City Council for restoring community composting funding in FY25 and continuing the funding for FY26. I am writing to strongly support **ongoing, stable funding for community composting** through Schedule C Council Initiative funding for Community Composting.

When Mayor Adams cut funding to community programs at DSNY, City Council stepped in FY25 to save decades old programs that supported community composting, composting education, and outreach through New York nonprofits. The ongoing support from constituents shows how community composting impacts and engages the community.

I use the food scrap drop off sites in McCarren and McGolrick weekly, which provides an even better outcome for my food scraps than the brown bins. The resulting compost is used in parks and also given back to community members. In addition the McGolrick drop off site often collects plastic food containers for reuse, which we also use regularly.

Community composting is a proven, community-powered climate solution. It reduces landfill waste, lowers emissions, enriches our city's soil, and strengthens our resilience. Curbside composting needs outreach and education, and community composting provides this. With EPA cuts and climate change denial at the federal level, we know that **acting locally can have a big impact**, and we've seen how the City Council can be part of that change.

This isn't just about compost. It's about environmental justice and climate resilience. It's about green jobs. It's about investing in a better future for all New Yorkers. I urge Council to continue to **fund community composting**. Let's keep growing a cleaner, more resilient New York City—*together*.

Thank you,

Isaac

From: [Isabella Vitti](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Community Composting Programs - written testimony
Date: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 2:50:57 PM

Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee,

My name is Isabella Vitti, resident of Bed-Stuy in Brooklyn.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Thank you to Chair Sanchez and all of the City Council for restoring community composting funding in FY25 and continuing the funding for FY26. I am writing to strongly support ongoing, stable funding for community composting through Schedule C Council Initiative funding for Community Composting.

When Mayor Adams cut funding to community programs at DSNY, City Council stepped in FY25 to save decades old programs that supported community composting, composting education, and outreach through New York nonprofits. The ongoing support from constituents shows how community composting impacts and engages the community.

For many years, I dropped off my food scraps at GrowNYC's collection points at farmer's markets. I felt great about the fact that my food waste could be turned into rich compost that can nourish plants and trees. Now my husband and I use BK Rot's food scrap pick-up service, which also has the added benefit of employing community youth.

Community composting is a proven, community-powered climate solution. It reduces landfill waste, lowers emissions, enriches our city's soil, and strengthens our resilience. Curbside composting needs outreach and education, and community composting provides this. With EPA cuts and climate change denial at the federal level, we know that acting locally can have a big impact, and we've seen how the City Council can be part of that change.

This isn't just about compost. It's about environmental justice and climate resilience. It's about green jobs. It's about investing in a better future for all New Yorkers. I urge Council to continue to fund community composting. Let's keep growing a cleaner, more resilient New York City—together.

Thank you,
Isabella Vitti

Subject: Testimony Regarding Support for Funding for Community Composting for FY2027

To: The Honorable City Councilmember Justin Sanchez, Chair

Submitted for the New York City Council Budget and Oversight Hearings on the Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2027, Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management held on March 16, 2026 (File # T2026-1360)

March 16, 2025

Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee,

I am writing to advocate for continued and full funding for community composting programs in the Fiscal year 2027 budget.

First, thank you to Chair Sanchez and all of the City Council for restoring community composting funding in FY25 and continuing the funding for FY26. I am writing to strongly advocate for ongoing, stable funding for community composting through Schedule C Council Initiative funding for Community Composting.

I am writing as a long-time community garden member. Our community garden has an active composting program used by members of the garden and community. At home, and in my building, we are active composters. Curbside composting has reduced solid waste in the building by an incredible amount. Whereas our compost bins are full weekly, we only have enough solid waste to put the garbage bin out on the curb every 2 to 3 garbage days (1 to 1.5 weeks).

Community composting is a proven, community-based climate solution. It reduces landfill waste, lowers emissions, enriches our city's soil, and strengthens our resilience. Curbside composting needs outreach and education, and community composting provides this. With budget and climate change denial at the federal level, we know that acting locally can have a big impact, and we've seen how the City Council can be part of that change.

This isn't just about compost. It's about environmental justice and climate resilience. It's about green jobs. It's about investing in a better future for all New Yorkers. I urge Council to continue to fund community composting.

In closing, I thank the City Council for holding this hearing and the opportunity to provide written testimony. I thank you in advance for your continued support for community composting.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jane Zucker

██████████
Brooklyn, NY 11217
██████████

From: [Jean Fox](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Composting
Date: Saturday, March 14, 2026 9:24:02 PM

To whom it may concern:

I manage a tenement building on the upper west side. Composting is fantastic, and I will be very unhappy if it is diminished.

- It is the right thing to do for our waste stream and our planet, and has an educational and consciousness-raising aspect.
 - It is so great to not have stinky garbage -- neither in our apartments nor on the street.
 - it certainly helps reduce the vermine messing with trash that's still (sometimes) in bags at the curb.
- Three huge advantages.

Please continue the program!!!!

Jean Fox
Managing Agent

[REDACTED]
New York 10025
[REDACTED]

Support for Funding for Community Composting

To: The Honorable City Councilmember Justin Sanchez, Chair

From:

Date:

Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee,

I'm Jenny Poole, community composter at EL Garden in Bushwick.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Thank you to Chair Sanchez and all of the City Council for restoring community composting funding in FY25 and continuing the funding for FY26. I am writing to strongly support **ongoing, stable funding for community composting** through Schedule C Council Initiative funding for Community Composting.

When Mayor Adams cut funding to community programs at DSNY, City Council stepped in FY25 to save decades old programs that supported community composting, composting education, and outreach through New York nonprofits. The ongoing support from constituents shows how community composting impacts and engages the community.

I am a compost crew member at EL Garden in Bushwick. We are able to continue to collect food scraps from our neighbors and make compost to enrich or amend the soil in our garden through our partnership with Big Reuse. Without their support, we would not have access to wood chips and sawdust to mix with the food scraps. They have helped us bring in more volunteers to support our composting efforts, thus educating more of our neighbors about the benefits of keeping food scraps out of landfills. With the support of your funding, Big Reuse helped us replace our deteriorating compost bin system with new metal, rodent-proof bins! This will increase our food scrap collection capacity so that we can make more compost for our garden, neighbors and street trees! Turning food scraps into compost has enriched my life in so many ways and I appreciate your continued funding of such a vital resource. Please continue this funding into fiscal year 2026.

