

**Testimony of
Jessica Tisch, Commissioner
New York City Department of Sanitation**

**Hearing before the New York City Council
Committee on Sanitation & Solid Waste Management
Wednesday, May 1, 2024 10:00 A.M.**

Oversight: Street Cleanliness

Good morning, Chair Abreu and members of the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste. I am Jessica Tisch, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Sanitation, and I am joined today by Joshua Goodman, Deputy Commissioner for Public Affairs and Customer Experience, and by Ryan Merola, Chief of Staff and Deputy Commissioner, External Affairs.

The 10,000 New York's Strongest are tasked with as Sisyphean an undertaking as you will find in our City: collecting and processing 24 million pounds of residential waste each day, only to find another 24 million pounds waiting for them the day after... and the day after... and the day after.

It is a task that is literally without end, and for many decades, the continuous nature of this work gradually developed into a cynicism; a belief that because the trash just keeps coming, that meant solutions to street cleanliness were also impossible.

We know, today, that that is wrong.

Choosing to surrender the streets to the black bags of trash, to litter and to litterers, and – worst of all – to the rats is a conscious choice.

But instead, waging a Trash Revolution against filth can also be a choice – a choice this administration has made clearly and steadily, but one where we need your help and support.

Containerization

We are moving forward with a once-in-a-generation change to the way the trash is set out, making tremendous strides in the long-discussed but long-delayed process of getting every single piece of trash off our streets and sidewalks and into secure bins and containers.

In October 2022, the Adams administration kicked off this Trash Revolution by changing set-out times for both residential and commercial waste from 4:00 PM — one of the earliest set-out times in the country — to 8:00 PM in April 2023, while also allowing earlier set-out if the material is in a container. This incentive of containerization was paired with major changes to DSNY operations, picking up more of the trash far earlier, including ending a practice by which up to one fifth of trash had been left out for a full day.

Later that month, DSNY published its "Future of Trash" report, the first meaningful attempt to study containerization models in New York City, and the playbook to get it done.

Last August, containerization requirements went into effect for all food-related businesses in New York City. These businesses — restaurants, delis, bodegas, bars, grocery stores, caterers, etc. — produce an outsized amount of the type of trash that attracts rats.

That same month, installation of the initial 10-block, 14-school Manhattan Community Board 9 pilot containers began.

Last September, commercial containerization requirements extended to chain businesses of any type with five or more locations in New York City. These chain businesses tend to produce a large total volume of trash.

Starting March 1, 2024, container requirements went into effect for all businesses — of every type — in New York City to get their trash off the streets and into a secure bin. There is now a new 311 service request whereby residents can report a business not using bins.

Later this fall, when container requirements go into effect for low-density residential buildings — those with one to nine units — approximately 70 percent of all trash in the city will be containerized.

In the spring of 2025, installation of stationary on-street containers will begin in Manhattan Community Board 9 for the first full-district containerization pilot, serviced by new automated side-loading trucks.

This represents a complete overhaul of an essential service that effects every neighborhood, every street, and every building in our City — and it is working, with historic decreases in rat sightings reported concurrently with this effort.

Litter Baskets

This work of rethinking how the trash is stored does not only apply to waste set out for collection, but to public space trash as well; that's why DSNY is excited that New York City's street corners now have more than 1600 litter 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; its widespread presence was based more on inertia than on effectiveness.

The old baskets are full of holes from which garbage juice gets out and through which rats get in. The new baskets have no holes for the first 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 are grateful to our Council partners who have purchased several hundred 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.

Enforcement

While the Department of Sanitation will never enforce for enforcement's sake, over the last two years we have worked to hold property owners accountable to the very basic requirements around cleanliness – the legal requirements 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. In 2023, our enforcement of these critical rules around cleanliness was up over 60% compared to the year prior, and we target ongoing enforcement in the highest-density parts of the City, doubling down on this Council's designation around 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 scourge of illegal dumping. Illegal dumping is defined in the law as the disposal of at least one cubic yard of material – approximately two large trash bags – from a vehicle. This occurs in areas that dumpers consider to be “out of the way,” like dead-end streets, underpasses, and, perhaps most distressingly, alongside cemeteries.

For many years, the Department of Sanitation did not have a meaningful enforcement strategy against the crime of illegal dumping. We just cleaned and cleaned over and over again, and the behavior continued to afflict neighborhoods like East New York, Glendale, and Hunts Point.

We have *significantly* stepped up illegal dumping surveillance in the last two years. Last year, we issued more than 300 summonses for illegal dumping, an increase of about 70% over 2022. Each of those summonses start at \$4,000, with the cost of cleaning up the mess also passed along to the dumper. And we impound the vehicles involved.

The dumpers are on notice that they won't get away with it any longer.

The same is true for people who use our streets as free storage for abandoned or derelict vehicles. Under state law, DSNY has jurisdiction for the removal of vehicles identified as derelict, meaning without license plates and with a value of under \$1,250, with authority for removal of vehicles outside this category residing with the NYPD. But for the public, this distinction is meaningless. Who knows the value of a car that has taken up space outside their home, sometimes for years without moving? Who needs to know which agency to call?

That's why in 2023, DSNY and NYPD launched an interagency Abandoned Vehicle Task Force to cut through the red tape. A team of five NYPD officers were assigned to DSNY to partner with our derelict vehicle operations team so that when we encounter vehicles on the streets that do not meet the derelict criteria but qualify as abandoned, we can action them then and there. Thanks to these efforts, in 2023, we increased our derelict vehicle removal by 43%, and removed nearly 8,000 vehicles that calendar year. In 2024, we're on pace to dwarf that number.

All of you celebrate this work and most of you ask for *more* of this work. You speak often about the concerns of your constituents related to the cleanliness of commercial corridors and other dirty conditions in your districts.

But there are gaps in our enforcement authority – areas where the Department of Sanitation does not have the tools we need to do our job. And yet the bills that would help prevent the worst recurrent conditions are not on the agenda; two have yet to be heard.

We want to get the job done. And we need your partnership to give airtime at a future hearing to bills that will help us prevent the worst recurrent conditions. That is why we are calling on you to support the passage of the following three Council bills that will allow us to keep the city cleaner.

Intro 97, sponsored by Council Member Ung, will provide a meaningful escalator in fines for the small number of residential property owners who repeatedly allow filth to congregate on our streets and sidewalks. Intro 11, sponsored by Council Member Bottcher, will expand the hours of the day that DSNY may enforce commercial cleanliness rules, and Intro 57, sponsored by Council Member Osse, will codify and clarify the penalties for failure to containerize waste, one of the most successful cleanliness programs underway in the City.

In 2023, over 1,600 locations received four or more summonses for Dirty Area, and nearly 500 were issued 10 or more. Three dozen were issued FIFTY or more! Clearly, the escalating fine structure is not currently steep enough to act as a disincentive to repeat offenders.

Enforcement is not about generating revenue; it is about compliance, but under the law today, bad actors can simply look at DSNY enforcement as the cost of doing business. That has to change.

Cleanliness is a shared responsibility. We urge this Committee to add bills that recognize that to upcoming hearings.

Legislation

I will now turn to the bills that are on today's agenda.

Intro 3, sponsored by Chair Abreu, would set a new 72-hour window for the removal of abandoned and derelict vehicles. We strongly support the concept of this bill, and as mentioned earlier, have developed new strategies around this issue. However, we believe that DSNY is not staffed appropriately to action this window, and there must be considerations given to special circumstances that require vehicles to remain on the street for longer than 72 hours, such as criminal investigations. We would be happy to discuss the bill with you, Chair, and our colleagues in City Hall.

The same is true for Intro 52, sponsored by Council Member Moya, which would replace the City's existing cleanliness scorecard system with a far more extensive one. DSNY has stated

publicly over a period of many years that we believe the current scorecard system is flawed and requires significant revisions. We are already in discussions with our Council and City Hall colleagues on potential revisions, particularly around the substantial price tag associated with the bill as written.

As should be clear from this testimony, DSNY is not shy about or embarrassed by our enforcement actions, and so we appreciate the reason for Intro 102, Council Member Yeger's bill on pairing summonses with photographs. However, the bill as written and the laws guaranteeing the right to confront evidence would mean DSNY officers will be taken out of the field and placed into OATH hearings every single time a violation is heard. It would impede DSNY's ability not only to enforce but to perform normal supervisory duties in the field. Given that, we cannot support the introduction at this time.

Fourth, we have a perennial favorite topic, dog waste collection, in Council Member Menin's Intro 281. The proposal requires dog waste disposal bags be placed on litter baskets. Given the dynamic nature of waste disposal – i.e., that a Sanitation Worker physically lifts and puts down the basket to empty it – litter baskets are not a practical place to affix a dog waste bag dispenser. However, making dog waste bags more readily available is a goal that we support and we would appreciate the chance to discuss the legislation with the Council Member and our sister agencies.

Council Member Holden's Intro 43 would require that public waste receptacles be emptied at least once per day. DSNY engages in frequent review of the average fullness of corner litter baskets using a variety of data sources, and the Department is the appropriate place for the decision to be made on how to most efficiently allocate these resources. We have concerns about the fiscal impact of this bill.

Finally, we have the Chair's recent proposal, Intro 736. The bill's contraceptive mechanism is within the purview of the Department of Health, and they have submitted written testimony on this topic.

We look forward to taking your questions and appreciate the opportunity to discuss this serious issue – both what is on today's agenda, and what we believe should be.



**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE**

Ashwin Vasana, MD, PhD
Commissioner

Testimony

of

Corinne Schiff

**Deputy Commissioner of Environmental Health
New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene**

before the

**New York City Council
Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management**

on

Street Cleanliness

May 1, 2024
New York, NY

Chair Abreu and members of the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management, I am Corinne Schiff, Deputy Commissioner for Environmental Health at the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (Health Department). I appreciate the opportunity to submit written testimony relating to the Health Department's rat mitigation work and on the legislation before your committee.

The Health Department's rat control program takes a multi-pronged, evidence-based approach across New York City that builds on decades of experience. The approach, called Integrated Pest Management (IPM), emphasizes inspections, monitoring, and removal of conditions that rats need to survive. Rats thrive when they have ready access to food and water, a place to live, and effective transportation routes. That means that reducing the rat population requires managing garbage, eliminating nesting areas, and repairing cracks and holes in sidewalks, structures, and buildings.

Safe, targeted treatment using best practices is the final piece of an effective IPM program. The Health Department is focused on researching and transitioning to rat control methods that minimize risks to birds and other wildlife. We share New Yorkers' grief about the death of Flaco the Eurasian eagle-owl.

Turning to the legislation being discussed today, Introduction 736 would require the Health Department to establish a pilot program to deploy rat contraceptives, and report on the outcomes of the program. The pilot program would require the monthly inspection of the program and comparison areas for signs of rats for six months before the application of rat contraceptives, and then the monthly inspection of such areas for the twelve-month period during the application of the rat contraceptive.

