Testimony of Anthony Pennolino, Chief of Department New York City Department of Sanitation

Hearing before the New York City Council Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management

Thursday, September 18, 2025 10:00 A.M.

Oversight Hearing: Ongoing Challenges with Street Cleanliness

Good afternoon, Chair Abreu and members of the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management. I am Anthony Pennolino, Chief of Department at the New York City Department of Sanitation, and I am joined today by Chief of Cleaning Operations Jeff Pitts and by Joshua Goodman, Deputy Commissioner, Public Affairs & Customer Experience.

When I joined the Department as a Sanitation Worker more than twenty years ago, the nature of our work was very different, with less technology, less data analysis, and bureaucratic red tape that meant some areas were not regularly cleaned. Every Sanitation Worker wanted to work hard and deliver a clean City, but that was hampered by a status quo that accepted less than perfect conditions in large parts of the City. Those days are over.

In recent years, we have doubled down on these core cleaning functions with significant additional resources while also adding several new initiatives: The creation of the Targeted Neighborhood Taskforce, Highway Unit, Precision Cleaning Unit and Graffiti Unit have been incredibly gratifying, as has the addition of specialized equipment to sweep our expanding network of protected bike lanes. Though there is more to do, as the parent of a young child I wake up every day and feel pride at the quality of life this Department is now working to deliver.

Allow me to provide a few examples.

CONTAINERIZATION

In October 2022, the Adams administration kicked off the Trash Revolution. Effective April 2023, set-out times for both residential and commercial waste became 8:00 PM, instead of 4:00 PM, one of the earliest set-out times in the country. Containerized waste could be set out two hours earlier at 6:00 PM, encouraging people to use containers. DSNY also changed our operations to collect more of the trash earlier, and together, this ended a practice by which one fifth of the trash was left out for almost a full day.

Just over one year ago, container rules went into effect for all businesses of every type in New York City. These rules require businesses to get their trash off the streets and into secure bins. We wrote 70,000 warnings to businesses as this rule went into effect. We have written tens of thousands of summonses since. This has resulted in broad compliance. Restaurants, delis, shops,

and other businesses on our commercial corridors now use bins to keep their streets clean and free of millions of pounds of trash.

The first containerization requirement for residential buildings in more than 50 years went into effect November 12, 2024. All buildings with 1-9 residential units are now required to use bins. This can be either their own, or the official NYC Bin. This program was designed thoughtfully so that these discounted bins would be a reasonable responsibility for most New York City property owners as part of the Trash Revolution.

To date, New Yorkers have purchased over 900,000 of these bins at www.bins.nyc or at NYC Home Depot locations. These bins have fundamentally altered the look and feel of our streets, replacing piles of black trash bags that attracted the rats and were unsightly, smelly obstacles for pedestrians. These bins may look like simple pieces of plastic, but they have led to double digit percentage decreases in rat sightings citywide, with sightings falling eight straight months in a row.

Starting June 2026, this will be the only bin permitted for lower-density residential trash, to facilitate safer, cleaner collection.

Containerization for businesses and for 1- to 9-unit residential buildings accounts for 70% of trash already covered by containerization requirements. We have a plan for the remaining 30%, which is already in action. We are currently collecting trash from 1,100 stationary on-street containers called Empire Bins in Manhattan Community District 9 as part of the first full-district containerization pilot. The pilot has taken those huge piles of trash bags generated by the largest buildings off the streets and, instead, is storing them in secure containers just like you would see in Europe, South America, or Asia. As Mayor Adams and Acting Commissioner Lojan announced this week, we plan to expand this pilot to Brooklyn Community District 2 in the coming months.

This containerization initiative for large buildings is happening faster than anyone thought possible.

ENFORCEMENT

While the Department of Sanitation will never enforce for enforcement's sake, during the last several years we have worked to hold property owners accountable for compliance with the very basic requirements around cleanliness. Property owners, our partners in maintaining street cleanliness, are required to maintain a clean sidewalk, to remove litter and debris from the first 18 inches into the street, and to set out waste at the proper time and in the proper receptacles. We target ongoing enforcement in the highest-density parts of the City, doubling down on this in the Council's designated Rat Mitigation Zones.

In addition to enforcing the basic rules of cleanliness outside every property in the City, we have implemented new strategies to combat two specific quality-of-life offenses.

The first is our camera enforcement approach to the ongoing problem of illegal dumping. Illegal dumping is defined in the law as the disposal from a vehicle of at least one cubic yard of material – approximately two large trash bags. This occurs in areas that dumpers consider to be "out of the way," like dead-end streets, underpasses, and, perhaps worst of all, alongside cemeteries.

For the first part of my career at DSNY, the Department did not have a meaningful enforcement strategy against the crime of illegal dumping. We just cleaned and cleaned over and over again, while violators continued to afflict neighborhoods like East New York, Glendale, and Hunts Point.

We have *significantly* stepped up illegal dumping surveillance under the Adams administration. Each illegal dumping summons starts at \$4,000. The violator is required to pay the cost of cleaning up the mess. Importantly, we impound the vehicles that are used to break the law, and both fines and storage fees must be paid before it is returned.

We are also using new strategies against abandoned or derelict vehicles. For years, complaints about these conditions could fall through the cracks because of bureaucratic confusion about whether a specific vehicle was responsibility of DSNY or NYPD. We have cut through these black holes of bureaucracy by working with the NYPD to create an interagency Abandoned Vehicle Task Force. This Task Force has led to thousands of additional vehicles removed from the streets, as reflected in the MMR.