Community composting is a proven, community-powered climate solution. It reduces landfill waste, lowers emissions, enriches our city's soil, and strengthens our resilience. Curbside composting needs outreach and education, and community composting provides this. With EPA cuts and climate change denial at the federal level, we know that **acting locally can have a big impact**, and we've seen how the City Council can be part of that change.

This isn't just about compost. It's about environmental justice and climate resilience. It's about green jobs. It's about investing in a better future for all New Yorkers. I urge Council to continue to **fund community composting**. Let's keep growing a cleaner, more resilient New York City—*together*.

Thank you,

Jenny Poole

Individual Testimony

Mon. Mar 16th, Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management

Hi, my name is Jessica Wang. I am a resident in Jackson Heights, Queens and long-time composting advocate. I strongly urge City Council to continue funding the community organizations who do this important work in FY27 as a FY27 City Council initiative in Schedule C. The programs you're funding keep millions of pounds of organic waste from the landfill and return compost to the community, helping Big Reuse, BK Rot, Brooklyn Botanical Garden, The Brotherhood Sister Sol, Cafeteria Culture, Compost Power, Earth Matter, East New York Farms, Lower East Side Ecology Center, New York Botanical Garden, Queens Botanical Garden, Red Hook Farms, and Snug Harbor to do impactful community composting work across all five NYC boroughs.

Community composting should be considered an essential part of the city's environmental goals and zero waste plan. It's important for me to see my council member supporting community-based, environmental programs that make it easy for us to learn more about composting (through the Master Composter and other programs), receive curbside composting support for my building, attend volunteer events that connect us to compost as a beneficial resource for our communities, and receive free compost for our neighborhood gardens and street trees.

Climate change is already here, as we've seen increasingly extreme weather patterns in NYC and across the globe. Especially with EPA cuts and climate change denial on the federal level, we must take action to combat the climate crisis however we can on the citywide and statewide level, including community composting.

Thank you for making these critical resources possible.



To: The Honorable City Councilmember Justin Sanchez, Chair

From: Joanna Frank

Date: 3/13/26

Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee,

I'm Joanna Frank, a Queens resident and avid gardener.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Thank you to Chair Sanchez and all of the City Council for restoring community composting funding in FY25 and continuing the funding for FY26. I am writing to strongly support **ongoing, stable funding for community composting** through Schedule C Council Initiative funding for Community Composting.

When Mayor Adams cut funding to community programs at DSNY, City Council stepped in FY25 to save decades old programs that supported community composting, composting education, and outreach through New York nonprofits. The ongoing support from constituents shows how community composting impacts and engages the community.

It's wonderful to be part of a cyclical economy where my food scraps become usable compost available to residents at no cost. Last summer after replacing our lead pipes, the garden was totally destroyed; but a trip to sanitation and 8 bags of compost later, my little yard is doing better than ever!

Community composting is a proven, community-powered climate solution. It reduces landfill waste, lowers emissions, enriches our city's soil, and strengthens our resilience. Curbside composting needs outreach and education, and community composting provides this. With EPA cuts and climate change denial at the federal level, we know that **acting locally can have a big impact**, and we've seen how the City Council can be part of that change.

This isn't just about compost. It's about environmental justice and climate resilience. It's about green jobs. It's about investing in a better future for all New Yorkers. I urge Council to continue to **fund community composting**. Let's keep growing a cleaner, more resilient New York City—*together*.

Thank you,

Joanna

From: [Kevin Burns](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Cc: Dstrict29@council.nyc.gov
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support Community Composting
Date: Thursday, March 19, 2026 11:21:58 AM

Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee,

Hello,

I am writing to strongly support ongoing, stable funding for community composting. I am a regular weekly contributor with a community composting program in Kew Gardens that is run by volunteers and supported by the Queens Botanical Garden.

Community composting is a proven climate solution. It reduces landfill waste, lowers emissions, enriches our city's soil, and strengthens our resilience. We've seen how the City Council can be part of that change, and we appreciate the support it has given so far.

This isn't just about compost; it's about investing in a better future for all New Yorkers because supporting organic compost is just one part of the process that enriches our community through organic gardening, compost teaching programs along with awareness and community food support programs.

I urge the Council to continue to fund community composting.

Thank you,

Kevin Burns
Kew Gardens, Queens
District 29

From: [Leigh Celentano](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support for Funding for Community Composting
Date: Monday, March 16, 2026 2:10:18 PM

To: The Honorable City Councilmember Justin Sanchez, Chair
From: Leigh Celentano
Date: 16 Mar 2026

Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee,

My name is Leigh Celentano and I am a 20 plus year resident of NYC, with the last 15 years in Greenpoint, Brooklyn.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Thank you to Chair Sanchez and city council for restoring community composting funding in 2025 and continuing the funding in 2026. I strongly support **ongoing, stable funding for community composting** through Schedule C Council Initiative funding for community composting.

When Mayor Adams cut funding to community programs at DSNY, City Council stepped in to save decades-old programs that supported community composting, composting education, and outreach through New York nonprofits. The ongoing support from constituents shows how community composting impacts and engages the community.

My building was in the pilot program for brown bin curbside composting in 2019. When curbside composting was cut in 2020 when Covid started, it was truly devastating to see all of the hard work and education on the benefits of composting be negatively impacted. We relied on community composting at the park during that time, which managed to continue to collect despite numerous issues. Even though we now have our brown bins back, we often use the community composting collection sites at our local park on the weekends, for overflow.

Not everyone has access to brown bin curbside composting. I discovered that a woman on my block was using our brown bin, because her landlord refused to

participate in brown bin collection. I educated her on the existence of drop-off at the local park on Sundays and she was so thankful to have that information and resource. The presence of community composting at our parks is a visual reminder of NYC's commitment to composting. The community composting program goes hand-in-hand with the brown bin collection program. We need both.

I have volunteered at community compost events and plan to do so again in 2026. I urge you to put NYC at the forefront of environmental and climate solutions.

Community composting is a proven, community-powered climate solution. It reduces landfill waste, lowers emissions, enriches our city's soil, and strengthens our resilience. Curbside composting needs outreach and education, and community composting provides this. With EPA cuts and climate change denial at the federal level, we know that **acting locally can have a big impact**, and we've seen how the City Council can be part of that change.