The Health Department has operational and effectiveness concerns about this legislation. There has been significant study of rat contraceptives over the last decade—including our own study in 2017—the studies have found that rat contraception is not effective for an urban pest control program. We have also been in touch with other municipal pest control programs, and they likewise have not found rat contraceptives effective.

We are concerned that the study methodology contained in the bill may not evaluate these products completely, providing ambiguous results. This is because contraception is effective only in a contained environment because approximately 95% of the rat population would need to be made infertile. In New York City, any rat rendered infertile would potentially be replaced by other rats from outside the study areas. Furthermore, the Health Department does not have full control over the proposed study areas. Our staff only treat a private property when the owner fails to do so as part of our enforcement program.

We look forward to sharing our research on this topic and continuing to work with you on rat mitigation efforts. I also want to reiterate our commitment to research and transitioning to rat control methods that minimize risks to birds and other wildlife while maximizing the impact on the rat population. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony. I look forward to continuing the conversation.



Mayor's Alliance
for NYC's Animals

Steve Gruber, Director of Communications
Mayor's Alliance for NYC's Animals

Hearing before the New York City Council's Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management in consideration of Intro 736 to begin a pilot program testing contraceptive pellets for rat and mice population control.

Wednesday, May 1, 2024

My name is Steve Gruber and I am Director of Communications for the Mayor's Alliance for NYC's Animals. Since our inception in 2003, the Mayor's Alliance for NYC's Animals has worked toward improving the lives of animals in New York City. While our primary mission has centered on improving the welfare of owned and homeless pets, our concerns have always extended to the welfare and humane treatment of all animals.

As a member of the Lights Out Coalition, the Mayor's Alliance joins our colleagues in support of Intro 736, which would establish a pilot program to deploy rat contraceptives as a safer, more humane alternative to rat poison.

For years, the use of rodenticides in attempts to eradicate the city's rat population has proven to be ineffective. And in addition to imposing a cruel death sentence on its target victims, rodenticides pose a serious risk to public health and the environment. These toxic products cause severe health damage and even death in nontarget wildlife, companion animals, and people.

The tragic death of Flaco, the beloved owl of NYC's Central Park who died with high levels of rat poison in his system, cast a spotlight on the devastating effects of rodenticide on unintended victims. It's only fitting that Intro 736 honors his memory by being named as one of "Flaco's Laws."

New York City can do better with regard to seeking humane and effective solutions to the problems that challenge all urban centers. We support Intro 736 as an important step toward embracing the Lights Out Coalition's "Science, Not Violence" approach to seeking effective and humane solutions.

Rat contraception, in concert with common sense measures like disposing of garbage in metal containers with lids instead of plastic bags on the street, can improve the lives of *all* New Yorkers, human and non-human alike.

Thank you.



JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS

**STATEMENT OF PUBLIC ADVOCATE JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS
TO THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID
WASTE MANAGEMENT
MAY 1, 2024**

Good Morning,

My name is Jumaane D. Williams and I am the Public Advocate for the City of New York. Thank you to Chair Abreu and members of the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management for holding this hearing and for allowing me to share my statement. Thank you Commissioner Tisch and the NYC Department of Sanitation team for being here.

My office consistently receives quality of life complaints about overflowing corner garbage cans and the rats that accompany the overflowing garbage. This is a health and safety concern for New Yorkers. Mayor Adams has made clear that improving New York City's sanitation is a priority of his administration by appointing a "Rat Czar" and by releasing targeted containerization policies. These concentrated efforts by the Department of Sanitation have been effective as shown by 311 calls for rats decreasing in containerized zones, and we must continue to implement containerization policies. Containerization is the standard that all modern cities rely on, and New York City should be moving as quickly as possible towards universal containerization. However, we must make sure that containerization is deployed equitably. Currently, there are swaths of neighborhoods in New York City without or with limited access to street garbage cans¹. During the transition to containerization, DSNY must make sure that low income or more suburban residents are included in their plans.

The city must also invest in alternative waste collection processes. Compost processors have had their services reduced due to budget cuts. These nonprofits utilize environmentally friendly methods to reduce waste, and the City should be encouraging and supporting these efforts. New York City has long seen a difference in street cleanings and garbage infrastructure, and these nonprofits have helped to close the gap in traditionally underserved neighborhoods where the majority of residents are people of more color. If the Mayor's Office is serious about reducing the city's rodent population, then the Office of Management and Budget must restore funding to nonprofit organizations that target food waste through composting and other means.

If the administration's goals are reducing the rat population and improving street cleanliness across the City, then the budget must reflect this. We must reverse all cuts in sanitation

¹<https://studentwork.prattsi.org/infovis/visualization/waste-inequity-in-nyc-placement-of-garbage-bins/#:~:text=Many%20have%20suggested%20that%20there,and%20residential%20and%20industrial%20zoning.>



JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS

management as well as invest in modern technologies and processes to better manage street waste. Additionally, the DSNY should expedite the hiring of roles that were previously impacted by the hiring freeze. Thank you.

Good morning,

I offer these comments in support of Int 0736 to provide an immediate alternative in the form of rat contraception to the dangerous and board application of toxic rodenticides in our city.

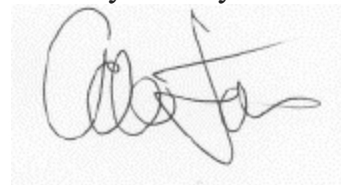
New York City is home and host to more than 450 species of birds. 3-5 million migrate over and through the five boroughs every spring, and another 12-20 million every fall, mostly under the cover of darkness. Hundreds of thousands more reside or stopover outside of migration periods. Aside from the challenges these birds face from our rapidly changing climate and dramatic alteration of landscapes of their origins, stopovers, and destinations, including in this city, they face extreme hazards – I'll specifically highlight one of particular relevance to today's hearing: poisoning by toxic chemicals.

An untold number - by some estimates more than 8 of every 10 individuals of some local bird species' populations - of more than 100 species are poisoned annually by unchecked application of anticoagulant rodenticides. These dead birds have names - Red-tailed Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, Bald Eagle, and Flaco, the recently deceased and beloved Eurasian Eagle-Owl, among countless other raptors and songbirds alike

And these birds poisoned are part of pervasive and enormous population declines across many species we've seen in North America – and globally - during the last half century. These birds provide essential ecological services like pollinating flowers, controlling pests, and dispersing seeds, and so, too, economic services in the form of billions of dollars locally *and* nationally from people observing and studying them. They connect continents and know no political boundaries, with birds that pass through our city as likely to occur on Arctic tundra as boreal peatland as tropical rain forest, and Caribbean island.

It is imperative we enact protections, and this legislation to employ rat contraception in place of toxic rodenticides is absolutely essential to safeguard birds' places in our city and on the planet, while simultaneously safeguarding our own human population.

Thank you for your audience.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Farnsworth', is centered below the text. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Andrew Farnsworth, Ph.D.
Center for Avian Population Studies, Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Lights Out Coalition.
Science, not violence.

Recent or highly cited peer-reviewed research on the broad and deadly extent of rodenticide poisoning in birds in support of the alternative approach of rat contraception offered in Int 0736.

Elliott, J.E., Silverthorn, V., Hindmarch, S., Lee, S., Bowes, V., Redford, T. and Maisonneuve, F., 2022. Anticoagulant rodenticide contamination of terrestrial birds of prey from western Canada: Patterns and trends, 1988–2018. *Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry*, 41(8), pp.1903-1917. “Exposure varied by species, by proximity to residential areas, and over time, with at least one SGAR residue detected in 74% of individuals and multiple residues in 50% of individuals. By comparison, we detected first-generation compounds in <5% of the raptors. Highest rates of exposure were in barred owls (*Strix varia*), 96%, and great horned owls (*Bubo virginianus*), 81%, species with diverse diets, including rats (*Rattus norvegicus* and *Rattus rattus*), and inhabiting suburban and intensive agricultural habitats. Barn owls (*Tyto alba*), mainly a vole (*Microtus*) eater, had a lower incidence of exposure of 65%. Putatively, bird-eating raptors also had a relatively high incidence of exposure, with 75% of Cooper's hawks (*Accipiter cooperii*) and 60% of sharp-shinned hawks (*Accipiter striatus*) exposed.”

Elliott, J.E., Silverthorn, V., English, S.G., Mineau, P., Hindmarch, S., Thomas, P.J., Lee, S., Bowes, V., Redford, T., Maisonneuve, F. and Okoniewski, J. (2024), Anticoagulant Rodenticide Toxicity in Terrestrial Raptors: Tools to Estimate the Impact on Populations in North America and Globally. *Environ Toxicol Chem*, 43: 988-998. <https://doi.org/10.1002/etc.5829>. “Our results show bromadiolone to be very toxic to raptors, and to be poisoning birds across North America.”

Gomez EA, Prestridge HL, Smith JA (2023) Anthropogenic threats to owls: Insights from rehabilitation admittance data and rodenticide screening in Texas. *PLoS ONE* 18(8): e0289228. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0289228>. “Our results suggest that owls in Texas are at risk from myriad anthropogenic threats and face high exposure rates to ARs.”

Walther, B., Geduhn, A., Schenke, D. and Jacob, J., 2021. Exposure of passerine birds to brodifacoum during management of Norway rats on farms. *Science of the Total Environment*, 762, p.144160. “We used [liquid chromatography](#) coupled with tandem mass spectrometry to screen for residues of [anticoagulant rodenticides](#) (ARs) in liver tissue of passerine birds that were present during rodent control with a product containing [brodifacoum](#) (BR). The 222 birds of 13 species were [bycatch](#) of rodent snap trapping in 2011–2013 on 11 livestock farms run synchronously with baiting. During baiting, ARs were detected in about 30% of birds; 28% carried BR. In liver tissue of 54 birds that carried BR, concentrations ranged from 4 to 7809 ng/g (mean 490 ± 169 ng/g). Among common [bird species](#) with AR residues, BR was most prevalent in robins (*Erithacus rubecula*) (44%) and dunnocks (*Prunella modularis*) (41%). Mean BR concentration was highest in great tits (*Parus major*) (902 ± 405 ng/g). The occurrence

and concentrations of BR residues were about 30% higher in birds collected close to bait stations compared to birds collected further away. The results demonstrate that several ground feeding songbird species are exposed to ARs used on farms. If BR was present in liver tissue, concentrations were variable, which may imply a combination of primary and secondary exposure of songbirds. Exposure was mostly restricted to the immediate surroundings of farms where bait was used, which might limit the transfer to the wider environment. Efforts should be made to reduce the access for birds to AR bait to prevent high exposure.”

Thornton, G.L., Stevens, B., French, S.K. *et al.* Anticoagulant rodenticide exposure in raptors from Ontario, Canada. *Environ Sci Pollut Res* **29**, 34137–34146 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11356-022-18529-z>. “We collected liver samples from 133 raptors representing 17 species submitted to the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative (CWHC) in Ontario, Canada, between 2017 and 2019. Liquid chromatography-tandem mass spectrometry (LC–MS/MS) was used to quantitatively assess the level of exposure to 14 first- and second-generation ARs. Detectable levels of one or more ARs were found in 82 of 133 (62%) tested raptors, representing 12 species. The most commonly detected ARs were bromadiolone (54/133), difethialone (40/133), and brodifacoum (33/133). Of AR-positive birds, 34/82 (42%) contained residues of multiple (> 1) anticoagulant compounds. Our results indicate that AR exposure is common in raptors living in southern Ontario, Canada.”