But there are strategic gaps in our enforcement authority – areas where the Department of Sanitation does not have the tools we need to do our job. And the Council has the chance to help fill those gaps with legislation that's been introduced.

We strongly support the passage of Intro 11, sponsored by Council Member Bottcher, which will expand the hours of the day that DSNY may enforce commercial cleanliness rules. I will speak about this in more detail later in this testimony, but DSNY is disappointed today's hearing does not include a discussion of this bill, and we urge this Committee to add it to an upcoming hearing to support your stated goal of increased street cleanliness.

I do want to thank the Council for its support of state legislation to increase enforcement authority around alternate side parking. While the state legislation did not pass this year, we will continue to advocate for Albany to support clean streets by passing this necessary legislation. We appreciate your support.

I know many of you are rightfully concerned about selfish dog owners not picking up after their pets. As my colleagues have said here before, it is nearly impossible for us to enforce the law requiring dog owners to remove their pet's waste from the sidewalk because enforcement personnel has to visually observe the dog owner fail to remove the waste.

We understand this to be an important quality-of-life issue in many areas of the City. We have done patrols in areas with the highest number of complaints. We are exploring the use of mobile cameras to increase enforcement against these careless residents. We have also done – and continue to do – several ad campaigns and educational outreach on this issue.

CLEANING MORE AREAS THAN EVER BEFORE

Early in my career, DSNY did not have resources to clean areas such as medians, step streets, or underpasses on a regular schedule. No one was sure which agency was responsible for cleaning them in a sustained way. The status quo answer to the question, "why doesn't DSNY clean these areas" would be, "well, that's the way it's always been."

Status quo thinking is over. Since this administration created the first DSNY Highway Unit in 2023, we have added specialized highway cleaning equipment and implemented important highway safety trainings. This new unit has now cleaned 15 million pounds of debris off the highways, areas that visitors to our city often see first.

Another new unit, our Targeted Neighborhood Taskforce, provides regular cleaning to over 1700 areas that had been left out of prior plans. I guarantee there are 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 took management of the City's graffiti removal program, increasing the number of 311 Service Requests closed by 80%.

And our Precision Cleaning Initiative is meeting 21st century challenges. Just this summer we deployed to the Hub in the Bronx with a mobile command bus to ensure real-time cleaning as part of the interagency effort to restore safety and quality of life to that major intersection.

While this has always been a data-driven agency, we are using new technology to streamline public space cleaning. 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 means more areas of your district serviced in an even more timely manner.

LITTER BASKETS

There's one more thing each of you can do to help. Rethinking how the trash is stored does not only apply to waste set out for collection, but to public space trash as well. DSNY is proud that New York City's street corners now have approximately 5,000 litters baskets of the future, which we call the BetterBin. The old green mesh basket had become an icon over decades of use, but it is an icon of a different time.

The old baskets are full of holes that let garbage juice and odors out, while welcoming rats in. 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. We look forward to discussing other discretionary cleanliness spending that may work for your districts.

LEGISLATION

I will turn now to the three bills being considered today.

Intro 1349, sponsored by Council Member Dinowitz, would exempt any business that produces medical waste from being required to participate in the landmark and groundbreaking Commercial Waste Zone program. This program is getting real results for workers' rights, for pedestrian safety, and for sustainability, including by reducing vehicle miles traveled and emissions produced by commercial carters. Medical waste itself, which is handled by specialized carters, is already exempt.

Under this proposal, a pharmacy or hospital or veterinary practice that generates any amount of medical waste, large or small, wouldn't need to comply with this important piece of safety and workers' rights legislation. That means you might have major areas of a Commercial Waste Zone around hospital systems or clinics where the new rules don't apply at all. That means more trucks on the road and more fumes in the air.

The Commercial Waste Zone system is a complete reimagining of a troubled industry. The idea of exempting all the *regular* trash from a place that *also* produces medical waste would be the first step in eliminating the entire program – in walking back this law just as it is starting to get results. If that is the Council's intention, then certainly it is your right to proceed. But if you do not wish to undo the Commercial Waste Zone program, then please oppose this bill, as we do.

Intro 536, sponsored by Council Member Brannan, would require certain retail food stores to post notices on a food donation web portal concerning the availability of excess food, and arranging for the transportation and retrieval of such food. DSNY is interested in any opportunity to keep food waste out of landfill and to achieve this goal. Through the NYC Food Portal at DonateNYC, we already connect businesses and nonprofits with excess food to organizations that can use or redistribute it. However, it would require additional staff and resources to mandate more than 15,000 retail businesses to post food donations once a month. We support the spirit of bill and we hope to work with Council Member Brannan to align the bill with the Department's existing resource.

Intro 1370, sponsored by Council Member Stevens, would create an online submission system for complaints about illegal dumping. This already exists via 311 – googling "NYC 311 illegal dumping" should take you right to the page. We are happy to work with the Council Member on any changes to the existing system, but do not feel that new legislation is necessary.

Intro 1279, sponsored by Council Member Ayala, would delay containerization requirements for supplemental service providers by three years, to August 2028. DSNY has already engaged in more than one year of outreach around these rules, and this Council has allocated \$5 million to

BIDs and supplemental service providers in order to facilitate implementation. As you all know, businesses and many residents are required to containerize their waste. Extending this requirement to supplemental service providers has been done slowly, thoughtfully, and with substantial resources. Legalizing the placement of this trash in bags right on the street for three more years is a mistake, and we oppose this bill in order to get the streets clean.

