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MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT - LS 11714

Title: A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to the posting of signs on the prohibition of leaving dog waste on the ground

Summary: This bill would require the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation to post signs at park entrances and facilities stating the rule requiring dog owners to remove waste and the penalties for violation. It would also require the Department of Transportation to post similar signs on sidewalks and pedestrian plazas in response to 311 complaints, in consultation with the Department of Sanitation. DOT would submit an annual report on sign postings.

Background

New York City is home to roughly 600,000 dogs across 530,000 households, producing an estimated 27,000 tons of waste every year. While the Pooper Scooper Law has been on the books since 1978 and carries fines of up to \$250, dog waste remains one of the most persistent quality-of-life complaints in the city. It is not just unsightly. Dog feces carry E. coli, Salmonella, and parasites like roundworms and hookworms, and the EPA classifies pet waste as an environmental pollutant because it washes bacteria into storm drains and waterways.

Current Process

DSNY issued just two summonses for canine waste in all of 2025, and only eight over the prior two years. Enforcement requires an officer to catch someone in the act, which officials themselves have called nearly impossible. Meanwhile, 311 complaints keep climbing: 1,622 in the first half of 2025 alone, up from 1,426 the year before. Early 2026, following this season's snowstorms, we saw an 81% spike over the same period in 2025, with 77 complaints filed on a single day in February alone. While laws exist, without any visible reminder in the places where violations happen most, compliance depends entirely on dog owner's good faith.

Solution

This bill takes a common-sense, data-driven approach. Signs in parks and at locations flagged by 311 complaints serve as both a reminder and a deterrent, putting public education exactly where the problem is worst. The data backs this up, as a recent analysis found that zip codes with more waste-bag dispensers had fewer complaints, while 51 of the city's 145 zip codes have no dispensers at all. Many of the most complaint-heavy neighborhoods lack any visible signage or infrastructure. This legislation fills that gap and includes an annual reporting requirement so the Council can track results. With 600,000 dogs and complaint volumes that show no sign of slowing, the City needs to do more than rely on a law that virtually no one is being held to. Targeted signage is a straightforward step toward cleaner, healthier streets for all New Yorkers.