Vyas, N.B., Hulse, C.S., Meteyer, C.U. and Rice, C.P., 2013. Evidence of songbird intoxication from Rozol® application at a black-tailed prairie dog colony. *Journal of Fish and Wildlife Management*, 4(1), pp.97-103. “Chlorophacinone residues from two Rozol-colored songbird droppings found at the study colony were 0.09 and 0.46 µg/g (wet weight). The timing of the meadowlark mortality and the occurrence of discolored droppings show that songbird exposure and poisoning can occur weeks after a Rozol application.”

Masuda, B.M., Fisher, P. and Jamieson, I.G., 2014. Anticoagulant rodenticide brodifacoum detected in dead nestlings of an insectivorous passerine. *New Zealand Journal of Ecology*, pp.110-115. “Our results highlight the potential role of invertebrates as vectors of anticoagulant rodenticides in the environment, as well as the need for further research on this exposure pathway.”



**NYC Council Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management
Oversight Hearing on Street Cleanliness
May 1, 2024
Testimony by Lights Out Coalition**

Good morning, Chair Abreu and members of the Sanitation Committee. I'm Kathy Nizzari, Founder and Chair of the Lights Out Coalition - a diverse group of animal, avian, environmental activists, scientists, rehabilitators, legal, medical, economic and design professionals, as well as a Vice President in the United Nations System, some of whom you will hear today or via written testimony - *all* united to protect urban wildlife through science-based and common sense strategies. I am *thrilled* to be testifying today in support of [Intro 736](#), Flaco's Law.

Mayor Adams declared a war on rats, yet while we waste literally millions of dollars on rodenticides, the rat population has [exploded](#). There is currently nearly [1 rat for every 3 people](#) living in New York City. The rats are winning!

For 2 years we've sought a political partner to pilot a rat contraception program and could not be happier to work with Council Member Shaun Abreu, who has broken with tradition by being proactive and preventative and using a scientific approach to what is an issue of biology. To use the Councilman's words, "We can't kill our way out of this problem." Nor should we try. By reducing the number of births, we can successfully significantly reduce the population without causing harm to [rats](#), [wildlife](#), [pets](#), or [human children](#), the latter which is so often omitted from discussions, despite millions of sick children and thousands of deaths from rodenticide ingestion.

And let's not forget the damage it does to the [soil and water](#). Is anyone testing our drinking water for the presence of rodenticides?

Lights Out is proud to have as one of our members, Dr. Loretta Mayer, who invented rat contraception, and her WISDOM Good Works. They developed the first solid, easily deployed contraceptive rodent feed in the form of a nonpoisonous pellet called Good Bites. Studies show up to [98%](#) population reductions. Poison was *never* so efficient! The pellets are very sweet and appealing to rats who carry it back to their burrows to other family members. It renders both males and females infertile within a few short days of ingesting their first serving. With a minimum of weekly returns to feed, infertility continues. Made completely from non-toxic natural ingredients, these pellets will not harm animals, humans, or the environment.

Following the heartbreaking and completely avoidable death of Flaco from rodenticides, New Yorkers have indicated they want humane solutions. Policy needs to reflect changing times. In less than 3 weeks, this bill has bipartisan support, the majority of the committee, just hit a Council majority, and is well on its way to a supermajority! We're told it's the fastest moving animal bill ever in the Council which says our lawmakers are ready for change. New York will make history by being the first, not only in the nation but, *in the world* to mandate rat contraception, leading with science, not violence.

Our heartfelt thanks to all of you.

The following constitutes our suggested friendly amendments to Intro 736:

1. We are very concerned that this pilot would be assigned to the Department of Health. In our experience, DOHMH has not expressed support of contraception as a viable means of reducing rat populations. Conversely, staff have said in Rat Academy sessions that 'rat contraception is not efficient.' Moreover, their failure to attend this hearing or send *any* representation gives us serious pause about their level of commitment. The agency responsible for this pilot should be 100% committed to its success. This success could be a complete game changer in how New York manages its rat population and could lay a blueprint for other municipalities who wish to follow our lead. Therefore, we ask that this be assigned to the Department of Sanitation with heavy participation from the organization hired for the contraception's deployment and monitoring. {Lights Out is also happy to provide volunteers to supplement efforts.}

- a. To reflect this, we ask the bill's language be changed to reflect replacing DOHMH with DSNY and third party provider.
2. Can implementation happen sooner than 180 days?
3. DELETE DOH can terminate any time
4. Change 'termination' to 'completion'

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you so much.

Kathy Nizzari
Lights Out Coalition
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Northeast Region

New York City Council Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management Hearing NWRA Testimony May 1, 2024

Hello, I'm Lew Dubuque, and I'm here today representing the New York City chapter of the National Waste and Recycling Association. NWRA represents the hardworking men and women of the industry who collect and manage the waste, recyclables and organics produced by the more than 100,000 commercial entities in this great city.

I would like to thank Chairperson Abreu and the rest of the Sanitation and Solid Waste Management Committee for the opportunity to speak here today.

I'm here today testifying in opposition to the resolution calling for the expansion of the state's "Bottle Bill" Law.

Any bottle bill expansion will only further duplication in the state's recycling process. Recycling technologies have advanced significantly since the bottle bill. Now there are two redundant recycling systems – a bottle bill system recovering a limited percentage of the recycling stream (<1%) and Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs) recovering all recyclables. Materials considered under the bottle bill expansion are already being recycled by MRFs. Solutions are needed for hard-to-recycle materials MRFs cannot process (i.e. carpets, tires, mattresses, and lithium-ion batteries), not plastic bottles, or aluminum cans.

New York City residents and businesses will still pay for two recycling systems – a per container fee under the expanded bottle bill system and a residential and commercial curbside service for solid waste & recycling. They will also be directly impacted by additional costs – a \$0.10 upfront container deposit and as a hidden fee, relayed via higher costs of groceries, as producers pass along their handling costs.

States instituted bottle bills as litter abatement programs before curbside recycling was initiated and is now used by just ten states, as they are an inefficient method of managing post-use of the product. New York State would be better served by investing unclaimed deposit money in performance standards, existing infrastructure, education, litter cleanup, enforcement, and recycling assistance for municipalities.



Northeast Region

An expanded bottle bill will harm recycling due to the fact that the containers targeted for the expansion are currently being managed effectively in local recycling programs. They are key items in the recycling bin that have a positive commodity value. The value of those containers help underwrite the cost of delivering everyone's recycling services. Without these valuable recyclable containers in the general recyclables stream, the cost to municipalities, and ultimately New York taxpayers, to continue their recycling programs will assuredly go up.

Recycling programs have weathered tough commodity markets for the last several years. That cycle has now passed, and markets are returning -- driving both demand and value for recyclable commodities. This is great news for all involved in recycling, from the resident using curbside recycling, to the municipalities charged with managing recyclables, to industry ensuring that these recyclables make it to end markets for reuse. It is great news too for the environment as recycling reduces the amount of raw materials we take from the planet and prevents significant emissions helping to reduce impacts of climate change.

Thank you for your consideration of our written and verbal testimony today.

Sincerely,

Lewis A. Dubuque

Lewis A. Dubuque

Vice President, Northeast Region

National Waste & Recycling Association

[REDACTED]

From: Edita Birnkrant <edita@nyclass.org>
Sent: Friday, May 3, 2024 8:17 AM
To: Testimony
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Intro 736 - Memo of Support from NYCLASS

[REDACTED]



NYCLASS Memorandum of Support for Intro 736

Edita Birnkrant, Executive Director

New York City Council Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management, May 1

New Yorkers for Clean, Livable, and Safe Streets (NYCLASS) strongly supports passage of Intro 736, which would establish a rat contraception pilot program, and which currently has a majority of support in the City Council.

NYCLASS is a proud member of the Lights Out Coalition, which is leading the effort to change laws and policies to better protect birds and urban wildlife while also benefiting New Yorkers.

After the untimely death of Flaco, New Yorkers and the world were horrified to learn that the beloved Eurasian owl had high amounts of rat poison in his system – a prime cause of his death. It didn't have to be this way. Not for Flaco and not for the countless other birds who needlessly die from rat poison in our city. Even dogs are not safe from ingesting the poison inside the ubiquitous black boxes we find everywhere around our city – even on playgrounds. We are aware of several dogs in Manhattan who recently died from ingesting rat poison outside. Over 1 million children are also harmed by rat poison every year. It doesn't have to be this way

NYCLASS has had a tremendous amount of positive feedback from our tens of thousands of supporters and members across the five boroughs for the rat contraception bill and for implanting policies to protect our wildlife instead of poisoning them.

The “Good Bites” rat infertility pellets created by Dr. Loretta Mayer are not only incredibly effective at lowering rat populations when deployed, they are also *100% non-toxic* to all other animals and humans. It is truly a win-win for everyone involved.

If the rat poison currently being implemented now worked, we wouldn't be losing the endless war on rats. We know that rodenticides are ineffective at controlling the rat population. What they are incredibly effective at doing is poisoning birds like Flaco. We have a better way now. When you know better, you can do better. Intro 736 does better. I urge the Sanitation Committee to pass Intro 736 and for the entire Council to pass it into law. We thank Council Member Shaun Abreu for his leadership on this issue and we look forward to working with him in making our city safer and more humane for all.

NYCLASS (New Yorkers for Clean, Livable, and Safe Streets) is a 501(c)(4) non-profit organization founded in New York in 2008 that works to enact animal welfare legislation into law and elect pro-animal candidates to office. NYCLASS is committed to changing the world for animals and seeks to create a truly humane society for all by passing New York City, State and Federal legislation, embracing grassroots efforts, and on the street activism to educate and activate the public to protect animals and end abuse
www.NYCLASS.org

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**Edita
Birnkrant**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

 edita@nyclass.org
 917.940.2725
 nyclass.org

NYCLASS
We Love Animals and We Vote!

Dear Members of the New York City Council Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management:

The Botstiber Institute for Wildlife Fertility Control (BIWFC) is uniquely qualified to provide testimony about Intro 736 as the Institute acts as a resource center for expertise in the field of wildlife fertility control. Its mission is to educate policymakers, wildlife managers and the public about reproductive management to mitigate human-wildlife conflict.

BIWFC supports New York City's interest in considering a pilot project to control its rat population through non-lethal methods, since current rodenticides are extremely inhumane for rats and for scavengers and predators that feed on these animals.

BIWFC is aware that oral contraceptives to control rats have been tested in other US cities, although the outcomes of these efforts are still unclear.