As mentioned earlier, despite the stated goal of this hearing around street cleanliness, Intro 11, which would expand the hours of the day that DSNY may enforce commercial cleanliness rules, is not being heard today.

I want to be clear: Right now, all the commercial cleanliness rules can only be enforced during two hours each day. That limits our ability to keep every one of your district's clean via quality of life enforcement. Extending these hours, as Intro 11 seeks to do, would give DSNY more tools to do our job, and we again register our regret at the missed opportunity that is taking place by not hearing it today. This hearing includes multiple bills that would allow more trash on the streets, and does not include a bill that would allow us to take steps *against* this trash. It is very unfortunate.

We look forward to your questions and the opportunity to discuss street cleanliness concerns and strategies with you.



OFFICE OF THE BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

ANTONIO REYNOSO

Brooklyn Borough President

City Council Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management Testimony on Intro 1349 September 18, 2025

Good morning Chair Abreu and thank you for holding this hearing today. I am here representing Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso, who as Chair of the City Council's Sanitation Committee from 2014-2021 created the Commercial Waste Zones program alongside DSNY. Today, he wants to join DSNY, labor unions, commercial carters, and advocates in expressing his strong opposition to Intro 1349.

While Borough President Reynoso has voiced continued frustration with DSNY's rollout of the CWZ program, he remains committed to its full implementation. When all 20 zones are active and operating, the city will see a dramatic reduction in truck traffic and associated emissions from the waste industry, safer streets, improved worker protections, and less waste going to landfills. These goals remain as important, if not more so, as when the CWZ bill became law in 2019.

Yet Intro 1349 would dramatically undermine these goals. This bill would change the definition of "commercial establishment" in the CWZ law, with the intent of exempting any business that generates medical waste from having to contract with a selected carter. This is simply not necessary. Medical waste is already exempted from the CWZ law due to its unique pickup and disposal regulations. It is true that medical facilities such as hospitals generate both medical and non-medical waste; however, it is not necessarily true that this means they must contract with more than one carter. Many carters within the CWZ program offer specialized medical waste services or have the ability through the CWZ program to subcontract with a hauler that can.

Changing the definition of "commercial establishment" in the law is overly broad such that it would exempt thousands of businesses citywide from complying with CWZ. According to the State Department of Environmental Conservation, regulated businesses that generate medical waste include: hospitals, clinical laboratories, veterinarians, funeral homes, nursing homes, home health providers, physicians' offices, research laboratories, pharmaceutical companies, colleges and universities, blood banks, company infirmaries, and correctional facilities. This bill would create a dangerous precedent for carving out businesses from complying with the CWZ law unnecessarily, leading to more vehicle miles traveled, more greenhouse gas emissions, less oversight of worker safety and safe driving practices, and more waste in our landfills.

Borough President Reynoso encourages the Council NOT to move forward with Intro 1349, and to instead work together to ensure that the CWZ program continues its rollout to all five boroughs quickly and efficiently. Thank you.



Testimony in Opposition of Intro. 1349

Proposed Bill to Exclude Generators of Medical Waste from the CWZ Program

Good morning,

My name is Josh Haraf and I serve as Market Vice President for New York City at Action Environmental Services, a subsidiary of Interstate Waste Services. Thank you for the opportunity to deliver testimony respectfully opposing the adoption of Intro. 1349, a Bill which intends to exclude generators of regulated medical waste from the Commercial Waste Zones program. The historic passage of Local Law 199 ratified specific goals for New York City's commercial waste and recycling industry, including a reduction in vehicle congestion and emissions, the standardization of safety-focused operational practices, and an elevated commitment to customer service through transparent rates and written service agreements. Bill Intro. 1349 actively threatens the achievability of Local Law 199's key goals by introducing unnecessary exemptions for commercial businesses and a viable loophole for non-Awarded haulers to continue operating without CWZ standards.

The broad exemption of *any* generator of regulated medical waste from the CWZ program is an overcorrection to a non-existent problem. Per New York City's Administrative code, regulated medical waste is already exempt from the CWZ program. This distinction affords generators of regulated medical waste the ability to contract a specialty hauler to properly manage the specific material's collection and disposal, however entirely exempting these establishments from CWZ requirements neglects the volume of commercial refuse and recycling that they still produce. Hospitals, nursing homes, veterinary offices, blood banks, funeral homes, companies with infirmaries, tattoo parlors, and several other businesses produce regulated medical waste, however they also produce non-specialty waste and recycling. Medical waste collection companies can continue collecting these customers' medical material without Intro. 1349, however this Bill would allow commercial haulers without CWZ Awards or standards to continue collecting non-medical, commercial waste and recycling from these establishments, effectively contradicting Local Law 199's consolidation, operations, and customer service-focused goals.

Furthermore, this workaround for commercial businesses would irrevocably fracture the enforceability of the CWZ program. As written in the Administrative Code, the program's requirements are applied based on the type or quantity of waste generated by businesses, not the type of business. Intro. 1349 imposes broader risks for future exemptions of businesses that produce more than one waste type. If Intro. 1349 passes, what will stop future industries from requesting exemption from CWZ program requirements due to the production of multiple, regulated waste types?

- For example:
 - If a tattoo parlor or CVS disposes of sharp objects, are they exempt?
 - If a restaurant disposes of grease, can they be exempt?
 - o If federal agencies dispose of paper to be shredded, are they exempt?

