

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

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November 16, 2021
Start: 10:03 a.m.
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HELD AT: Remote Hearing, Virtual Room 1

B E F O R E: Antonio Reynoso
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Antonio Reynoso
Justin L. Brannan
Fernando Cabrera
Margaret S. Chin
Oswald Feliz
James F. Gennaro
Kevin C. Riley

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

Edward Grayson
Commissioner
Department of Sanitation

Greg Anderson
Deputy Commissioner for Policy and
External Affairs
Department of Sanitation

Bridget Anderson
Deputy Commissioner for Recycling and
Sustainability
Department of Sanitation

Eric Goldstein

Justin Wood

Kathy Nizzari

Alex Shapanka

Oliver Wright

@

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2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Recording.

3 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Recording to the
4 computer all set.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Recording to the cloud
6 is up.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Backup is rolling.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Sergeant Polite, you
9 may begin with the opening.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS POLITE: Thank you.
11 Good morning and welcome to the remote hearing on
12 Sanitation and Solid Waste Management. Will all
13 council members and staff please turn on your video
14 at this time. Thank you. To minimize disruption,
15 please place all cell phones and electronics to
16 vibrate. You may send your testimony to
17 testimony@council.nyc.gov. Once again, that's
18 testimony@council.nyc.gov. Chair, we are ready to
19 begin.

20 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Good morning. I'm
21 Council Member Antonio Reynoso, chair of the
22 Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management.
23 Welcome to this oversight hearing on the topic
24 Advancements in Residential and Commercial Solid
25 Waste Management Systems. As this session draws to a

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3 closure and my tenure as chair of the committee, I
4 think it's important to celebrate some of the
5 landmark advancements that we have made in how the
6 city handles its solid waste and look to the future
7 and consider areas for future improvements to help
8 the city achieve its zero waste goals. This session
9 has been nothing short of remarkable for this
10 committee. We passed Local Law 199 of 2019, the
11 Commercial Waste Zone Law, which completely
12 transformed the private carting system that was
13 endangering workers and the public, wreaking havoc on
14 our environment and provide poor service to many of
15 their customers. We passed Local Law 152 of 2018,
16 the Waste Equity Law, which prevents certain
17 communities from bearing the brunt of truck traffic,
18 air and noise pollution, from waste transfer stations
19 in their neighborhoods. We reduced single-use bag
20 use and pollution by passing a 5-cent fee on paper
21 bags to accompany the state ban on plastic bags. And
22 we continue to push for residential commercial waste
23 systems that would advance, ah, progress to sending
24 zero waste landfill. I just want to note off script
25 that the sky hasn't fallen because of any of these
pieces of legislation. Um, which you would think

would happen, ah, during our debates. Um, despite the achievements of this committee the city still has a long way to go and much, much more to do when it comes to improving how we handle waste in New York City. In 2015 the de Blasio administration set an ambitious goal of sending zero waste to landfill by 2030. The council and advocates agreed with this bill as a necessary and urgent step that New York City should take to combat climate change. However, since the goal was announced six years ago we have had to fight tooth and nail to encourage the administration to enact even the basic [inaudible] to achieve the goals that they themselves set out to achieve. As my time as chair comes to a close, I hope that the incoming council and mayoral administration will pick up the mantle of prioritizing the Zero By 30 goal while continuing to improve sanitation practices in New York City. Today I look forward to hearing testimony from DSNY and the public about their experience of implementation of the landmark local laws that we have passed under my tenure. In addition, I look forward to hearing advice for how the city could be doing more to reduce waste now and in the future. Ah, I just want to say

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this is sort of a hearing and exit memo hearing, ah,
and very rarely during exit memos do you, you know,
talk about what you've done, it's mostly, ah, about
what you haven't done and what you're hoping the, the
future folks, ah, take on. Um, I want to thank, ah,
everyone that's on this, in this committee, um, over
the last four years and shorter, um, that Council
Member Riley who came in a little later after that,
um, for all the work that you guys have done. You
can say, um, you know, without hesitation in this
committee, ah, took on tough battles, um, discussed
them in a very, in a very, um, in a way that was
relevant, productive, um, and I'm, it's one of the,
the best committees, I believe, in all of the City of
New York. Um, and it also happens because we have
amazing advocates that continue to push us every
single day to make sure that we're doing the best we
can, and arguably, um, the greatest, ah, team at DSNY
that, um, agrees with the advocates, ah, most of the
time and is looking themselves to push as far as they
can to turn this tanker of a, of, um, of an agency
around, um, in a positive way or advance it in a
positive way. Um, so again, I just want to thank
everyone, um, for being in [inaudible] with me and

supporting me. I want to acknowledge the council members, um, that are here, but also that have been, ah, fighting the good fight related to sanitation. Council Member Chin, um, who has the most time spent on these committees, um, who actually stays here, listens, ask questions, and then waits for everyone to ask questions, and is very, um, intentional about, um, about her time and her responsibility as a chair. So I want to thank Council Member Chin. Council Member Cabrera, ah, from the Bronx who always, ah, puts his people first, um, always, ah, looking to mitigate any negative impacts on anything that we would be doing. No matter how, ah, promising of a goal it might seem on paper, um, what it looks like practically is very important for him, ah, because, you know, especially in the Bronx folks have suffered for a long time under, you know, conditions of pollution, um, and environmental justice, so I want to thank Council Member Carrera, Cabrera for his fight, um, for his community in the Bronx. Um, we also have Council Member Riley that is new, also from the Bronx, within a short time has been engaged and, and very thoughtful of about how he's looking out for the interests of the Bronx and I hope that as he