Therefore, if New York City's pilot project is to yield meaningful results, comprehensive and robust monitoring should be planned through a variety of tools and technology to estimate the effects and possible side effects of contraceptives on rat population size and welfare, and on the food chain.

Most critically, monitoring should be carried out by experts who are independent from both the trial and the manufacturer of the contraceptive being tested.

The success of the New York City pilot project rests on the degree to which documentable and reproducible results are informed by a comprehensive array of well-designed indicators rather than by anecdotal evidence.

If this trial produces sound scientific data pointing to its effectiveness, the BIWFC will be pleased for its success in advancing the use of humane, effective and environmentally sustainable methods for mitigating conflicts between humans and urban rats.

Thank you.

Monique Principi
Managing Director

[The Botstiber Institute for Wildlife Fertility Control](http://www.wildlifefertilitycontrol.org)

<https://www.wildlifefertilitycontrol.org>



Memorandum of Support Intro 55 of 2024

May 1, , 2024

The Transform Don't Trash NYC Coalition writes in strong support of Intro 55 of 2024, a bill requiring the Department of Sanitation (DSNY) to begin accepting commercial waste at the City's marine and rail waste transfer facilities.

By allowing private sanitation trucks to use municipal waste facilities, this bill will reduce the number of trucks traveling in and out of low-income communities and communities of color overburdened by private, truck-based transfer stations. Currently, private sanitation trucks travel millions of unnecessary miles across boroughs and communities to reach private transfer stations where waste is then exported using large, highly polluting long-haul trucks.

The City's nearly expired 2006 Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP) directed DSNY to report on efforts to process commercial waste at marine transfer stations and to issue an RFP to process commercial waste at least one Manhattan marine transfer station, but neither of these goals have been achieved.

Intro 55 would, finally, require the City to enact this long-standing environmental justice priority. The timeline required by the bill is appropriate, as it would precede the new 20-year Solid Waste Management Plan due in 2026 and would coincide with the expected citywide implementation of the new Commercial Waste Zones (CWZ) system required by Local Law 199 of 2019.

The CWZ program was designed to sharply reduce commercial waste truck mileage citywide and incentivize the use of waste and recycling facilities with high safety and environmental standards, including publicly owned marine and rail-based transfer stations. In the absence of equitable and efficient options to utilize municipal facilities

located near commercial districts and commercial waste routes, DSNY's [most recent Waste Equity report](#) shows that almost 12,000 tons per day (75%) of the City's commercial waste continues to be trucked in and out of a handful of overburdened communities in the South Bronx, North Brooklyn, and Southeast Queens.

Fundamental reforms to a notoriously inefficient, dangerous, and polluting commercial waste system are long overdue. Intro 55 would implement a common-sense solution first included in the City's SWMP almost two decades ago.

We urge the Council to pass it into law as soon as possible.

Yours,

ALIGN

Natural Resources Defense Council

New York City Environmental Justice Alliance

New York Lawyers for the Public Interest

Teamsters Local 813

About Transform Don't Trash NYC

Transform Don't Trash NYC coalition is dedicated to transforming New York City's commercial trash industry to reduce waste and pollution, foster clean and healthy communities for all New Yorkers, and create good jobs. Steering committee organizations include ALIGN, International Brotherhood of Teamsters Joint Council 16, New York City Environmental Justice Alliance, Natural Resource Defense Council and New York Lawyers for the Public Interest.



Urban Wildlife Alliance, Inc.
158 West 76th Street
New York, NY 10023
info@urbanwildlifeny.org
845-276-0966

Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management

New York City Council

City Hall
New York, NY 10007

April 30, 2024

Re: Testimony in Support of Intro 0736-2024

Good morning, esteemed members of the Committee,

My name is Arina Hinzen, and I am the co-founder and executive director of the Urban Wildlife Alliance. Since 2014, our organization has been dedicated to promoting the welfare of wildlife in urban environments, focusing on compassionate conservation practices.

Today, I stand before you to express our strong support for Intro 0736-2024, which proposes a pilot program to replace traditional rodenticides with contraceptives for rat population control in our city.

Over the past decade, our team has witnessed the devastating impact of rodenticides on urban wildlife. Animals such as hawks, owls, squirrels, opossums and even pets have suffered painful deaths due to direct or secondary rodenticide poisoning. The recent tragic death of Flaco, the beloved owl, brought this issue into the public eye, though it has been a concern our organization has dealt with for many years.

This bill offers a hopeful shift towards more humane and innovative methods of pest control. By adopting rat contraceptives, we can significantly reduce the collateral damage inflicted on non-target wildlife species. Such methods not only protect our cherished wildlife but also reflect a progressive, humane approach to rat population management.

Implementing this pilot program will place New York City at the forefront of sustainable and ethical urban ecology practices. It will demonstrate our city's commitment to coexisting with all forms of urban life in a way that respects their intrinsic value and right to live free from undue harm.

I urge the committee to approve this bill and allow our city to lead by example in adopting safer, more effective solutions for managing our urban wildlife challenges.

Thank you for considering this critical issue.

Sincerely,

Arina Hinzen

Executive Director Urban Wildlife Alliance, Inc.



My name is Allie Taylor and I am the president of Voters For Animal Rights (VFAR) in NYC. Thank you to Council Member Shaun Abreu and the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management and Speaker Adrienne Adams for holding today's public hearing. I would like to highlight and express my gratitude to the 25 council members who have already signed onto Intro 736. I would also like to thank the animal advocates for doing this important work to advance this legislation.

As a current homeowner in Bushwick and a former resident of Bed Stuy, I am very familiar with the rat problem. If you take one step outside my stoop on Putnam Ave, it's obvious why we have a rat problem with a buffet of trash bags lining our streets. As a trap-neuter-release cat rescuer and a dog walker in Bushwick and Bed Stuy, I have seen first-hand the devastating and fatal effects of rodenticide on cats and dogs. Rodenticide is not only ineffective, but it has devastating effects on wildlife, too. When birds of prey eat rodents, they ingest rodenticides and suffer slow and painful deaths that cannot be reversed. We need to find a sustainable and effective long-term solution. Containerizing trash coupled with a pilot program to test contraceptive pellets for rats and mice is an important first step to getting there.

VFAR is proud to support Intro 736. We urge the City Council to swiftly pass this bill so that we can take this first step to better protecting urban wildlife while controlling our rat and mouse population. Thank you.

Allie Taylor, President
Voters For Animal Rights
1276 Putnam Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11221

[REDACTED]

From: Catherine Quayle <social@wildbirdfund.org>
Sent: Friday, May 3, 2024 4:49 PM
To: Testimony
Cc: [REDACTED] Kathy Nizzari; wildbirdfund nyc
Subject: [EXTERNAL] testimony in support of Intro 736

[REDACTED]

Dear Councilmember Abreu and members of the Sanitation Committee,

Wild Bird Fund Director Rita McMahon testified at Wednesday's meeting in favor of Intro 736. I am following up with the written version of her comments:

The Wild Bird Fund is New York City's only wildlife rehabilitation center. When a bird or other wild animal becomes sick or injured in the city, the Wild Bird Fund is their emergency room. Last year we admitted 11,500 patients, mostly birds, from all 5 boroughs.

From this vantage point, we are uniquely positioned to see – intimately– the devastating collateral damage of the city's war on rats via rodenticide.

While Flaco the owl was flying free in NYC, consuming meal after meal of the poisoned rats that would contribute to his death, hundreds of wild, native raptors across the city were meeting the same fate. Red-tailed hawks. Cooper's hawks. Peregrine falcons. Owls.

They are brought to our clinic on the Upper West Side, week after week.

The signs of anticoagulant rodenticide ingestion can be disturbingly clear: bleeding excessively from a small wound, bleeding from the mouth, blood pooling beneath the skin in the chest or abdomen from internal hemorrhaging.

We can administer vitamin K to counteract the effects of the anticoagulant, but by the time these birds are found lying face down in a park, or on the sidewalk, and brought to the clinic, it is often too late.

In March alone, two red-tailed hawks from Williamsburg and one from Chelsea all died before or soon after reaching the clinic. A famous pair of nesting hawks at Columbia University were both found face down on campus, dying or dead from rodenticide. One study at Cornell found that 68% of the NYS red-tailed hawks tested had anticoagulant rodenticide in their systems.

In the normal course of feeding themselves and their families, these native raptors are helping us in our battle against rats. But instead of welcoming their assistance, the city is killing them.

This situation is simply unsustainable.

It is time for the city to invest its resources in safer, humane solutions to the rat problem. To that end, we welcome this pilot project and thank you for considering it.

All the best,

Catherine Quayle

Communications Director

WILD BIRD FUND

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Good Morning. My name is Alaina Gonzalez-White and I represent Wisdom Good Works in New York City and on the east coast at large. Wisdom Good Works is a 501(c)(3) non-profit established to provide alternatives to lethal and poisonous approaches to wildlife population management which have been the failing status quo for the last several hundred years.

We do this by investing in scientific research and sharing expertise in the development of real world applications of fertility control measures which aim to make this world a safer place for all inhabitants including my fellow New Yorkers, our children, our pets and the endangered members of the food chain. Yes, even safer for the rats. We rely on science, not violence.

Past attempts to apply fertility control to rats in New York have failed because available products at the time of study failed to follow the science of the behavior of the worlds fastest breeding mammal on earth. Any product used must meet the requirements of the intended target. An urban rat requires the same things a human seeks: food, shelter and water.

In New York, you can find the best of every global cuisine, every day of the week and up until recently we have served them to rats on the sidewalk each night. For a product to compete amidst our esteemed restaurant offerings you must make it continuously, easily available, the best tasting and of course, most efficacious. Above all it must be *safe* for anyone who comes in contact with it. We must *provide food*, which makes them infertile, not poison which barely and only temporarily slows the growth of their population. Our solid pellet, Good Bites™ have been developed with each of these imperative metrics in mind, and I'm here to tell you, they taste great.

We would like to extend our thanks to Council Member Shaun Abreau for introducing bill 736 which, if passed, is an important first step in ridding New York of harmful poisons as first line defense for rodent abatement by city management. We would also like to thank the members of Lights Out NY for supporting us in our mission to provide impactful solutions for facing the monumental, yet achievable task of urban rodent population reduction. We urge you to join Councilor Abreau in supporting the creation of a rodent fertility control pilot study for New York. Thank you.

My name is Alexandra LaFata, and I am the founder of Hamptons Muse. As a hospitality expert and lobbyist, I have actively supported various animal welfare initiatives, often in partnership with Voters for Animal Rights. With my extensive experience managing hospitality venues in New York City, I can attest to the potential benefits of rat contraception in our industry.

While I cannot speak on behalf of the entire industry, I represent my colleagues and myself who have been earnestly seeking humane solutions to manage rodent issues while adhering to all health and safety standards required by NYC. The fear that hospitality managers and venue owners face—of being cited, shut down, or having their reputations tarnished due to rat problems—has pushed many towards inhumane methods of control. The commonly used methods are torturous: poisons that cause internal bleeding, snap and glue traps, and carbon monoxide suffocation in their burrows. Alarmingly, I have also witnessed residents using their dogs, trained to hunt rats, during nighttime outings.