The Commercial Waste Zones have only just begun rolling-out, and this unnecessary adjustment to the program's framework will jeopardize the system's overall success. Exempting generators





of regulated medical waste from CWZ program requirements defeats the program's key goals, so Action Environmental strongly recommends the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management to reject Intro. 1349 to preserve the longevity and positive potential of the CWZ program.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
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Testimony to Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management Oversight hearing

September 18, 2025

Board of Directors

Stuart Appelbaum President, Retail Wholesale Department Store Union

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Lucia Gomez, Political Director, NYC Central Labor Council

Bernadette Kelly, Consortium for Worker Education

Eunice Ko
Deputy
Director,
NYC
Environmental
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Alliance

Olivia Leirer Co-Director, New York Communities for Change

Juanita O. Lewis

Council Member Shaun Abreu, Chair New York City Committee on Sanitation and Waste Management

My name is Jenille Scott, and I am the Climate Director of ALIGN: The Alliance for a Greater New York. We bring together labor, climate, and community for a more just and sustainable New York. I am writing as one of the leading organizations of the Transform Don't Trash Coalition, which for over 10 years has been dedicated to transforming New York City's commercial trash industry by reducing waste and pollution, fostering clean and healthy communities for all New Yorkers, and creating better working conditions for our state's workers. Thank you to Chair Abreu and members of the Sanitation and Solid Waste Management committee for the opportunity to provide testimony today.

ALIGN and the Transform Don't Trash Coalition strongly oppose Intro 1349 of 2025 due to its broad exemption of health care facilities and other generators of medical waste from utilizing a designated waste hauler as required by Local Law 199 of 2019 (LL199). This bill is wholly unnecessary and excessive, as Local Law 199 already permits hospitals, nursing homes, and other generators of regulated medical waste to contract with any specialized medical waste company of their choosing, per the exclusion of medical waste from the definition of "commercial waste" in Local Law 199. Hospitals and health facilities generate massive amounts of non medical waste and rather than exempting them from the Commercial Waste Zone law (CWZ) and undermining the law, it should be used to incentivize them to reduce their waste so that the full benefits of the CWZ law can be realized.

Completely exempting these medical facilities undermines the extensive RFP process haulers underwent to be vetted and chosen by DSNY as required by LL199. This process was necessary, lengthy, and intricate to ensure haulers' environmental and worker safety practices, not to mention their quality of service, were up to standard. Intro 1349 would allow the facilities exempted in the bill to entirely subvert the law and choose haulers who were not vetted or chosen to be a designated hauler in the specific zone to collect this waste, undermining the multiple benefits that are central to the original commercial waste zones legislation: reductions in miles traveled by trucks and corresponding greenhouse gas emissions, worker protections in one of the

Executive Director Community Voices Heard

Jose Lopez Co-Executive Director, Make the Road NY most dangerous jobs in the city, waste reduction strategies and cleaner, safer environments for all New Yorkers.

Price was also a key factor in DSNY's selection criteria to maximize affordability, so healthcare facilities and other generators of medical waste may contract with both a medical waste hauler freely chosen by the facility and an approved commercial waste hauler cost-effectively. Allowing Intro 1349 to pass would mean allowing the extreme dangers to citizens across all five boroughs caused by the unregulated commercial waste industry, the very ills which Local law 199 of 2019 rectifies, to persist.

Thank you for the opportunity to raise our coalition's concerns regarding continued waste inequity in our city. We look forward to continuing our work together toward the highest possible environmental, safety, and customer protection standards across a new waste system.

Thank you, Jenille



APPROVED STORAGE AND WASTE HAULING, INC.

CT-BMW-027 • DEC PERMIT #3A-476 • NJ DEP #27163 • NYC TWC #0959 • EPA ID #NYR000076513

Thank you, Chair Abreu and Council Members, for the opportunity to speak on Intro 1349. My name is Charles Dippolito, Jr., owner of Approved Storage and Waste Hauling, a commercial and medical waste carting business that has operated in the New York City region since 1996.

I have appeared before this committee in the past to alert you to what I believe was a significant oversight in the Commercial Waste Zone program as it related to health care facilities, which is that the solid waste industry goes further than regulated waste categories and considers "health care" or "institutional" waste a special category. Intro 1349 artfully recognizes that reality.

Health care facilities can include hospitals, nursing facilities, and community clinics. Many generators, such as Northwell and Montefiore, are concerned about current CWZ policy because:

- 1. They want to retain a single hauler for their vast network of hospitals, offices, and nursing homes, which span many boroughs.
- 2. They are liable if contaminated or commingled waste arrives at a facility which is not permitted to handle institutional waste, and/or
- 3. They are comfortable with the subset of companies with the expertise to differentiate regular medical waste from institutional waste that has been contaminated.
- 4. And most urgently, they are getting hit by devastating funding cuts and do not want to undo the savings they've achieved by consolidating waste operations.

Through Council Member Dinowitz's proposed legislation, you are providing flexibility to the health care sector, which includes small community health centers and nursing facilities in addition to larger hospital campuses. You are also ensuring these complicated waste streams are handled safely.

I strongly recommend Intro 1349's passage and also recommend that when it passes, it take effect immediately to ensure health care facilities have clarity as the CWZ program continues to roll out.

Thank you.

TESTIMONY OF DAVID BIDERMAN INTRO 1349 SEPTEMBER 18, 2025

My name is David Biderman and I am submitting this written testimony in opposition to Intro 1349. I am the President of Biderman Consulting, LLC and serve as the sole industry representative on the Department of Sanitation's Commercial Waste Zone Safety Task Force. I provide safety training to Commercial Waste Zone (CWZ) awardees on a regular basis, including as recently as last week in Brooklyn. This testimony largely replicates the oral testimony provided via Zoom at the City Council hearing.