This isn't just about compost. It's about environmental justice and climate resilience. It's about green jobs. It's about investing in a better future for all New Yorkers. I urge Council to continue to **fund community composting**. Let's keep growing a cleaner, more resilient New York City—*together*.

Thank you,

Leigh Celentano

Support for Funding for Community Composting

To: The Honorable City Councilmember Justin Sanchez, Chair
From: Lisa Puttagio
Date: 3/14/26

Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Thank you to Chair Sanchez and all of the City Council for restoring community composting funding in FY25 and continuing the funding for FY26. I am writing to strongly support **ongoing, stable funding for community composting** through Schedule C Council Initiative funding for Community Composting.

When Mayor Adams cut funding to community programs at DSNY, City Council stepped in FY25 to save decades old programs that supported community composting, composting education, and outreach through New York nonprofits. The ongoing support from constituents shows how community composting impacts and engages the community.

In the past I have used the food scrap drop-off sites, have volunteered with composting efforts and have taken advantage of the wonderful compost givebacks. I believe it is a valuable local community resource.

Community composting is a proven, community-powered climate solution. It reduces landfill waste, lowers emissions, enriches our city's soil, and strengthens our resilience. Curbside composting needs outreach and education, and community composting provides this. With EPA cuts and climate change denial at the federal level, we know that **acting locally can have a big impact**, and we've seen how the City Council can be part of that change.

This isn't just about compost. It's about environmental justice and climate resilience. It's about green jobs. It's about investing in a better future for all New Yorkers. I urge Council to continue to **fund community composting**. Let's keep growing a cleaner, more resilient New York City—*together*.

Thank you,

Lisa Puttagio

Support for Funding for Community Composting

To: The Honorable City Councilmember Justin Sanchez, Chair

From: Dr. Lois Wilcken

Date: 15 March 2026

Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee,

My name is Lois Wilcken. I was born and raised in New York and have never left the City.

Thank you for this golden opportunity to provide testimony. Thank you to Chair Sanchez and all of the City Council for restoring community composting funding in FY25 and continuing the funding for FY26. I am writing to strongly support **ongoing, stable funding for community composting** through Schedule C Council Initiative funding for Community Composting.

Mayor Adams tried to set us back when he cut funding to community programs at DSNY. The City Council, however, intervened in FY25, saving decades well-established and highly popular programs: community composting, composting education, and outreach through New York nonprofits. The ongoing popularity among your constituents shows how community composting impacts and engages us.

The degradation of our ecosystems becomes more and more visible every year to a growing number of constituents. Community composting is a proven, community-powered climate solution. It reduces landfill waste, lowers emissions, enriches our city's soil, and strengthens our resilience. Curbside composting needs outreach and education, and community composting provides this. With EPA cuts and climate change denial at the federal level, we know that **acting locally can have a big impact**, and we've seen how the City Council can be part of that change.

This isn't just about compost. It's about environmental justice and climate resilience. It's about green jobs. It's about investing in a better future for all New Yorkers. Most of all, it's about re-connecting with the planet (and the City) we love. I urge Council to continue to **fund community composting**. Let's keep growing a cleaner, more resilient New York City—*together*.

Thank you,

Lois Wilcken, Ph.D.

From: [Marci Iacobucci](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support for Funding for Community Composting
Date: Monday, March 16, 2026 3:24:06 PM

Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee,

My name is Marci Iacobucci and I live in Midwood, Brooklyn.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony via email as I was unable to attend the March 16 budget hearing in person.

I also want to thank you for restoring community composting funding in FY25 and continuing the funding for FY26. I am writing to strongly support **ongoing, stable funding for community composting** through Schedule C Council Initiative funding for Community Composting.

When Mayor Adams cut funding to community programs at DSNY, City Council stepped in FY25 to save decades old programs that supported community composting, composting education, and outreach through New York nonprofits. The ongoing support from constituents shows how community composting impacts and engages the community.

Community composting is a proven, community-powered climate solution. It reduces landfill waste, lowers emissions, enriches our city's soil, and strengthens our resilience. Curbside composting needs outreach and education, and community composting provides this. With EPA cuts and climate change denial at the federal level, we know that **acting locally can have a big impact**, and we've seen how the City Council can be part of that change.

This isn't just about compost. It's about environmental justice and climate resilience. It's about green jobs. It's about investing in a better future for all New Yorkers. I urge Council to continue to **fund community composting**. Let's keep growing a cleaner, more resilient New York City—*together*.

Thank you,

Marci Iacobucci

To: The Honorable City Councilmember Justin Sanchez, Chair

From: Maria Fernandez

Date: 3/16/2026

Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee,

I'm Maria Fernandez and I reside in Astoria, Queens.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Thank you to Chair Sanchez and all of the City Council for restoring community composting funding in FY25 and continuing the funding for FY26. I am writing to strongly support ongoing, stable funding for community composting through Schedule C Council Initiative funding for Community Composting.

When Mayor Adams cut funding to community programs at DSNY, City Council stepped in FY25 to save decades old programs that supported community composting, composting education, and outreach through New York nonprofits. The ongoing support from constituents shows how community composting impacts and engages the community.

I also currently volunteer with Astoria Pug a nonprofit that is local community composting organization based in Astoria, Queens. This organization was vital during the public health crisis in stepping up to fill the gap when DSNY shutdown the compost drop off sites. Astoria Pug still remains crucial for community compost because they collaborate with Queens Botanical Garden in order to use it for their gardens.

Various media outlets have exposed the fact that the material from Smart NYC bins and brown bins is not being composted. DSNY deceitfully told us that the material was being composted.

Instead, the vast majority of it is being flared off in Greenpoint. This is one of the worst cases of greenwashing.

Community compost is far from inefficient.

Community composting is not about metrics- the same metrics MAB and DSNY use as proof of inefficiency. It is about building momentum and trust in a program that is meant to be widely accessible without any glitchy apps or gimmicks.

It is about making habits second nature, like brushing your teeth. The food scraps collected at community drop-off sites are turned to compost real compost, and that final product is used for soil amendment within our parks, community gardens, urban farms, schools.