Adopting rat contraception could significantly reduce suffering. Societally, we tend to protect animals we find appealing, while those we consider less attractive, like rats, are subjected to brutal treatment. Yet, rats are exceptionally clean and capable of emotions such as fear and empathy. By controlling the rat population through birth control, we can prevent countless brutal deaths not only of rats but also of prey animals like owls. The ripple effects of current rat control methods harm numerous other species. For example, consider the case of Flaco, who escaped human captivity only to be fatally impacted by our cruel decisions regarding other animals.

Implementing birth control as a method of population control represents a compassionate step forward, aligning our actions with our ethics and reducing unnecessary suffering across the ecosystem.

Thank you.

Testimony by Courtney Scheffler, Member of the GrowNYC Workers Collective
New York City Council Committee on Sanitation
Chair Shaun Abreu
Oversight – Street Cleanliness
May 1, 2024

Good morning Chair Abreu, and members of the Sanitation committee. I am a proud member of the GrowNYC Workers Collective, a labor union represented by RWDSU, the Retail Wholesale and Department Store Union. I am a Compost Coordinator and Driver for GrowNYC until May 20th, this date is the beginning of layoffs for 80 coworkers.

Together with our partners at The New York City Compost Project, we work to provide New Yorkers with waste equity access through food scrap collections and processing, outreach, education, and finished compost. We keep the city clean by removing pest food sources from the sidewalks and by providing finished compost and programming for communities to tend to street trees. It is the workers and volunteers who keep our neighborhoods clean through our labor of education, outreach, and street tree care.

Due to the defunding of our program, I now deliver food scraps collected at GrowNYC drop offs to SICS for processing. The workers at SICS gesture to the bags piled high in their bay as they describe the high rates of contamination received from curbside bins and the public schools. They told me that much of what is next to the organics we bring is trash. Because there is not a worker to audit during collections, the operations workers have to take time and energy from their work or discard collections due to non-organic contamination. This indicates systemic failure of a hasty rollout with insufficient funding towards the outreach and education necessary to build enduring practices.

The undervaluing of our efforts to give our neighbors a cleaner city are demonstrated by the defunding of community compost, curbside service gaps, and inadequate outreach that are counterintuitive to the green and clean messaging we hear but have yet to see. Curbside and smart bins alone will not realize the waste equity needs of our city. If this administration were earnestly committed to its purported environmental objectives, the services we provide the public would be adequately funded and legislated beyond our year-to-year contracts. Investing in communities is always worth it, especially those disproportionately experiencing environmental injustice.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Courtney Scheffler
Brooklyn

I'm Debbie Mullins, president of the Linnaean Society of New York. I am here to express our support for Intro 736.

Raptor populations have increased dramatically since DDT was banned in 1972, and in New York City we are privileged to have many raptors nest and raise their young here, including Red-tailed Hawks, Peregrine Falcons, American Kestrels, Merlins, and Great Horned Owls. Charismatic birds like Barry, the Barred Owl, and Flaco, the Eurasian Eagle owl, spend time in the city and capture the hearts of the public. Rat poison contributed to the deaths of both Barry and Flaco.

Rats are one of the main food sources for raptors. While providing a reliable source of food, many rats consumed by raptors have anticoagulant rodenticides in their bodies that are passed on to the birds. As a result, many raptors living in urban environments where rats are on the menu, meet this same fate as Barry and Flaco. Rodenticide poisoning of raptors is widespread. Scientists at the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine (1) estimated that 68% of the Red-tailed Hawks in the state have rat poison in their systems. Council Member Abreau's bill calling for the use of non-toxic rat contraception could provide the proof-of-concept needed to phase out the use of rodenticides that are so dangerous to raptors, pets, and even children.

A landmark study published in 2019 found that 2.9 billion birds have been lost from North America since 1970 (2). It is imperative that governments at all levels act now to mitigate the deadly effects of human-altered landscapes and toxic chemicals on birds. I urge the City Council to establish a rat contraceptive pilot program as a first step toward phasing out the use of toxic rodenticides.

1. Hopt-Denis, C et al, 2022. Prevalence of anticoagulant rodenticide exposure in red-tailed hawks (*Buteo jamaicensis*) and utility of clotting time assays to detect coagulopathy. *Ecotoxicology* 31(6):919-932.

2. Rosenberg, KV et al, 2019. Decline of the North American avifauna. *Science* 366:120-124.736-2024

Dear Councilmen,

I support the experimentation with birth control for rats as an innovative powerful; I and cutting edge approach to decreasing the rat population.

New York can be a leader in a new technology to help this issue in the entire country.

The numbers of sick, staggering almost dead rats that I see in central park around all the jids ihas gotten unsanitary and disgusting .

Better To have LESS BODIES OF RATS OVERALL than Poisoned ,rotting bodies of dead ones.

I addition of course, they are a threat to raptors, dogs and children who try to play with them when they are dying.

Thank you Elizabeth Fagan Phd

I encourage the passing of Flaco's Law bill 376. Rodenticide has proven to be ineffective and results in unintended fatalities. Please consider what has been described as a more humane means of controlling rat populations.

Thank you.

Elizabeth Long

11222

[REDACTED]

From: Irene Muschel <irenemuschel21@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 1, 2024 12:58 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] humane rat control

[REDACTED]

Several months ago, I was walking down Third Avenue and saw a suffering rat with paralyzed legs dragging himself/herself across the street. My heart broke to see anyone suffering this way. This poor sentient creature was hurting, confused, and painfully dying.

He/she did not choose to be a rat. That's how he was born.

Does anyone think it is ethical to intentionally cause an animal to suffer in this way?

I did not know what to do. I did not have a box to put him in or gloves to handle him so that I could take him to a vet. I was at a complete loss even though I have rescued so many animals.

But the image of his suffering has remained with me.

Please create a humane way -- such as pellets that contain something to stop breeding --to deal with the overpopulation of these fellow city creatures. Try to imagine what it feels like to be a rat filled with poison.

Irene Muschel

[REDACTED]
New York, New York 10021

Testimony for Intro 736 for the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a dermatologist and a licensed NYS Wildlife Rehabilitator. Rat or mouse poison is an inhumane and toxic method of killing rodents. Larger predators also die after eating the poisoned rodents. It is ecologically unsound and decimates the food web. If rats were not poisoned, natural predators would thrive and balance the problem over time. Glue traps condemn the rats and mice to a slow, painful, and tortured death that no creature deserves. That said, I understand the rodent population needs to be controlled quickly. Preventing reproduction through chemical sterilization is a creative and ethically humane option that entails no suffering on the part of the rodent population. It also does not poison predatory animals in the food chain. For these reasons, I urge NYC to take this progressive approach to rodent control.

Respectfully,

Jacob Levitt, MD, FAAD

**TESTIMONY SUBMITTED TO THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL,
MAY 3, 2024, IN SUPPORT OF INTRO 736**

A Witnessing for Rats and a Plea for a Ban on Rodenticides

The first time I encountered a rat was decades ago when I lived in a brownstone in Brooklyn that I shared with six or seven others. Late one night I descended to the kitchen, which was in the basement, to get a drink of water, and the moment I entered I was floored, for right in front of me, near my dog's bowl, stood a giant rat looking up at me. The rat neither fled nor approached me, neither feared nor importuned, rather, he remained as if frozen to the spot, staring up at me, as if entirely confident that I wouldn't harm him. What struck me right away, and stayed with me all this time, was the brilliant light that shone in his eyes, suggestive of keen intelligence.

The most recent encounter was about a month ago in my tent in Chelsea at 3 a.m. or so where I was startled from sleep by what felt like a furry dog lying across my neck. As if in a dream, for a moment I was euphoric, imagining it was my own dog, until, regaining full consciousness, I remembered that my dog died several years ago, and I saw that the seeming dog was actually a huge rat lying there as if relaxed, right under my chin, across my chest, licking what must have been food residue from the button of the coat I was wearing. Now all the prejudice from the milieu seemed to rise up and explode in me and I screamed, as the poor creature darted off to the other side of the tent, hiding behind a wheeler there. When I unzipped the door, he darted out so quickly I scarcely saw him go. And yet, when I looked out, I was shocked to see him slowly hobbling away, as if fearless. He went so slowly and his gait was so wobbly that I guessed his fear had been overridden by pain. Later I looked up the symptoms of poisoning and a wobbly gait is one of them. He must have entered my tent, sensing that I would not harm him, hoping for food and water.

The next night I saw him again, this time, emerging from the subway station nearby. There were many people walking by, though again he seemed fearless, but again my fear overrode my reason. For when he looked me in the eyes from a few yards away and seemed about to approach, as if again he thought I might help him, I signaled to him to go away and he did. Then I realized that he must be starving and thirsty and was probably dying and knew it, so as soon as I could I left some food out for him in the street

nearby, the next night and a few nights thereafter, though I never saw him again.

About a decade ago there was a family of rats that I saw more than once emerging from a sewer on Ninth Avenue not far from a Chinese take-out place where I occasionally went. I'd see them—sometimes a parent and baby—rushing over to the trash, some so thin that their rib cage showed beneath the fur. The dish I ordered always came with an overabundance of rice, of which I eat very little. So I began to feed the family of rats with the rice and some remaining sauce, usually adding a piece of broccoli or other vegetable. I'd leave it outside a garbage can on the ground near the sewer where they lived, where there was almost always strewn garbage. Then for a few months I didn't go to the Chinese place. All at once I found myself walking past that same sewer and, almost as if they knew I'd be there at that moment, the family—or maybe a different family, though I suspect it was the same one—poked their heads up through the grating and began squeaking and squeaking in a chorus, as if crying out for me to feed them. This time, however, I had no food with me and their cries broke my heart.

I've seen hungry rats on the subway tracks anxiously searching for food and occasionally I've given them a piece of bread which they accept gratefully and, holding onto it, return to their hiding places.

A rat is very much like a squirrel—also a highly intelligent rodent, as they're called—friendly unless menaced. And yet squirrels are regarded as adorable, rats anathema. That this is purely a matter of convention may be seen from the fact that in India there's a Hindu temple for rats where the creatures live, are fed, come and go as they please, give birth, and are protected for their entire lives by the people who run the place.

There would be no rat problem in New York City if the needs of the rats were recognized and humans were taught to relate to them in a more enlightened way than at present. I am not a fan of contraceptives for animals, and yet if poison is the only alternative, they're obviously by far the better strategy. The poison condemns them to a slow, tortured death that no creature on earth deserves to suffer. The rodenticides need to be banned, something that's already happening in California and is in the planning stages in other states.