I want to point out the breadth of opposition to Intro 1349. The Department of Sanitation, organized labor, Brooklyn Borough President Reynoso's office, environmental advocates, several waste companies, and the leading solid waste association that represents many of the CWZ awardees all oppose Intro 1349. This diverse group of organizations rarely agree on anything, and suggests that Intro 1349 is, at best, misguided.

The Department of Sanitation and others have testified about how Intro 1349 would undercut CWZ's efforts to reduce vehicle miles travelled, truck traffic, and emissions. These are all valid reasons to oppose this misguided legislation. Let me add another: safety. Intro 1349 would interfere with one of the core CWZ goals – improving worker safety for commercial waste collection employees and improving street safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other road users. Local Law 199 and the CWZ regulations issued by Sanitation include stringent new safety requirements, including training, incident reporting, and telematics reporting. Why would this Committee even consider creating an exemption from Local Law 199 allowing collection companies to evade these requirements, which are making New York City's streets safer and have reduced accidents and fatalities involving the commercial solid waste collection industry? Under Intro 1349, a customer could generate a single needle, and this would exempt that waste generator from CWZ entirely. The Department of Sanitation testified that as many as 15,000 customers in New York City might be exempted from CWZ if this bill is enacted.

The Department of Sanitation is in the early stages of implementing CWZ, but one of its notable achievements already has been a substantial reduction in fatal collisions involving commercial garbage trucks operating in New York City. Prior to Local Law 199, there were 5 or 6 fatal incidents each year, with several collection workers killed annually. There has not been a private sector solid waste collection employee killed on a route in the five boroughs for several years. The race to the bottom, to the extent it ever existed, is effectively over.

CWZ awardees incur substantial costs to comply with the safety requirements embedded in Local Law 199 and Sanitation's regulations. This Committee, and the City Council, should reject efforts to exclude companies that collect solid waste from medical waste generators from those obligations. This would create a huge loophole in CWZ, potentially exempting tens of thousands of customers from the CWZ program, and endangering solid waste collection workers as well as 8.5 million New Yorkers.

Respectfully submitted,

David Biderman
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New York City Council

Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management

Hearing Testimony:
"Exempting Generators of Regulated Medical Waste from
Commercial Waste Zones"

Andrew Dahl, Vice President, Emergency Preparedness and Response GREATER NEW YORK HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

Introduction

Chair Abreu and members of the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management, my name is Andrew Dahl, and I serve as Vice President for Emergency Preparedness and Response at the Greater New York Hospital Association (GNYHA). GNYHA proudly represents all voluntary and public hospitals in New York City. We appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss Introduction 1349, which would exempt generators of medical waste from the commercial waste zone (CWZ) program.

Summary of GNYHA's Position

GNYHA supports this proposed legislation, which would affect our hospital members in New York City. We urge the City Council to pass this bill.

Hospitals navigate a complex system of over a dozen different waste streams and disposal processes that are crucial to support patient care and other services for their patients and communities. Their waste streams exceed the general "clear bag" waste that CWZ encompasses and range from regulated infectious medical waste to pharmaceutical waste dealing with the disposition of controlled substances. To responsibly manage the complexities of these varied regulated waste streams, hospitals approach waste management from a systematic standpoint, often contracting with a single health care carting service that understands these intricacies.

This is made more complicated by the fact that most NYC hospitals—large and small—operate as health system networks comprising acute-care hospitals and other facilities traversing multiple CWZs. The locations of one hospital system span nine of the 10 implementation zones, further complicating that system's waste management operations. While CWZ allows certain carting services to operate citywide for containerized general waste, these carting services—and there are only five—do not provide the comprehensive array of services necessary to manage all health care waste streams.

While the CWZ program exempts regulated medical waste, it nevertheless makes hospitals' traditional systematic waste management solutions more complicated, at best. Full-service waste management services realize efficiencies in operations and cost to hospitals. While we understand and support the CWZ program's overall goals, we think exempting hospitals would not undermine the program's objectives. It would also help them avoid unnecessary costs and burdens. Hospitals,

through existing relationships with their carting services, have already implemented containerization of solid waste to ensure the most efficient disposition, supporting a goal of the CWZ program to decrease truck traffic.

As my colleague Elisabeth Wynn testified this past Monday, hospitals in New York State are bracing for an \$8 billion revenue hit from lower health insurance reimbursements, cuts to Medicaid, and increases in uncompensated care because of the recently enacted One Big Beautiful Bill Act. Finding and realizing cost savings, where practical, is paramount to ensuring limited fiscal resources are preserved for patient care and the staffing to support it.

Conclusion

Our hospitals remain committed to the spirit of Local Law 199 for responsible and sustainable management of the waste they generate. Hospitals employ sustainability programs to reduce waste and lessen their impact on the environment at all levels. We are committed to the public health of the communities, residents, and patients that we serve. We thank the City Council for introducing this legislation and being responsive to the needs of our City's hospitals. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important issue. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.



September 18, 2025

Testimony of Nelson Eusebio Director of Government Relations National Supermarket Association

Before the

New York City City Council Committee on Sanitation & Solid Waste Management

Regarding

Int 0536-2024

On behalf of the National Supermarket Association (NSA), thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding Introduction 536 of 2024. The NSA represents over 500 independent supermarkets throughout New York City, many of which are family- and minority-owned businesses that serve as anchors in their neighborhoods. Our members provide essential access to healthy, safe, and affordable food to millions of New Yorkers every day.