Community composting is a proven, community-powered climate solution. It reduces landfill waste, lowers emissions, enriches our city's soil, and strengthens our resilience. Curbside composting needs outreach and education, and community composting provides this. With EPA cuts and climate change denial at the federal level, we know that acting locally can have a big impact, and we've seen how the City Council can be part of that change.

This isn't just about compost. It's about environmental justice and climate resilience. It's about green jobs. It's about investing in a better future for all New Yorkers. I urge Council to continue to fund community composting. Let's keep growing a cleaner, more resilient New York City—together.

Thank you,

Maria Fernandez

Astoria, NY

From: [Marilyn Kraemer](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Community Compost Support
Date: Thursday, March 19, 2026 8:54:38 AM

[REDACTED]

Hello Chair Sanchez and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to strongly support ongoing, stable funding for community composting. I am a regular weekly volunteer with a community composting program in Kew Gardens that is run by volunteers and supported by the Queens Botanical Garden.

Community composting is a proven climate solution. It reduces landfill waste, lowers emissions, enriches our city's soil, and strengthens our resilience. We've seen how the City Council can be part of that change, and we appreciate the support it's been given in the past.

This isn't just about compost; it's about investing in a better future for all New Yorkers because supporting organic compost is just one part of the process that enriches our community through organic gardening, compost teaching programs along with awareness and community food support programs. I urge the Council to continue to fund community composting.

Thank you,
Marilyn Kraemer

From: [Mary Cannone Scott](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Kew Gardens Community Compost Collection
Date: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 6:32:45 PM

Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee,

Good day.

I am writing to strongly support ongoing, stable funding for community composting. I am a regular weekly contributor with a community composting program in Kew Gardens that is run by volunteers and supported by the Queens Botanical Garden.

Community composting is a proven climate solution. It reduces landfill waste, lowers emissions, enriches our city's soil, and strengthens our resilience. We've seen how the City Council can be part of that change, and we appreciate the support it's been given in the past.

This isn't just about compost; it's about investing in a better future for all New Yorkers because supporting organic compost is just one part of the process that enriches our community through organic gardening, compost teaching programs along with awareness and community food support programs. I urge the Council to continue to fund community composting.

*Thank you,
Mary Cannone Scott and Jefferson Scott*

From: [Matthew Racz](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support for Funding for Community Composting
Date: Monday, March 16, 2026 9:44:57 PM



Support for Funding for Community Composting

To: The Honorable City Councilmember Justin Sanchez, Chair
From: Matthew G Racz
Date: **March 16th, 2026**

Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. I am writing to strongly support **ongoing, stable funding for community composting** through Schedule C Council Initiative funding for Community Composting.

There are large bodies of research illustrating the effectiveness of composting. One pillar of composting is that it keeps soil, pollinators, agriculture, trees, and various other components of ecosystems native. The more native everything is, the more efficiently and effectively they work together. This saves tons of money in the long term, as the extant ecological processes of various plants and animals are allowed to be as productive as possible within the city.

Composting also has proven health benefits for all of your constituents, and is the basis for dozens upon dozens of volunteer groups throughout NYC and across the world. Many of these groups are based at parks, community gardens and farms, and in many NYC neighborhoods. They lack a common unity, instead relying on being discovered or via word of mouth, and often attract niche crowds who are already “in the loop.”

Support for composting efforts will benefit the many grassroots and neighborly organizations which share a common goal of saving the taxpayer money and bettering NYC’s urban ecosystems. Support for composting efforts will better position and advantage beneficial ecological services—services that produce and save significant amounts of money, raise the quality of life, and which happen in the background of everyone’s lives without problems nor interference. Most people

already support composting, its implementation, and its aims. Won't you?

Thank you,

Matthew G Racz

To: The Honorable City Councilmember Justin Sanchez, Chair

From: Morgan Sobel

Date: 3/13/26

Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee,

I'm Morgan Sobel, a writer and Brooklyn resident for 40 years.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Thank you to Chair Sanchez and all of the City Council for restoring community composting funding in FY25 and continuing the funding for FY26. I am writing to **strongly support ongoing, stable funding for community composting** through Schedule C Council Initiative funding for Community Composting.

As a member of McCarren Park community garden and an active user of food scrap drop-off sites in North Brooklyn, I cannot overstate how beneficial composting is to our community. We've been able to use fresh, rich compost to revitalize our demonstration garden in McCarren Park each season, and with the produce we harvest each summer, we can stock free fridges throughout North Brooklyn, providing much needed nutrition to the underserved. In addition, drop-off sites provide compost give back days, benefitting any neighbor with houseplants (of which there are many.)

When Mayor Adams cut funding to community programs at DSNY, City Council stepped in FY25 to save decades old programs that supported community composting, composting education, and outreach through New York nonprofits. The ongoing support from constituents shows how community composting impacts and engages the community.

Community composting is a proven, community-powered climate solution. It reduces landfill waste, lowers emissions, enriches our city's soil, and strengthens our resilience. Curbside composting needs outreach and education, and community composting provides this. With EPA cuts and climate change denial at the federal level, we know that **acting locally can have a big impact**, and we've seen how the City Council can be part of that change.

This isn't just about compost. It's about environmental justice and climate resilience. It's about green jobs. It's about investing in a better future for all New Yorkers. I urge Council to continue to **fund community composting**. Let's keep growing a cleaner, more resilient New York City—together.

Thank you,

Morgan Sobel

From: [Nicholas Kunzig](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support for Funding for Community Composting
Date: Monday, March 16, 2026 9:44:28 PM

Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee,

I'm Nicholas Kunzig, a concerned citizen and composter in my personal capacity.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Thank you to Chair Sanchez and all of the City Council for restoring community composting funding in FY25 and continuing the funding for FY26. I am writing to strongly support **ongoing, stable funding for community composting** through Schedule C Council Initiative funding for Community Composting.

When Mayor Adams cut funding to community programs at DSNY, City Council stepped in FY25 to save decades olds programs that supported community composting, composting education, and outreach through New York nonprofits. The ongoing support from constituents shows how community composting impacts and engages the community.

Community composting is a proven, community-powered climate solution. It reduces landfill waste, lowers emissions, enriches our city's soil, and strengthens our resilience. Curbside composting needs outreach and education, and community composting provides this. With EPA cuts and climate change denial at the federal level, we know that **acting locally can have a big impact**, and we've seen how the City Council can be part of that change.