A Mouse in New York City

At an apartment in the South Bronx years ago, that I shared with three others, each of us blessed with our own room and lock, a tiny mouse visited me one evening, and, divining that the mouse was hungry, I provided a portion of refried lentils—mashed with garlic and spices—inside the top of a container that was about one inch in diameter. The mouse seemed very frightened and hid under the refrigerator, so I pushed the food there and some water in a separate container of the same size. The lentils were soon gone and the mouse departed. The same mouse returned the next evening, slightly less timid, though remaining mostly under the refrigerator. Again I provided some refried lentils, and, after finishing them, the mouse departed. This went on for some time—with the mouse returning at 6 p.m. every night, as if she knew how to read the clock!, at which time I'd give the same or similar soft food, all of which she accepted avidly, except for black beans, which she rejected unless they were refried!, and during the day I'd leave water in the same sized container under the refrigerator, a container that was always empty when I returned at night. (The mice there lived in walls and it was an upper floor during an unbearably warm summer!) The mouse began to be less afraid and eventually stood out in the open, between refrigerator and cabinet, then she'd sit down looking up at me with her button eyes and wrap her tail around her awaiting the evening meal. The first time that happened—for I'd never looked closely at a mouse before—I noticed how large her ears were compared with her tiny face—pale and perfect circles that stuck out almost perpendicular to her head and so thin the light of the room seemed to pass through them.

One night I was wakened by a strange noise as of feverish scratching against a material surface. The noise went on for a long time, stopping only when I turned on the light, and, finding nothing to account for it, guessing it was coming from inside the walls, I returned to sleep. Then a day or so later, by chance, right after mopping the floor, I discovered behind the cabinet near the refrigerator a huge nest made of soft material from inside the mattress, and many other soft materials from other parts of the room, and I knew, of course, that this was the frantic labor of a mouse getting ready to give birth, who'd trusted me enough to build her nest in a hidden corner of my space. Leaving the nest intact, I placed it in a completely concealed location that would not elude mama mouse, though would keep it from any human inspectors.

Though mice give birth to six babies on average, I witnessed only one—a baby who eventually began visiting me nightly with mama mouse. Naturally I fed them both and continued to leave water under the refrigerator every day. Then one day I was called in to the BRC office on grounds that someone reported that I'd been feeding mice. Terror! Did the inspectors enter my room while I was away and discover the tiny bowls under the refrigerator? Why would they even think to look there? I'd never said a word to the other tenants or anyone else about my mouse friend or her baby! The psychiatrist was called in and I was forced to undergo a new interview with her, even though she'd already determined that I was okay, not insane, and qualified for regular housing.

Her judgment: I was “guarded” in the face of her questions, may indeed have been feeding mice, was possibly psychotic therefore, so I needed to be housed under Category A. That meant I'd be yoked to BRC for the rest of my life, and to a psychiatrist of their choosing, who could incarcerate me in a hospital at any time, or force me to take drugs, and get me evicted if I refused any of his or her dictates. I rejected that out of hand and pleaded for help getting low cost housing, though to no avail. Nor was I allowed to remain in the South Bronx transitional housing apartment, where I'd lived for almost a year. They gave me a month or so to prepare myself to leave.

Soon thereafter I traveled up north for a few days to an area of New England where I'd lived happily several years before, to look for an apartment there, though finding nothing I returned to the South Bronx. As I approached the apartment building, exhausted from my travels, a vision of horror struck me. On the ground floor, though partially hidden inside, all the trash cans for the building were clustered. And around one of them, as if deliberately placed that way, were the bodies of dead mice, one after the other, some with mouths slightly open as if they'd died gasping for air. Sick with pain, I did not go to see if mama mouse and her baby were there, for the inference was obvious. And upstairs that night the man who'd reported me to the office, one of the other tenants of the apartment, confessed to me *sub rosa* to having done so, even mentioning the tiny container tops I'd used for food and water, and disclosed additionally that the office had planted him there from the beginning, and paid him for his work. The following day he moved out and returned to his own apartment.

Joan Harrison

Testimony on Intro 736
Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management
Wed, May 01 @ 10:00 AM

Hello Chair Abreu and members of the Sanitation Committee,


I write in **support of Intro 736** because the City's current practices of rodent mitigation are inhumane. I am hoping the DOHMH will testify in support of this bill ahead of my reading this testimony, or even better, to say that the bill is unnecessary because they are already piloting rat contraception.

As a cyclist, I am over-exposed to the gruesome roadkill that rat poison causes. After seeing one too many disturbing rat carcasses on the street, I began to document them in late March. As of 4/27, I have documented 16 dead rats on the street, 7 of which were found in just one trip from Williamsburg to Bushwick. NYC should not have roadkill of any kind.

Not only are rats sentient animals, which means they can feel negative and positive emotions, they are part of a small group of non-human animals that have been proven to have metacognition.¹ This means they can suffer. And at the hands of the City, they do so, extremely.

Rats also have empathy. There is documentation that they experience distress when another rat is in distress, and at least one study² found that rats repeatedly took action to help another rat, even if it meant having less treats.

Lastly, I learned in National Geographic³ that a study published in *Current Biology* trained rats to pull levers to get a tasty sugar pellet. When the lever delivered a mild shock to a neighbor, several rats stopped pulling it and switched to another lever. I'd call this compassion. Something I want more of from the City for these emotionally intelligent animals.

Thank you,
Kate Mikuliak

BK NY 11211

1. Metacognition in the rat, Allison L. Foote¹ and Jonathon D. Crystal. National Institute of Health. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1861845/>
2. Rats Show Empathy, Too. NIH RESEARCH MATTERS. <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/nih-research-matters/rats-show-empathy-too>
3. Rats avoid harming other rats. The finding may help us understand sociopaths. National Geographic. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/article/rats-empathy-brains-harm-aversion>

[REDACTED]

From: Humane Westchester <humane.westchester@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 2, 2024 2:50 PM
To: Testimony
Cc: [REDACTED]; Kathy Nizzari
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Intro 736

[REDACTED]

Councilmembers,
New York City Council

Hon. Councilmembers:

I am writing in support of Intro 736, a welcome and humane bill which will require the Department of Health and the Sanitation Dept. to create a pilot rat contraceptive program. Rats are intelligent and sentient; they are basically just looking for food - witness the enormous public sympathy for 'Pizza Rat,' the little rat trying to take home his slice of discarded pizza; but I recognize and understand efforts to reduce their numbers. Installing a system of birth control is an intelligent, enlightened method of achieving this - without the need of various pain-producing implements...and certainly highly preferable to barbaric glue traps.

Thank you in advance for your learned and esteemed passage of this dynamic bill. The world is changing; such bills reflect a trend away from unnecessary pain and torture - to a more compassionate way of life for all.

Respectfully,

Kiley Blackman, Founder
Animal Defenders of Westchester
Member, *Lights Out Committee*

Life is as dear to a mute creature as it is to man. Just as one wants happiness and fears pain, just as one wants to live and not die, so do other creatures. [The Dalai Lama](#)

ANIMAL DEFENDERS OF WESTCHESTER

www.ADOW..org

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Testimony by Lena Frey, Member of the GrowNYC Workers Collective
New York City Council Committee on Sanitation
Chair Shaun Abreu
Oversight – Street Cleanliness
May 1, 2024

Good morning Chair Abreu, and members of the Sanitation committee. My name is Lena Frey, and I address you today as a proud community compost worker and a member of the GrowNYC Workers Collective, a labor union with RWDSU.

The recent defunding of the community compost program, and the City's failure to renew contracts for the Zero Waste Schools and Stop N Swap programs, will leave millions of New Yorkers without vital waste reduction services. It also means 79 union workers like myself losing our jobs. Community compost is one of the best ways to keep our city clean and mitigate the rat problem. Food waste sitting out on the street in plastic bags is a feast for rats, and diverting this waste through community composting is one of the most cost effective preventive measures the City can take.

Without the education and outreach efforts of Zero Waste workers, school compost programs and the City's brown bins will continue to be contaminated and ineffective. You cannot defund these waste reduction programs, laying off union workers, and expect this City to be clean and functional. We must invest in sustainable waste management, outreach and education, if we want a cleaner and healthier city.

I implore The City Council to reinstate funding for the Zero Waste Programs at GrowNYC and for the NYC Compost Project. Funds must be made immediately available to save our jobs and the 30+ years of progress we have made towards a clean and sustainable New York City for all.

Thank you for your time,
Lena Frey
Brooklyn

May 1, 2024

IN SUPPORT OF INT 736

Good morning, my name is Dr. Loretta Mayer and I am the Co-Founder of Wisdom Good Works, a 501© 3 sharing scientific expertise to restore ecologic balance around the world. I am speaking today in support of bill 736.

I have been working globally to provide fertility control solutions for rodent destruction of food, infrastructure, and disease spread for the past 25 years. I co-invented the only EPA registered product in the US where I learned the paradigm shift from killing to addressing the root cause of rodent infestation, their rapid reproduction, is a long-term proposition not suited to an initial commercial approach.

Our organization is comprised of scientists with support of many major donors and volunteers that wish to see a better approach to rodent management. We have amassed data that now shows rodent reduction in open, semi-open, and closed migration settings range from 70% population reduction to complete eradication within months.

We have developed a 100% plant derived pellet: attractive over local food availability, safe for humans and non-target animals such as Flaco here in NYC. We have learned using fertility control requires monitoring of population decline in every setting. We provide this monitoring and training open source to all along with the pellets.

I began my field work here in the subways of NYC and have demonstrated with confidence that fertility control can work for major cities such as yours. The solution is a strong working group with a depth of experience in both the science and practicality of the challenge. As a non-profit we can provide pellets at cost which is far below rodenticides or other solutions. This is our mission.

We stand ready to work with you and put our resources behind our support of this bill. The Lights Out Coalition brought your request to our door and it is always open. We can do this.

I am happy to be available to you for any questions or data.

[REDACTED]

From: MARGARET LEE <mlee282828@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, May 4, 2024 8:48 AM
To: Office of Correspondence Services; NYC Council Hearings
Subject: [EXTERNAL] TESTIMONY In Support of Intro 736 The Rat Contraception Bill

[REDACTED]

In Support of Intro 736
The Rat Contraception Bill

I'm Margaret Lee, a longtime resident of lower Manhattan and astute observer of New York's nonhuman beings, including RATS. I felt it important to be here in person to support Intro 736 - the Rat Contraception Bill - and to personally thank the NYC Council members who initiated and cosponsored this life-changing action for wildlife. It has the potential to make NYC a more compassionate place for urban wildlife and may inspire other urban areas to do better for their under-appreciated residents.

I'm excited by FLACO's LAWS - named for NYC's beloved owl who tragically died as a result of rodenticide poisoning. Like many NYers I was deeply moved by the life and death of Flaco. He had a year of freedom, out of captivity, but ultimately succumbed to the city's perils...most tragically our city's WAR ON RATS.

As one of the rare NYers who actually admire RATS for their lovely, quirky, fascinating qualities and the incalculable ways we are indebted to them, I'm saddened by the ways they are vilified and so viciously treated when they're simply struggling to survive against all odds.

RATS NEVER experience the freedom Flaco had. They are under constant attack in a city that considers them pests to be destroyed by any manner of diabolical methods and products no matter how cruel and insidious...all because humans regard them as unworthy of respect...in a hostile environment we created against a species that is enviably generous, doing everything they can to help others in need or distress.