The NSA and its members share the City Council's commitment to reducing food waste and supporting New Yorkers who face food insecurity. That is why NSA members have opened stores in many of the communities facing those challenges. Many supermarkets already maintain longstanding partnerships with local nonprofits to ensure that food reaches those in need.

While the goals of Int 536 are well-intentioned, the legislation would impose unrealistic and burdensome requirements on supermarkets, particularly small and independent operators. For the reasons outlined below, the National Supermarket Association opposes Introduction 536 of 2024.

Supermarkets are in the business of feeding people—not serving as logistics coordinators. This bill requires supermarkets not only to post notices on a city portal, but also to arrange retrieval and even transportation of excess food. That is not the role of retail grocery stores. New York City already has robust nonprofit networks that specialize in food distribution. Rather than duplicating their efforts, the City should strengthen and support these organizations.

Compliance with this mandate would add another layer of administrative responsibility to an industry that is already heavily regulated. Supermarkets must navigate public health codes, wage and scheduling

laws, recycling mandates, and more. Adding new monthly reporting and coordination duties stretches supermarket operators even further.

The requirement that supermarkets arrange for pickup and transportation creates significant cost and staffing challenges. Coordinating schedules, dedicating staff time, and any capital investments needed to facilitate such a policy are not feasible for most stores, already operating on thin margins. In 2023, industry profit margins averaged just 1.6%. Every dollar diverted toward administrative and transportation costs is a dollar taken away from serving customers and keeping food costs down.

Finally, the penalties contemplated under this bill—up to \$10,000 per month—are excessive and punitive. Supermarkets operate on very thin profit margins. Such fines could be crippling, especially for small, independent stores.

The National Supermarket Association urges you to reconsider Int 536 as drafted. Rather than imposing costly and duplicative mandates on supermarkets, the City should focus on supporting and expanding the food rescue organizations that are already doing this critical work.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



Good morning, Chair Abreu and members of the Committee. My name is Lew Dubuque, and I am here on behalf of the National Waste & Recycling Association. Our members are the private haulers who make the Commercial Waste Zone program possible. Collectively, we service commercial customers in 19 of the 20 designated zones across New York City, employing thousands of New Yorkers and investing millions of dollars to build safe, efficient, and environmentally sound collection systems.

We strongly oppose Int. 1349. This bill would exempt generators of regulated medical waste from the Commercial Waste Zone system. While we recognize that medical waste is highly regulated at the state and federal levels, carving out entire categories of customers undermines the very foundation of the CWZ framework.

The City Council created Commercial Waste Zones under Local Law 199 of 2019 to bring order, efficiency, and accountability to the collection of all commercial waste. NWRA members competed for contracts on the understanding that all commercial establishments in a zone would be covered. Every exemption chips away at that model, eroding fairness and threatening the financial viability of the system.

Hospitals and health facilities generate not just medical waste but also large volumes of recyclables, organics, and regular refuse. By exempting them from the CWZ program, this legislation removes a significant customer base that helps support zone-wide operations and keep rates stable for everyone else. That means fewer resources for recycling and organics diversion and higher costs for small businesses that remain inside the system.

Perhaps most troubling, this bill sets a dangerous precedent. If one industry is allowed to opt out, others will surely follow. That would unravel the CWZ framework piece by piece, leaving us with a patchwork system that undermines the City's policy goals and destabilizes investments haulers have already made.

In short, NWRA members have done everything DSNY and the City Council asked of them: we competed, we invested, and we built operations around the promise of a fair, comprehensive zone system. Int. 1349 would break that promise.

For these reasons, we urge the Council to reject this bill and instead continue working with DSNY, BIC, and industry stakeholders to strengthen—not weaken—the Commercial Waste Zone program.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I'm happy to answer any questions.



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 Oversight Hearing on Ongoing Challenges with Street Cleanliness in New York City September 18, 2025

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

In order to make our city cleaner, more sustainable, and work towards reaching our zero waste goals, NYLCV supports organic waste recycling as well as reducing our food waste in the first place. We are pleased to see that the 2025 Mayor's Management Report stated that in Fiscal 2025, DSNY disposed of 3,154,600 tons of refuse—two percent less than Fiscal 2024, and the lowest total in 15 years. While the amount of refuse disposed of is impacted by various factors and can vary year-over-year, this decrease is likely the result of the citywide expansion of curbside composting collection and the diversion of organic waste. We hope our city continues to reduce the amount of refuse disposed to landfills in the future and makes progress on its recycling goals.

NYLCV supports Intro 536, sponsored by Council Member Brannan, which would require certain stores that sell food for off-premises consumption, such as grocery stores, to post notices on the existing DonateNYC portal web portal regarding excess food they have available for donation, at least once per month. Currently, covered stores are not required to do so. Stores would also be required to arrange for the retrieval of the food that they are donating and to arrange for the transportation of such food if requested by the recipient. NYLCV supports this bill because requiring covered businesses to do this will not only reduce the amount of edible food sent to landfill but also help more people access food. If this bill is passed, we urge the City Council and Administration to allocate the requisite amount of funding in FY27 to ensure that DSNY staff are able to carry out this program.