This isn't just about compost. It's about environmental justice and climate resilience. It's about green jobs. It's about investing in a better future for all New Yorkers. I urge Council to continue to **fund community composting**. Let's keep growing a cleaner, more resilient New York City—*together*.

Thank you,

Nicholas Kunzig

From: [Nicole Zeiss](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support for Funding of Community Composting!
Date: Friday, March 13, 2026 7:31:40 PM

Dear City Council,

I know we have some budget problems and that you are holding hearings. Thank you thank you for funding community composting last year and this year. As we look ahead, please don't cut it in the next budget! We need this as a consistent part of the city's infrastructure!

As you know, food scraps are a huge portion of the city's garbage and community composting is a very effective way for all of us to continue to deal with it. Organic waste gets picked up either in our trash, in our individual composting, or at community sites, and that all costs money. Continuing to support community composting deals with this part of our trash stream in a positive way and keeps the community educated and moving forward, rather than backwards.

Please keep the progress growing for a healthier, more sustainable, more resilient NYC!

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole Zeiss
Brooklyn, NY
11215

To: The Honorable City Councilmember Justin Sanchez, Chair

From: Nina Meledandri

Date: 3/17/26

re: Testimony for the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management - 3/16/2026 10:30 AM

Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee,

My name is Nina Meledandri, I am a life long New Yorker and an almost life long composter. From worm boxes under my kitchen counter to compost drums, from carting compost on my bike to greenmarkets & community gardens to bringing my kitchen canister to the corner orange bin in my PJs, composting has connected me to nature whilst living in the heart of the City.

I thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony and I am grateful to you Chair Sanchez and all of the City Council for restoring community composting funding in FY25 and continuing the funding for FY26. I am writing to strongly support ongoing, stable funding for community composting through Schedule C Council Initiative funding for Community Composting.

When Mayor Adams cut funding to community programs at DSNY, City Council stepped in FY25 to save decades olds programs that supported community composting, composting education, and outreach through New York nonprofits. The ongoing support from constituents shows how community composting impacts and engages the community.

While we all can appreciate the benefits of commercial grade composting, nothing replaces the joy, educational experience, efficient, earth replenishing, benefits of community composting. I find it so important that I not only separate food scraps from the rest of my kitchen trash, I now must have two compost streams, one for the commercial NYC pick up and one for my personal composting with the overflow going to community compost sites. (My husband is close to having me committed).

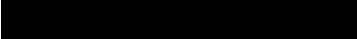
Community composting is a proven, community-powered climate solution. It reduces landfill waste, lowers emissions, enriches our city's soil, and strengthens our resilience. Curbside composting needs outreach and education, and community composting provides this. With EPA cuts and climate change denial at the federal level, we know that acting locally can have a big impact, and we've seen how the City Council can be part of that change.

This isn't just about compost. It's about environmental justice and climate resilience. It's about green jobs. It's about investing in a better future for all New Yorkers. I urge Council to continue to fund community composting. Let's keep growing a cleaner, more resilient New York City— together.

Thank you,
Nina Meledandri



Brooklyn, NY 11216



From: [Ronald Tirino](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] support community compost
Date: Monday, March 16, 2026 10:24:31 PM

Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee,

Hello,

I am writing to strongly support ongoing, stable funding for community composting. I am a regular weekly contributor with a community composting program in Kew Gardens that is run by volunteers and supported by the Queens Botanic Garden.

Ronald Tirino

March 18, 2026

Dear Chair Sanchez and Sanitation and Solid Waste Management Committee members and staff,

I am writing about the FY 27 budget hearing held Monday, March 16, 2026. I was impressed once again with the youth who testified from their classroom via Zoom. They truly are the future.

I have four areas of comment regarding the hearing and budget related to composting.

1. **Smart Bins:** DSNY Acting Commissioner Lojan responded to questions about the 400 Smart Composting Bins but did not commit to adding more, but merely possibly shifting them based on usage. The City should add more of these bins. People want to use them, especially because their buildings do not have enough or any brown bins.
2. **Fines:** There was very little discussion about what is going on with fines. 41,000 summons, 500 violations in CY26, did I hear that right? This Committee should be aware that there is inequity in how the fines are given out.
 - a. I know of a building with 500 apartments and just one brown bin. The bin is put out, so the building is compliant but this is not the spirit of the mandatory composting law.
 - b. Some homeowners who compost in their backyards or at a community garden have received warnings for not putting a brown bin out. They should not be fined.
3. **Outreach:** Despite Josh Goodman's claim that he is "Mr. Outreach", the lack of quality outreach to buildings and New Yorkers about composting continues to be a concern. He told Councilmember Hanif there is a \$2 million dollar grant 'starting today' but no follow-up was asked about that. Likewise, "800,000 doors have been knocked on." This most likely means that flyers were left at or mailed to residents. None of this is the same as in-person, face-to-face communication in same language to help people meet the requirements of this law.
4. **FSDOs:** Several people testified about the community composting supported through City Council members, not DSNY. I urge you to continue this funding but add back to DSNY or another agency. Currently only five greenmarkets in NYC have FSDOs compared to nearly 60 prior to budget cuts by the previous administration. I also am glad to see you have signed on to Councilmember Nurse's amendments regarding the Zero Waste Act requirements related to FSDOs in each borough.

Please be an advocate for those of us who want NYC to divert food scraps from the landfill and create nutrient-rich compost for our trees, gardens, and parks. We're relying on your leadership of this committee.

Thank you for reading this testimony.

Ruth G
Queens

P.S. I was surprised the last person to testify was not interrupted with the standard reminder to stay on topic. His song was not on topic and was full of hate speech. Even he looked surprised he wasn't cut off.

New York City Council
Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management
Hearing on the Fiscal Year 2027 Preliminary Budget

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

My name is Sage Mason. I am a lifelong New Yorker and East Harlem resident. I have become intimately familiar with the Preliminary Budget and its impact on my community by serving as the Chair of the District Needs & Budget Committee of Manhattan Community Board 11, but I am submitting this testimony solely in my individual capacity. I want to begin by expressing my utmost gratitude to the men and women who've devoted their careers to the Department of Sanitation. From clearing snow all night long during blizzards, to sweeping confetti from the streets after parades, to collecting the garbage every morning, sanitation workers are the lifeblood and unsung heroes who allow our City to function and prosper. My testimony below primarily concerns the level of service in my district compared to other districts as a result of budgetary and staffing discrepancies, and is not intended to disparage the work of the public servants of DSNY.