The reality is, if we could be more like rats, we'd have a kinder, more altruistic world!

I was in high school on Long Island when I was introduced to Rachel Carson's landmark book SILENT SPRING, required reading many years ago. It opened my eyes to the horrors of insecticides and rodenticides and to the ways we are all connected and impacted by how we treat other beings. How is it, all these years later, we still don't comprehend the lessons we've been taught?!!!

RATS live - if we can call it living - distinctly separate but also very much with us. They don't receive adulation like Flaco except by those of us who notice, care about and respect them as the ultimate NY survivors. As moved as I was by the life and death of Flaco, I am likewise moved by the life and everyday deaths of RATS.

Years after reading SILENT SPRING when I migrated from Long Island to NYC, I was shocked to see how RATS and mice and other creatures were subjected to instruments of torture simply because they had the grave misfortune of being born here.

I was most especially appalled by the heinous glue traps which not only cause the agonizing, tortuous deaths of their intended victims but also birds, squirrels and other animals who just happen to encounter them. Even Flaco could've

been a victim of this cruelty. Then there are the fake rocks designed to look nice in garden settings, but are actually diabolical traps for any creature small enough to be lured in. All these methods of destruction MUST be eliminated if we are to become a city of kindness.

It also surprised and continues to surprise me the everyday use of toxic chemicals unnecessarily used to wash sidewalks. How crazy is that???! I spend half my life racing poisoned birds to the WILD BIRD FUND when they mistake this deadly toxic soup for a refreshing sip of water - something else the city fails to provide. All too often they don't survive.

These destructive chemicals are used in the misguided notion that we have a 'RAT PROBLEM'!! I would suggest instead we have a HUMAN PROBLEM!! How can anyone not see the pain and suffering they cause???

Such life-destroying products have NO place in a city that considers itself civilized. There is NO EXCUSE for animal abuse!!

It should be clear by now how very interconnected we ALL are. Flaco's death helped bring awareness to that essential fact. But given how the human species inherently disregards other beings they see as inferior, those who don't measure up to Flaco, it's imperative Intro 736 be fast-tracked into practice. Rats endure such awful suffering in our unkind city that contraception is the only reasonable way to gain control over a population unhappily born into a mostly merciless world.

Ideally, humans would devise ways to enhance the lives of other beings rather than declare war on them. But given that is not going to happen anytime soon, Flaco's Laws are a good step forward!

Again I thank all members of the Council who support this essential Bill to better the lives of ALL NYers - those seen and those unseen. And I'd like to suggest it go even further to envision a truly merciful NYC as though our lives depend upon it...because they do..

Margaret Lee
NYC

To: **Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management**
From: Marion Koenig, Animal Advocate recognized by Animal Care Center
Date: May 1, 2024
Re: Testimony for supporting Intro Bill 736

In New York City, the idea to distribute rat contraceptives got fresh attention in city government Thursday following the death of an escaped zoo owl, **known as Flaco**, who was found dead with rat poison in his system.

City Council Member Shaun Abreu proposed a city ordinance Thursday to establish a pilot program for controlling the millions of rats lurking in subway stations and empty lots using birth control instead of lethal chemicals. Abreu, chair of the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management, said the contraceptives also are more ethical and humane than other methods.

The contraceptive, called ContraPest, is contained in salty, fatty pellets that are scattered in rat-infested areas as bait. It works by targeting ovarian function in female rats and disrupting sperm cell production in males, The New York Times reported.

If you are not aware, the poison in the black boxes slowly and painfully kills up the wildlife chain. This poison causes the rats to painfully, slowly bleed to death. In the meantime, while they are suffering, feral cats, raccoons, and coyotes kill the rats and are poisoned.

For decades, it's proven ineffectual to attempt to wipe out the rat population with poison. It's cruel and simply does not work. In addition, killing rats through the wide-scale use of rat poison has devastating effects on the city's raptor population.

Wildlife rescues have reported that emergency medical efforts are totally ineffective in the face

of rodenticide poisoning. There's nothing to do to save WILDLIFE from death by rodenticide poisoning. Please support Intro Bill 736. .

Thank you, City Council Member Shaun Abreu.

Thank you, NYC Council Members, for supporting this bill.

A special thanks to my Council Member, Eric Dinowitz, for supporting this bill 736.

To the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management:

I strongly urge you to move swiftly to pass City Council bill 736 – “Establish a rat contraceptive pilot program”. As the manager of a community compost operation on 4th Ave in Brooklyn, I can attest to the rise in rat population. I also know that rat poison has dire environmental consequences: birds and other wildlife, pets and even people are in danger of being poisoned when rodenticides are used to control rat populations. Rodenticides can also contaminate soil.

The rat contraceptive program sounds good; it holds promise. A recent study in [Integrated Zoology](#) illustrates the procedures used to implement contraceptive program and the consequent successes. NY City Dept of Health, along with DSNY needs to embrace this safe and efficient system. This pilot could lead to a safe alternative to the use of rodenticides.

Thank you,

Mark Hellermann

Brooklyn NY

1 May, 2024

Esteemed Committee Members and Concerned Others,

Opting for more humane strategies to address rat overpopulation (*Rattus norvegicus* and *Rattus rattus*) in this borough is long overdue and essential as an informed public safety measure.

There is a surfeit of ecological research which demonstrates why the use of toxins in the environment to eliminate unwanted mammal populations can backfire, resulting in off-target lethality and suffering to the target species as well as a host of other beings. Anticoagulants, bromethalin, cholecalciferol or other substances (including some labeled humane which are not) present an ongoing and unnecessary health risk.

Rats are sentient animals which have evolved to live and thrive in close proximity to humans and continue to do so because of human choices and practices. While we work on addressing how to curb human subsidies to unwanted species, contraception is the intelligent alternative. These strategies have been successfully used for years in other species such as feral horses and deer.

Unlike the somewhat labor intensive engagement these contraceptives entail in larger mammals there is a developed EPA approved product for use in rats which could be implemented immediately. Contrapest[™] is a humane sterilant manufactured by the company Senestech (<https://senestech.com/>) which effectively works on both male and female rats permanently sterilizing them with minimal risk to other species and a track record of efficacy.

As a lifelong resident of Manhattan I would gladly volunteer my time and expertise to assist in public sanitation campaigns to address the root of the issue.

Kind regards,

Melani Nardone
PhD, Anthrozoology

Testimony by Nathalie Huang, Member of the GrowNYC Workers Collective
New York City Council Committee on Sanitation
Chair Shaun Abreu
Oversight – Street Cleanliness
May 1, 2024

Good morning Chair Abreu, and members of the Sanitation Committee. My name is Nathalie Huang, and I write to you today as a proud member of the GrowNYC Workers Collective, a labor union under the Retail, Wholesale Department Store Union.

I am a Compost Coordinator in GrowNYC's compost program and my 53 coworkers and I are sadly preparing to be laid off on May 20th. While private funding did come through for our program in December after Mayor Adams cut our whole budget, these funds are running out. The compost program is a sub-department in GrowNYC's three Zero Waste Programs, with the two others being Zero Waste Schools and Stop n'Swap. My colleagues in these two departments are also losing their funding from the city by mid-June, and in total from the 53 people in GrowNYC's compost program, that will be 80 people facing unemployment. The loss of these three community-based waste diversion organizations will leave a gap in locally accessible services that are necessary for people to have tangible solutions in zero waste diversion.

To paraphrase what the Mayor's Director of Finance Jacques Jiha said in a December hearing, he called community composting "small and inefficient" as the reasoning for why funding for GrowNYC's compost program and the New York City Compost Project was cut. GrowNYC food scrap dropoff sites run by staff like me excel in ways the curbside organics collection programs rolled out by the city do not - we educate people in their neighborhoods about how separating their food waste for composting deters rats by keeping rotten food off the streets and we ensure the food scraps people bring to us are free of contaminants that cannot be composted. Nothing is more effective than the spoken word through consistent face-to-face interactions and compost workers like myself have conducted composting outreach in Bensonhurst, Bay Ridge, Crown Heights, Harlem, and Manhattan.

Commissioner Tisch from DSNY once proclaimed at a March hearing that all of Brooklyn and Queens has easy access to curbside collections, but this remains untrue. As a public-facing worker, I heard countless stories over the years from my participants about non-existent curbside collections and noncompliance from landlords and other tenants due to a lack of awareness about the program itself. I do not foresee a smooth transition for Manhattan either when the service begins in that borough this Fall. This is why GrowNYC's compost program and the New York City Compost Project organizations like Big Reuse, Lower East Side Ecology Center, and Earth Matter have been so essential to providing people with the needed hands-on

education and opportunities about composting and providing additional ways to drop off their food scraps as well as having a place to compost them locally. People should always have these options to empower them to help with rat mitigation and street cleanliness. Rather than getting rid of us completely, both the Mayor and DSNY need to be united in collaboration with us to further the cause of improving New York City's ability to be sustainable, healthy, and equitable.

I ask the City Council to carefully consider the ramifications of what losing the entire network of Zero Waste programs means and implore you for the full restoration of funding to our programs so that we may continue to serve your constituents who highly value and depend on our services.

Thank you for your time,

Nathalie Huang

Ridgewood, Queens

[REDACTED]

From: Nicole Rivard <nrivard@friendsofanimals.org>
Sent: Thursday, May 2, 2024 2:53 PM
To: Testimony; [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Votes yes to Intro 726

[REDACTED]



**Public Hearing—
Sanitation Committee
May 1, 2024
Testimony in support of Intro 726 submitted by Friends of Animals
Presented by Nicole Rivard, Government/Media Relations Manager**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony for Intro 726. I am here on behalf of Friends of Animals, an international animal advocacy group founded in NY in 1957, and our hundreds of NYC members. We are also a member of the Lights out Coalition.

Sadly, Flaco was not the first of NYC’s “celebrity owls” to be poisoned by rodenticides. Barry, the beloved barred owl who died in 2021, had a potentially lethal level of rat poison that could have impaired her flying abilities before she crashed into a Central Park maintenance truck.

Not to mention, anticoagulants were detected in 84 percent of dead birds of prey found in New York City, according to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

That’s why we are asking the Sanitation Committee to not only pass Intro 726 but also restrict the use of second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides in NYC as California and British Columbia have done. Similar legislation that we helped draft is moving through the CT legislature.

Fertility control alone will not stop the carnage of NYC’s raptors and other wildlife.

Anticoagulants work by preventing blood from clotting. The second-generation class was created to be more toxic and last longer than the first-generation class. Rodents frequently eat more than a single dose. Birds of prey don’t have a chance against this super lethal build-up in the rodent’s tissues—they’re dying from internal bleeding after consuming poisoned rodents.

There have been no public health emergencies in California or British Columbia since 2021 when they restricted and banned SGARS—proof that we can protect wildlife without compromising public health.