NYLCV has also supported moving our City towards a waste containerization system to improve New York City residents' quality of life. We are excited to see DSNY's successful pilot program in Manhattan Community District 9 roll out, in addition to the <u>recent announcement</u> that the City plans to add 1,500 containers in Brooklyn's Community Board 2, especially since similar programs have been long established in global cities such as Barcelona, Paris, Amsterdam, and Buenos Aires.

Waste containerization will reduce litter on the ground, the mounds of plastic trash bags on our sidewalks, and the rat population, which is particularly important to Manhattan CD 9 because it is one of the rat mitigation zones designated by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. A portion of this area was also the subject of a much smaller scale pilot program for containerization that resulted in fewer 311 rat complaints in the area. Waste containerization also has the potential to revitalize our City's streetscapes and sidewalks for public use.

While we understand that New York City's cityscape and density varies widely, from 1-2 families, to 3-6 story walk-ups, to large 5-12 story buildings to towers, NYLCV hopes that DSNY can move towards a comprehensive containerization program that includes trash, recyclables, and organic waste to increase diversion rates. We also hope that a program can one day include shared building containers for smaller buildings in order to preserve space for other public uses.

That's why NYLCV supports the passage of Intro 1123 of 2024, sponsored by Council Member Hudson, which would require DSNY to establish a program requiring all residential buildings with 10 or more dwelling units to place residential waste in stationary on-street containers provided by DSNY by June 1, 2032. Buildings with 10-30 units would be allowed to opt out of the program if they comply with alternative containerization requirements established by DSNY by rule.

NYLCV supports Intro 1123 because it is essential for the City to develop a concrete timeframe for the rollout and the expansion of the Empire Bin on-street containers beyond Upper Manhattan and Brooklyn CB2 pilot districts. Further, DSNY's initial use of on-street containers in CD 9 led to a large decrease in rat sightings on blocks that had the bins.

As the DSNY pilot programs progress and we look towards a citywide waste containerization program over the next several years, we underscore the need for long-term funding for Automated Side-Loading Trucks and containers. Going forward, NYLCV hopes the City learns from the pilot in Manhattan CB9 and Brooklyn CB2 to implement and fully fund a permanent citywide waste containerization program on our streets to streamline waste and prevent buildup on sidewalks and trashrooms.

Ultimately we want to invest and improve our streetscapes and work toward our City's zero waste by 2030 mandate to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfills. Getting trash off the sidewalk creates more opportunities for beneficial use of public space like bioswales, bike corrals, sidewalk seating, bus shelters, delivery microhubs, and pedestrian plazas.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.



September 23, 2025

NYU Langone Health Testimony in Support of Introduction 1349 Hearing on Ongoing Challenges with Street Cleanliness in New York City Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management

Thank you to Chair Abreu and members of the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management for holding a hearing on the issue of street cleanliness in New York City. NYU Langone Health supports introduction 1349, which would exempt generators of medical waste from the commercial waste zone (CWZ) program.

As noted in the hearing, hospitals navigate a complex system of different waste streams. Although the CWZ program exempts regulated medical waste, hospitals also have "normal" waste that currently needs to comply with the CWZ—making waste management solutions elaborate, at best.

For NYU Langone, which operates locations in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island, the coordination of multiple CWZs into multiple contracts further complicates an already complex issue.

To responsibly manage the complexities of these varied regulated waste streams, hospitals approach waste management from a systematic standpoint, often contracting with a single healthcare carting service that understands these intricacies. The CWZ program allows certain carting services to operate citywide for containerized general waste. However, these carting services do not provide the comprehensive array of services necessary to manage all healthcare waste streams.

While we understand and support the CWZ program's overall goals, we think exempting hospitals would not undermine the program's objectives.

Thank you for your consideration and we appreciate your attention to this matter.

Alex Hunt

Vice President, Business Development The Doe Fund, Inc. September 18th, 2025

New York City Council City Hall New York, NY 10007

Re: Testimony in Support of Int. 1279 – Supplemental Sanitation Services

Dear Council Members,

I am writing on behalf of The Doe Fund, which has proudly provided supplemental sanitation services across New York City for 35 years. But we don't just keep neighborhoods clean. We are a lifeline to hundreds of New Yorkers experiencing homelessness and seeking a fresh start. The street cleaning we provide to over 115 miles of city streets every week is just the first step in a program that offers paid work training, skill-building, vocational courses, and comprehensive support services that connect participants to good jobs, permanent housing, and lasting stability.

The introduction of **Int. 1279**, which would allow supplemental sanitation service providers to place tied refuse or recycling bags adjacent to public litter baskets, is vital to the success of programs like ours. Losing this will cost us millions in resources that would otherwise be directed to program participants, in addition to reducing our ability to keep communities clean and vibrant. Our crews will be forced to travel farther distances to locate alternative disposal sites. This reduces efficiency, limits the number of blocks we can service each day, and ultimately threatens the volume of paid transitional work training we can provide.

The inability to place tied bags next to public litter baskets risks disrupting routes, reducing service quality, and diminishing the very purpose of supplemental sanitation contracts: to keep New York's streets clean while providing opportunities for those who need it most.

We strongly support Int. 1279 and urge the Council to adopt this common-sense proposal. It ensures that supplemental sanitation partners like The Doe Fund can continue delivering efficient, reliable service while advancing our mission of creating employment opportunities for vulnerable New Yorkers.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration.

Respectfully, Alex Hunt

Vice President, Business Development The Doe Fund, Inc.