Despite the efforts of DSNY, East Harlem is not clean enough. On too many of our corridors (especially 110th Street, 116th Street, 125th Street, and many of the avenues in between) you will find torn garbage bags in the street, overflowing trash cans, scattered debris, canine and human waste, and sidewalks riddled with litter. When people visit from other neighborhoods, they often mention these conditions as the first thing they notice. Our residents should not have to accept this as normal, and we should get to the bottom of why this indignity persists.

Looking at the Mayor's Preliminary Budget and related materials, Manhattan District 11 appears to receive among the lowest funding levels in the borough. In recent conversations with DSNY, I was told that district staffing and service levels are driven largely by the amount of waste set out for collection in the prior year. In the past, I have also been told that funding is influenced by the number of serviceable streets in the district, which can disadvantage East Harlem because our neighborhood includes a large concentration of public housing developments that interrupt the street grid even while housing large numbers of residents. Whatever the precise formula, the allocation to District 11 does not seem to capture the lived sanitation conditions in East Harlem. District 11 is an extremely dense district with major commercial corridors, heavy pedestrian and vehicle traffic, and a built environment that generates substantial sanitation needs. In a neighborhood like ours, service cannot be measured only by the volume of curbside garbage bags.

What is especially concerning is that the staffing numbers in the preliminary budget seem out of sync with other districts. District 11 appears to have 25 fewer budgeted positions than District 10 while receiving only about \$500,000 less in expense funding, and 10 fewer positions than District 9 despite receiving roughly \$500,000 MORE. We have a higher population than both of these peer districts. From our perspective, the issue increasingly looks less like a pure funding problem and more like a staffing and deployment problem. Other districts appear to either get more resources, or get more visible cleanliness from similar resources compared to East Harlem. I therefore urge the Council to take a closer look at whether DSNY staffing levels and deployment models in District 11 adequately reflect the density, pedestrian traffic, and sanitation challenges of our community.¹

¹ For greater transparency into the actual number of employees in a given district and their roles, it would help if service-district-level employee data was publicly available. Currently, NYC OpenData only provides this information at the

I also want to emphasize that in many of the worst areas, the problem is not just collection, but also litter and a lack of enforcement. I appreciate DSNY's recent engagement on these issues and its willingness to consider expanded enforcement, but I don't expect this to yield tangible change without increased resources or structural reform. I encourage the Council to support increased resources for enforcement against littering, illegal dumping, improper setouts, and property owners who fail to keep their sidewalks clean. Clean streets require not only collection service, but consistent accountability for the behaviors that cause unsanitary conditions in the first place.

Finally, sanitation is not only about funding, staffing, and equipment – it is also about fostering a professional culture and pride in public service. Sanitation workers are among the most visible public servants in our neighborhoods, and I hope they see themselves as stewards of the communities they serve. Every district should have sufficient staffing, so that when a bag breaks or some garbage spills from a collection bin while being tossed into a truck, the worker can comfortably pick up all of the debris without stressing about messing up a schedule and the availability of overtime. When a DSNY employee sees someone litter, even if the employee is not an enforcement agent, the offense should be reported and addressed through enforcement rather than ignored. Clean streets require resources, but they also require care, accountability, and a commitment to doing the job with the level of pride that New Yorkers should expect in the greatest city in the world, and many of the DSNY employees I know expect of themselves. To the extent it doesn't already, DSNY should train, evaluate, and seek feedback from its employees with these principles in mind.

East Harlem deserves clean streets, effective enforcement, and sanitation service that reflects both the needs and the dignity of the community. I look forward to continuing to engage with the City Council, the Mayor, and DSNY to achieve that goal.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Sincerely,

Sage A. Mason

borough-level, so members of the public have no visibility into exactly what they're getting out of the expense funds allocated to their district (for example, perhaps only a fraction of the 65 positions budgeted to District 11 are filled, or perhaps a disproportionate number of these positions are filled by employees in administrative roles rather than direct service roles, etc.).

Support for Funding for Community Composting

To: The Honorable City Councilmember Justin Sanchez, Chair

From: Sandye Renz

Date: 3/13/26

Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee,

I'm Sandye Renz. I have lived in Gowanus, Brooklyn for over 35 years and I compost.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Thank you to Chair Sanchez and all of the City Council for restoring community composting funding in FY25 and continuing the funding for FY26. I am writing to strongly support **ongoing, stable funding for community composting** through Schedule C Council Initiative funding for Community Composting.

When Mayor Adams cut funding to community programs at DSNY, City Council stepped in FY25 to save decades olds programs that supported community composting, composting education, and outreach through New York nonprofits. The ongoing support from constituents shows how community composting impacts and engages the community.

When community composting was stopped during COVID I began working at The Big Reuse compost site at The Salt Lot in Gowanus. It was heartening and amazing how much community support this composting endeavor received.

Composting is an accessible, easy and cost efficient way to curtail our extensive environmental woes. Nothing should go in a land fill.

Community composting is a proven, community-powered climate solution. It reduces landfill waste, lowers emissions, enriches our city's soil, and strengthens our resilience. Curbside composting needs outreach and education, and community composting provides this. With EPA cuts and climate change denial at the federal level, we know that **acting locally can have a big impact**, and we've seen how the City Council can be part of that change.

This isn't just about compost. It's about environmental justice and climate resilience. It's about green jobs. It's about investing in a better future for all New Yorkers. I urge Council to continue to **fund community composting**. Let's keep growing a cleaner, more resilient New York City—*together*.

Thank you,

Sandye Renz



Brooklyn, NY 11215

From: [Sho K](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Community Composting
Date: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 1:26:59 PM

Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee,

My Name is Shoshana Klein.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Thank you to Chair Sanchez and all of the City Council for restoring community composting funding in FY25 and continuing the funding for FY26. I am writing to strongly support **ongoing, stable funding for community composting** through Schedule C Council Initiative funding for Community Composting.