More good news—data shows rodent birth control can be an effective solution that does not harm non-target wildlife. Raptors Are the Solution, our ally in California, was able to reduce the rat population by 91 percent at a Seattle business district using birth control. Bushnell Park in Hartford has stopped using toxic anticoagulants since it launched a successful birth control pilot program in 2021. Another key to success was removing potential rat habitat and improving waste management. After all, rodent problems stem from poor sanitation practices and giving rodents access to shelter.

Toxic anticoagulants ‘mis’-manage the problem—they will never solve it. Most importantly, they are killing NYC’s birds of prey who are the best defense against rodents anyway.

Friends of Animals is an international animal protection organization founded in New York in 1957 and advocates for the rights of animals, free-living and domestic around the world.

Nicole Rivard
Editor-in-Chief
Media/Government Relations Manager



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nrivard@friendsofanimals.org
www.friendsofanimals.org

Written Statement for City Hall Hearing

Subject: Support for Legislation on Dog Waste Management

Dear Members of the City Council,

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed bill that mandates the installation of dog waste bag dispensers alongside all public litter baskets on city streets, as well as the launch of a public awareness campaign about the health hazards associated with dog waste.

As a resident of the Upper East Side in Manhattan and a parent of a young toddler, I have firsthand experience of the challenges posed by unmanaged dog waste in our neighborhood. Each day, as I stroll through our community, I encounter numerous instances of dog waste that not only mar our beautiful streets but also present a real threat to public health. This waste is not just unsightly; it frequently ends up on the wheels of my child's stroller, an issue that becomes distressing once it is inadvertently carried into our home.

The presence of dog waste is so prevalent that my toddler, instead of admiring the beautiful tulips and daffodils, often points out and counts dog feces. Although this may inadvertently sharpen her counting skills, it is disheartening that her early experiences with nature are overshadowed by such a negative aspect. More importantly, dog waste is a known vector for fecal bacteria that can cause diseases, a fact that underscores the need for public education on this issue.

The proposed legislation will not only help keep our streets cleaner but also reduce the health risks associated with accidental contact with dog waste. By ensuring the availability of waste bags, we encourage responsible pet ownership. Furthermore, the collaboration between the Department of Sanitation and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene for a public awareness campaign is crucial. Educating the public about the dangers of dog waste will enhance community efforts to address this issue and promote a healthier, cleaner living environment for everyone.

Thank you for considering this legislation. I urge you to pass this bill and help make our city a better place for all residents, young and old.

Sincerely,
Dr. Olga Lavinda



██████████ New York, NY, 10128
lavinda@nyu.edu

New York City Council

New York City Hall

250 Broadway

New York, New York

RE: Testimonial for Support for Intro 736

May 1, 2024

Dear Committee, Hosts and Attendees,

It is an honor to submit this short but heart felt testimony of why I support Intro 736 or Flaco Law #1. As a frequent visitor to New York City and donor to various non profits such as the NYBG the bounty of nature is important to preserve. Also want to share that for decades have been active in the National Wildlife Federation Backyard Habitat Program, Monarch Waystation, Humane Society Human Backyard Guidelines and other stewardship memberships. Also studied Orthinology and Horticulture through distance learning with Cornell University's with certifications. As a wildlife habitat designer and rehabilitator the aftermath of pesticides and rodenticides are often observed in the mortality of birds, small mammals and felines.

We have had the very sad experience to deal with deaths or taking raptor and wildflie to certified centers for care. Two years ago a juvenile Saw Whet owl was found in our large garden space very ill with no injuries. Sadly it did not survive after transport to a Raptor Center. We suspect that the diet of mice during the winter and use of rodent pellets may have been the cause. Also squirrels have we have buried in metal containers had signs of being poisoned and precautions take to keep out of animal food chain.

Rosemary Kenigsberg

1 May 2024

IN SUPPORT OF INT 736

Hello, my name is Professor Stephen Shuster. I am Curator of Marine Invertebrates and Molluscs at Northern Arizona University, a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and Chair of the Scientific Advisory Board of Wisdom Good Works, a 501C3 sharing scientific research and expertise to restore ecological balance around the world.

I am speaking today in support of Bill 736.

I have written and coauthored over 30 of publications stressing the importance of species interactions for maintaining species diversity and ecosystem services. I have coauthored several additional publications on the efficacy of fertility control for managing rodent populations, and the evolution of resistance to pest and pathogen treatments involving rodenticides and other lethal measures.

These contributions argue strongly against reductions in genetic variation underlying foundation species in natural ecosystems associated with agriculture and development. They also indicate that rodenticides and antibiotics impose the strongest evolutionary forces now known favoring resistance. Most researchers agree that the rapid and catastrophic evolution of pest and pathogen resistance to the measures designed to control them, are among the most significant problems of modern times.

Our results indicate that contraceptives, such as the Good Bites pellets developed by Loretta Mayer and Cheryl Dyer of Wisdom Good Works, are more effective at controlling pest populations and slowing the evolution of rodenticide resistance, than treatments that cause sterilization or death in target species. These findings have significant implications for the management of pest and pathogen species through fertility control in major metropolitan areas such as New York City.

As a Chair of the Scientific Advisory Board of Wisdom Good Works, our group of consulting scientists with global reputations in fertility control are ready to work with you in support of Bill 736. We acknowledge The Lights Out Coalition for bringing this issue to our attention.

Please contact me if you have any questions or require data to support my statements.

Stephen M. Shuster, PhD, FAAAS
Professor of Invertebrate Zoology and Curator,
Museum of Marine Invertebrates and Molluscs
Department of Biological Sciences
Northern Arizona University
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stephen.shuster@nau.edu
https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Stephen_Shuster

Mating Systems and Strategies, 2003

<https://press.princeton.edu/titles/7571.html>

Invertebrates, 3e., 2016

<https://global.oup.com/ushe/product/invertebrates-9781605353753?lang=en&cc=ca>

Dog poop in our neighborhood is excessive. The volume of dog poop on our sidewalks poses a threat to our public health and safety. The feces-littered sidewalks and streets that we use daily, create an unsanitary and hazardous place to live, work, and play. The last three years of the COVID pandemic has demonstrated the importance of disease prevention and mitigation tactics. Our community is a particularly vulnerable ecosystem where disease is easily spread by the high concentration of schools and small children in the area.

The Pooper Scooper Law (New York Public Health Law § 1310) established in 1978 is not being enforced.

Sadly, this lack of enforcement encourages people to leave dog poop on the ground, rather than make a good faith effort to clean it up. Further, reporting such instances via nyc.gov transfers the responsibility of cleanliness to the property owner rather than the animal owner/caretaker. We think this is counterproductive. Although the failure to clean up dog poop has been receiving a lot of media attention, our local officials do not have a suitable solution, nor have we seen an actual reduction of dog poop.

I have started a group on Facebook called "UES Dog Poop Report" with fellow citizens to highlight this ever-growing problem and **discuss proposed solutions with you in person:**

Our suggestions include:

- Enforce the current Pooper Scooper Law NYS PHL § 1310 by having "sanitation officers" and "any persons authorized to issue tickets for parking violations" issue appearance tickets.
- Issue a quarterly enforcement measures report detailing the number of tickets issued, the locations of the violations, the time of day the ticket was issued, and the funds generated from the violation fees.
- Increase signage: "Pet Waste Transmits Disease: Leash and Clean Up After your Pet".
- Increase signage of penalty notifications around neighborhoods (\$250).
- Make poop bags available on every block and / or attach to garbage bins
 - Possibly sponsored by local pet care businesses, such as dog walkers, groomers, etc.
- Create a Civilian Enforcement / Citation Program (Civilians can receive portions of fines to incentivize, like they do for [illegally parked cars](#)).
- Incorporate poop clean-up option for [NY court ordered community service](#) (instead of jail time).
- Create a "Poop Patrol" similar to what [San Francisco did](#).
- Leverage security cameras already existing around the city to catch repeat offenders;
- Use saliva samples to create a local pet database
 - Saliva sampling would create jobs for the city and also revenue

- Could potentially benefit employment of homeless / formerly incarcerated who could be trained to perform testing for either collection of samples and/or matching of violators to the database
- Could be overseen by a veterinarian. Testing centers for saliva could be set up at the dog parks, groomers etc.
- Ask the State Legislature to adjust the \$250.00 violation amount for inflation to a higher amount that will serve as a stronger deterrence to violators.

As citizens, we expect the City to produce tangible results that reduce dog poop in our neighborhood. You, our elected officials, have an obligation to protect New Yorker's health and wellbeing.

**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: Deputy Commissioner Ryan Merola

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: Deputy Commissioner Joshua Goodman

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: Commissioner Jessica Tisch

Address: _____

I represent: DSNY

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

0736

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 0174 Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 5/11/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rosette Schiffer

Address: _____

I represent: GRANDNYC WORKERS

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

0736

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

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lena Grey

Address: _____

I represent: GRANDNYC Workers Collective

Address: RWDSU

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 0174 Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 5/11/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rene DelCarmen

Address: 219 MacKibbin St Brooklyn

I represent: Surge WeCan

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 0174 Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ryan Castalia

Address: 219 McKibbin St Brooklyn

I represent: Sure We Can

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 736 Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 5/1/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: GALICIA OUTES

Address: [REDACTED] Brooklyn 11215

I represent: myself

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 736 Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MARY FLAHERTY

Address: [REDACTED] NY NY

I represent: myself 10003

Address: _____

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. 736 Res. No. 0736

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Margaret Lee

Address: [redacted] 10012

I represent: self - member of Vegans of NY

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 736 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 5/1/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Alaina Gonzalez-White

Address: [redacted] Astoria, NY 11105

I represent: Wisdom Good Works

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 736 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Linda Mann

Address: 600 WF Ave

I represent: League of Humane Voters

Address: _____

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. 736 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 5/1/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kathy NIZZARI

Address: [redacted] NYC 10001

I represent: LIGHTS OUT COALITION

Address: same

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 736 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: DEBORAH THOMAS

Address: [redacted] 108TH ST. [redacted]

I represent: NYCLASS + NYA AOE

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 736 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: May 1, 2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rockwell Schwartz

Address: [redacted] Brooklyn, NY 11207

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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. 736 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 5/1/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Deborra Mullins

Address: _____ NYC

I represent: Linnæan Society of NY

Address: PO Box 801 NYC 10024

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: 05/01/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: SITRA BOWMAN

Address: _____

I represent: GrowNYC Workers Collective

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 174

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lea Dubuque

Address: _____

I represent: NWRA

Address: _____

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. 736

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: NAILA COSTA

Address: _____

I represent: VFAR

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 0736

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lorial Crowder

Address: [REDACTED] Broadway [REDACTED]

I represent: [REDACTED] They want to live

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 736 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 5/1/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Derek Shiller

Address: [REDACTED] Brooklyn

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

0781

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

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Danielle Avssor
Address: [REDACTED] E. 73rd Street
I represent: District 5, 5th manna
Address: UPS

**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: 5/1/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Christopher Leon Johnson
Address: [REDACTED]
I represent: Self
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: 5/1/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: _____
Address: Paul River
I represent: _____
Address: _____