Memorandum in Opposition Intro 1349 of 2025

September 17, 2025

Dear Speaker Adams, Sanitation Chair Abreu, and Members of the Council:

The Transform Don't Trash NYC Coalition writes in strong opposition to Intro 1349 of 2025, a bill that would broadly exempt health care facilities and other generators of medical waste from utilizing a designated waste hauler as required by Local Law 199 of 2019, the landmark Commercial Waste Zones Law.

This bill is unnecessary to meet the specific need for healthcare facilities to safely dispose of regulated medical waste, as such specialty waste is already exempt from the requirement that generators use a designated hauler. Hospitals, nursing homes, and other generators of regulated medical waste are already free to contract with any specialized medical waste company they choose.

Intro 1349 appears to seek a much broader exemption to Local Law 199 for hospitals, nursing homes, and other health care facilities by redefining the basic definition of "commercial establishment" to exclude "any generator of regulated medical waste."

Hospitals and other healthcare facilities are among New York City's biggest industries and are major generators of putrescible and recyclable waste in addition to regulated medical waste. In fact, studies have estimated that only about 15% of healthcare facility waste is hazardous, and that hospitals and other healthcare facilities typically generate huge quantities of waste, estimated to average 29 pounds per bed per day.

Exempting these major establishments from the CWZ program would enable them to utilize waste companies that have not undergone DSNY's RFP and selection process, which for the first time creates enforceable contract standards for safety, route efficiency, recycling, customer service, and data reporting.

Exempting healthcare facilities would therefore significantly undermine Local Law 199's goals of improved worker safety, reduced VMT, and transparency and accountability. The exemption would also deprive designated waste haulers of a major customer base, and would therefore threaten to undermine investments some of these companies are making in cleaner and safer trucks and facilities, better wages and worker training programs, and customer service infrastructure.

The law also protects all customers from unreasonable price increases in waste services by setting maximum prices, by permitting customers to negotiate with the designated haulers in each zone to obtain the best possible price, and by ensuring that designated haulers offer recycling services at discounted rates.

Healthcare institutions and other customers can further reduce waste management costs by reducing the amount of waste they generate, maximizing the amount of waste they separate for composting and recycling, and by working with qualified waste auditors to identify and implement waste reduction and recycling strategies.

In passing Local Law 199 of 2019, the City Council, DSNY, and the Mayor already contemplated and decided against such a broad carve-out for a major industry. As passed, the law allows a reasonable exemption to the zone system for regulated medical waste. We urge the Sanitation Committee to oppose Intro 1349, and to focus on partnering with DSNY and stakeholders to rigorously and rapidly implement the CWZ system citywide.

We further urge New York City's healthcare industry to view the new commercial waste zones system as an opportunity to begin to reduce unnecessary waste, recycle and compost more of their waste streams, and begin partnering with designated haulers to reduce the negative impact solid waste has on public health, local communities, and our shared environment.

Yours.

ALIGN
Natural Resources Defense Council
NYC Environmental Justice Alliance
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest
Teamsters Local 813
Transportation Alternatives

Testimony on Intro. 1349 – Opposition to Proposed Exemption for Regulated Medical Waste Generators

Waste Connections of New York, Inc. and Royal Waste Services, Inc. (collectively, "Waste Connections"), respectfully submits the following testimony regarding Intro. 1349 which would provide an exemption for regulated medical waste (RMW) generators from the City's commercial waste zone (CWZ) system.

We respectfully oppose Intro. 1349, as the exemption it introduces threatens to undermine the integrity and purpose of the CWZ program. While we acknowledge that RMW requires specialized handling and disposal, the current CWZ framework already accommodates this need by exempting RMW itself from the system. However, this bill goes further by creating a broad exemption based not on the type of waste, but on the type of customer.

Our reading of the bill suggests that although RMW is not subject to CWZ regulations, other forms of trade waste generated by these facilities such as packaging, food waste, and office refuse are. Under existing rules, commercial waste generators must display stickers identifying both their commercial waste hauler and their RMW hauler. Intro. 1349 would allow facilities regulated under medical waste laws to contract with a single hauler for both streams, effectively bypassing the CWZ system.

This exemption would not be limited to hospitals. It would apply to a wide range of facilities, including:

- Health care centers
- Nursing homes
- Diagnostic and treatment facilities
- Clinical and research laboratories
- Veterinary clinics
- Pharmacies
- Funeral homes

In effect, the bill redefines "commercial establishment" to exclude any generator of RMW, allowing these entities to operate outside the CWZ framework. This creates a parallel waste stream that undermines the program's goals of uniform service standards, rate stability, and environmental oversight.

Operational and Equity Concerns

Allowing a subset of businesses to opt out of the CWZ system introduces significant inequities and operational challenges:

- **Unfair Competition**: CWZ carters must comply with rigorous service, pricing, and environmental standards. Exempt entities could contract with any provider, potentially at lower cost, without those same obligations.
- **Fragmentation**: The exemption reintroduces the very fragmentation the CWZ system was designed to eliminate, resulting in inefficiencies and increased truck traffic.
- **Enforcement Difficulties**: Determining which businesses qualify for the exemption could be complex and prone to abuse, placing an undue burden on City enforcement agencies.

Recommendation

We urge the Council to reject Intro. 1349. The bill attempts to solve a problem that does not exist and, in doing so, creates a new and significant threat to the integrity of the CWZ system. Maintaining a consistent and equitable framework is essential to achieving the program's environmental, operational, and public health goals.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Andy Moss

Government Affairs Manager

andy.moss@wasteconnections.com

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