When Mayor Adams cut funding to community programs at DSNY, City Council stepped in FY25 to save decades olds programs that supported community composting, composting education, and outreach through New York nonprofits. The ongoing support from constituents shows how community composting impacts and engages the community.

Community composting is a proven, community-powered climate solution. It reduces landfill waste, lowers emissions, enriches our city's soil, and strengthens our resilience. Curbside composting needs outreach and education, and community composting provides this. With EPA cuts and climate change denial at the federal level, we know that **acting locally can have a big impact**, and we've seen how the City Council can be part of that change.

This isn't just about compost. It's about environmental justice and climate resilience. It's about green jobs. It's about investing in a better future for all New Yorkers. I urge Council to continue to **fund community composting**. Let's keep growing a cleaner, more resilient New York City—*together*.

Thank you,

Shoshana Klein

From: [Kadison, Stephanie](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support for Funding for Community Composting - testimony
Date: Friday, March 13, 2026 12:51:36 PM

Support for Funding for Community Composting

To: The Honorable City Councilmember Justin Sanchez, Chair
From: Stephanie Kadison
Date: **March 13**

Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee,

I'm Stephanie Kadison, the Sustainability Coordinator and Advisor for my school's Green Team,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Thank you to Chair Sanchez and all of the City Council for restoring community composting funding in FY25 and continuing the funding for FY26. I am writing to strongly support **ongoing, stable funding for community composting** through Schedule C Council Initiative funding for Community Composting.

When Mayor Adams cut funding to community programs at DSNY, City Council stepped in FY25 to save decades olds programs that supported community composting, composting education, and outreach through New York nonprofits. The ongoing support from constituents shows how community composting impacts and engages the community.

My school, Bard High School Early College, was able to be a Food Scrap pick up for community composting for one semester, thanks to Big Reuse and community composting funding; and we continue to do Tree Care events with Big Reuse for the last two years. I have also personally used food scrap drop off sites around the city for the last 5 years and have partial credits towards becoming a Master Composter, thanks to the funding that was provided.

Community composting is a proven, community-powered climate solution. It reduces landfill waste, lowers emissions, enriches our city's soil, and strengthens our resilience. Curbside composting needs outreach and education, and community

composting provides this. With EPA cuts and climate change denial at the federal level, we know that **acting locally can have a big impact**, and we've seen how the City Council can be part of that change.

This isn't just about compost. It's about environmental justice and climate resilience. It's about green jobs. It's about investing in a better future for all New Yorkers. I urge Council to continue to **fund community composting**. Let's keep growing a cleaner, more resilient New York City—*together*.

Thank you,

Dr. Stephanie Kadison

Sustainability Coordinator for Bard High School Early College Queens

--

Stephanie Kadison
MfA Master Teacher
Biology Faculty
Bard High School Early College - Queens
30-20 Thomson Ave
Long Island City, NY 10111

Pronouns: she/her/hers

Check out our
[Immigrant Voices Magazine](#)

From: [Lana Pil](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Composting Program in Kew Gardens
Date: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 11:08:16 PM

Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee,

Hello,

I am writing to strongly support ongoing, stable funding for community composting. I am a regular weekly contributor with a community composting program in Kew Gardens that is run by volunteers and supported by the Queens Botanical Garden.

Community composting is a proven climate solution. It reduces landfill waste, lowers emissions, enriches our city's soil, and strengthens our resilience. We've seen how the City Council can be part of that change, and we appreciate the support it's been given in the past.

This isn't just about compost; it's about investing in a better future for all New Yorkers because supporting organic compost is just one part of the process that enriches our community through organic gardening, compost teaching programs along with awareness and community food support programs. I urge the Council to continue to fund community composting.

Thank you,

Svetlana Pilosova

From: [Talía Milgrom-Elcott](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Thank you for supporting composting
Date: Friday, March 13, 2026 6:15:14 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)

Dear Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony. My family has been composting since our kids were born, and the introduction of citywide composting has been a game changer. We're a family of five, with three teenagers, but we manage to only use one garbage bag a week in our kitchen because all our food is composted. It doesn't smell or leak, either. Thank you to Chair Sanchez and all of the City Council for restoring community composting funding in FY25 and continuing the funding for FY26. I am writing to strongly support **ongoing, stable funding for community composting** through Schedule C Council Initiative funding for Community Composting.

Best wishes,

Talía Milgrom-Elcott

██████, Brooklyn, 11215



Talía Milgrom-Elcott

Founder and ED, Beyond100K and Starfish Institute

You can also find me at <https://www.forbes.com/sites/taliamilgromelcott/>

www.beyond100K.org

www.starfishinstitute.org



P.S. Just released: [Charting a Path for Those Who Dream to Teach](#)

Launching Beyond100K's next chapter of collective work — **Dream to Teach**

Support for Funding for Community Composting

To: The Honorable City Councilmember Justin Sanchez, Chair

From: Tyler Herald

Date: March 16, 2026

Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee,

I'm Tyler Herald, a resident of Sunnyside, Queens

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Thank you to Chair Sanchez and all of the City Council for restoring community composting funding in FY25 and continuing the funding for FY26. I am writing to strongly support **ongoing, stable funding for community composting** through Schedule C Council Initiative funding for Community Composting.

I was so disappointed when Mayor Adams cut funding to community programs at DSNY, but was excited to see that City Council stepped in FY25 to save decades olds programs that supported community composting, composting education, and outreach through New York nonprofits. The ongoing support from constituents shows how community composting impacts and engages the community.

The program has been such a success it's been great to see in use throughout our city. I signed up for a bin as soon as I could and have been using it so much. Personally speaking, it's significantly reduced my trash output. It's also really comforting as someone who cares about the environment, climate, recycling, etc to know that I'm doing all I can in my own household to make better choices for our earth. Knowing that I'm helping to contribute in a positive way is so great!

Community composting is a proven, community-powered climate solution. It reduces landfill waste, lowers emissions, enriches our city's soil, and strengthens our resilience. Curbside composting needs outreach and education, and community composting provides this. With EPA cuts and climate change denial at the federal level, we know that **acting locally can have a big impact**, and we've seen how the City Council can be part of that change.

This isn't just about compost. It's about environmental justice and climate resilience. It's about green jobs. It's about investing in a better future for all New Yorkers. I urge Council to continue to **fund community composting**. Let's keep growing a cleaner, more resilient New York City—*together*.

Thank you,

Tyler Herald

From: [Andie](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support for Funding for Community Composting
Date: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 12:35:42 PM

To: The Honorable City Councilmember Justin Sanchez, Chair
From: Vanessa Nadal
Date: 03/17/2026

Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee,

I'm Vanessa Nadal, NYC Resident.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Thank you to Chair Sanchez and all of the City Council for restoring community composting funding in FY25 and continuing the funding for FY26. I am writing to strongly support **ongoing, stable funding for community composting** through Schedule C Council Initiative funding for Community Composting.

When Mayor Adams cut funding to community programs at DSNY, City Council stepped in FY25 to save decades old programs that supported community composting, composting education, and outreach through New York nonprofits. The ongoing support from constituents shows how community composting impacts and engages the community.

Community composting is a proven, community-powered climate solution. It reduces landfill waste, lowers emissions, enriches our city's soil, and strengthens our resilience. Curbside composting needs outreach and education, and community composting provides this. With EPA cuts and climate change denial at the federal level, we know that **acting locally can have a big impact**, and we've seen how the City Council can be part of that change.

This isn't just about compost. It's about environmental justice and climate resilience. It's about green jobs. It's about investing in a better future for all New Yorkers. I urge Council to continue to **fund community composting**. Let's keep growing a cleaner, more resilient New York City—*together*.

Thank you,

Vanessa

From: [Wesley Straton](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] community composting testimony
Date: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 2:20:02 PM

Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee:

My name is Wesley Straton, I am a bartender, novelist, and homeowner in Brooklyn, and I am writing to voice support for community composting in New York.

Composting is an essential part of our city's sanitation infrastructure, as well as a crucial piece of our fight against climate change. I have been composting my food scraps since 2019, when I lived in Bed-Stuy and relied on community composting at 462 Halsey Community Farm, and through Grow NYC. When I moved to Clinton Hill, I turned to Grow NYC exclusively, at the Grand Army greenmarket and at a weekly collection site on Carlton. I loved knowing that my food scraps were being used in my community, and loved collecting my bag or two of finished compost to use with my plants at home. Neither site has been in operation since Eric Adams slashed the programs, and while I am supposed to have access to curbside composting in my building, these laws are not currently being enforced, leaving my neighbors and myself without reliable access to compost collection: community, curbside, or otherwise.

Like many others, I began composting because of community composting outreach and education. I believe in the power of local action, and community composting is a perfect example of our neighborhoods working together to make our city a better place.

Thank you for restoring community composting in FY25 and continuing the funding for FY26. Please, please continue to do so. Now more than ever, we need to invest in a greener, better future for all New Yorkers.

Thank you,

Wesley

From: [whitney doherty](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support Composting
Date: Monday, March 16, 2026 12:45:18 PM



Support for Funding for Community Composting

To: The Honorable City Councilmember Justin Sanchez, Chair
From: Whitney Doherty
Date: 3/15/26

Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee,

I'm a long time NYC resident and an early adopter to composting. I have read extensively about its positive impacts in reducing landfill waste and contributing to the reduction of methane gas among other things that contribute to climate change.

Thank you to Chair Sanchez and all of the City Council for restoring community composting funding in FY25 and continuing the funding for FY26. I am writing to strongly support **ongoing, stable funding for community composting** through Schedule C Council Initiative funding for Community Composting.

When Mayor Adams cut funding to community programs at DSNY, City Council stepped in FY25 to save decades olds programs that supported community composting, composting education, and outreach through New York nonprofits. The ongoing support from constituents shows how community composting impacts and engages the community.

As an early adopter, we used the food scrap drop off center at the Union Square farmer's market beginning in early 2000s. Then when the city began pilot programs to test collection, we were not in a pilot neighborhood and continued to do so as we believe in the importance of getting our food waste out of the waste stream and recycling and composting as much as possible. We have now been practicing this for close to 25 years and know that everyone can adopt these practices for the good of our city, if it is funded and managed well.

Community composting is a proven, community-powered climate solution. It reduces

landfill waste, lowers emissions, enriches our city's soil, and strengthens our resilience. Curbside composting needs outreach and education, and community composting provides this. With EPA cuts and climate change denial at the federal level, we know that **acting locally can have a big impact**, and we've seen how the City Council can be part of that change.

This isn't just about compost. It's about environmental justice and climate resilience. It's about green jobs. It's about investing in a better future for all New Yorkers. I urge Council to continue to **fund community composting**. Let's keep growing a cleaner, more resilient New York City—*together*.

Thank you,

Whitney Doherty, Brooklyn NY

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Joe Antonelli

Address: _____

I represent: DSNY

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jashua Goodman

Address: _____

I represent: DSNY

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/16/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JUSTIN WOOD

Address: STATEN ISLAND 10301

I represent: NYLPI

Address: 151 W 30th, NY 10001

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/16/2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Christine Datz-Romero

Address: P.O. Box 20488 New York, NY 10009

I represent: Lower East Side Ecology Center

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Javier Lajan

Address: _____

I represent: DSNY

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ERIC GOLDSTEIN

Address: _____

I represent: NRDC -

Address: 26th St. NY, NY

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: March 16, 2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: RHONDA KEUSER

Address: _____

I represent: Cafeteria Culture

Address: E. 8th St. NY, NY

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: March 16, 2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mary Ellen Sullivan

Address: _____ Brooklyn

I represent: Brooklyn Solid Waste Adv Board

Address: 209 Joralemon St. BK

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1360 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Leon Feingold

Address: _____

I represent: House of Good Deeds

Address: 18 Avenue D

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

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

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rebeca Sabnam

Address: [redacted] New York NY 10009

I represent: Cafeteria Culture

Address: 402 E 8th St NY NY 10009

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

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

Date: 3-16-26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Justin Green

Address: [redacted] Brooklyn, NY 11205

I represent: BIG REUSE

Address: 1 12th St, Brooklyn, NY, 11215

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

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

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ellen Cooper

Address: [redacted]

I represent: myself

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Samere Rush

Address: _____

I represent: Cafeteria Culture

Address: Lower East Side Girls Club

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/16/2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Megan Ortiz

Address: _____

I represent: Cafeteria Culture

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sydney Scott

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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