2 stays on, um, which he will, and he continues this
3 work and maybe he'll fight to stay on, ah, the
4 Sanitation Committee. Um, so thank you again to all
5 of, ah, the council members that are here right now.
6 Um, and now, ah, I'd like to ask the committee to
7 swear in the administer.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Thank
9 you, Chair Reynoso. Um, I'm just gonna over a few
10 procedural items before swearing in the
11 administration. So I am Counsel Jessica Steinberg-
12 Alban and I will be moderating this hearing. Before
13 we begin I'd like to remind everyone that you will be
14 on mute until you are called on to testify, at which
15 point you will be unmuted by the host. During the
16 hearing I will be calling on panelists to testify.
17 Please listen for your name to be called as I will
18 periodically be announcing who the next panelist will
19 be. We will first be hearing testimony from the
20 administration, followed by testimony from members of
21 the public. During the hearing if council members
22 would like to ask a question of the administration or
23 a specific panelist please use the Zoom raise hand
24 function and I will call on you in order. We will be
25 limiting council member questions to five minutes,

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2 which includes the time it takes to answer those
3 questions. For members of the public, we will be
4 limiting speaking time to three minutes in order to
5 accommodate all who wish to speak today. I
6 apologize. I have low bandwidth. I'm gonna turn off
7 my video and continue with the instructions. Once
8 you are called on to testify please state your name
9 and the organization that you represent, if any, when
10 it is your turn to speak. We will now call on
11 representatives of the administration to testify.
12 Appearing today for the Department of Sanitation will
13 be Commissioner Edward Grayson, Greg Anderson, Deputy
14 Commissioner for policy and external affairs, and
15 Bridget Anderson, Deputy Commissioner for recycling
16 and sustainability. At this time I will
17 administration the affirmation to each representative
18 of the administration. I will call on each of you
19 individually for a response. Please raise your
20 right hand. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the
21 whole truth, and nothing but the truth before this
22 committee and to respond honestly to council member
23 questions? Commissioner Edward Grayson.

24 COMMISSIONER GRAYSON: I do.

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3 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Deputy Commissioner
4 Greg Anderson.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GREG ANDERSON: I do.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Deputy Commissioner
7 Bridget Anderson.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRIDGET ANDERSON: I
9 do.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. You may
11 begin your testimony.

12 COMMISSIONER GRAYSON: Good morning Chair
13 Reynoso and members of the City Council Committee on
14 Sanitation and Solid Waste Management. I'm Edward
15 Grayson, Commissioner of the New York City Department
16 of Sanitation. Thank you for the opportunity to
17 testify on this important topic. With me this
18 morning are Bridget Anderson, our deputy commissioner
19 for recycling and sustainability, and Gregory
20 Anderson, our deputy commissioner for policy and
21 external affairs at the department. First, I would
22 like to thank you, Chair Reynoso, for your
23 leadership, advocacy, and the support over the last
24 eight years as chair of this committee. You have
25 been a key partner in our efforts to reform the
commercial waste sector, to promote environmental

2 justice, and to chart a path to zero waste for New
3 York City. The department looks forward to
4 continuing its work as you take on your new role as
5 Brooklyn Borough President. I'd also like to thank
6 all the outgoing members of the City Council,
7 particularly those who have served on this committee,
8 for their service to their communities and to the
9 City of New York. You've been true partners in our
10 work to keep New York City healthy, safe, and clean.
11 And, lastly, I want to thank all those here to
12 testify today - advocates, industry experts,
13 citizens, and others. In this administration we have
14 made a transformative change to our waste management
15 sector. We have invested in new facilities that
16 embrace a stable transportation and provide relief to
17 communities that have carried the burden of our waste
18 for decades. We are creating new and expanded
19 programs to convert an ever-growing assortment of
20 products from landfill and give them new life. We
21 have enacted policies to reduce our, our reliance on
22 plastics and reform the commercial waste sector. In
23 my testimony today I will highlight a few of these
24 achievements and some of the greatest opportunities
25 we face in the next several years as we look to work

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on, with the new administration and a new council and all of our stakeholders to continue our important work to New York, to keep New York City healthy, safe, and clean. Afterwards, my team and I will be happy to answer your questions. The department's more than 6000 sanitation workers collect an average of 12,000 tons of waste, refuse, recyclables, and organics every day. Our residential waste stream is built upon their work, nearly all of it manual and physical labor. Twice or three times each week residents and property managers bring their waste out to the curb in bags and in bins and it is collected at the hands of our sanitation workers. Because of the nature of our city, densely built, diverse, and the neighborhoods, and conflicting demands for space in both buildings and in the public sphere, we relied on the same approach with some small variation for over a century. In the last several years we have employed innovative approaches to improve our collection operations and service delivery. These include new technology systems for routing, operations management, and resources tracking, as well as collection methods using dual bins and specifically trucks to increased our operational

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flexibility and roll out of curbside composting and other programs. The department is also exploring new models for waste set in collection, including approaches that will move set out from the sidewalk and into the roadway. This money we are releasing a procurement to select M/WBE vendors to test the Clean Curbs model for residential waste on a small scale, potentially the first in a series of pilots that will inform our future planning. Next month we will unveil a pilot network of smart bins, unstaffed and automated food scrap drop-off bins controlled with either a smart phone or RFID card. These hold the promise of an expanded network of drop-off sites in parts of the city not yet served by curbside composting. Also next month we will promulgate final rules requiring large residential buildings to develop a waste management plan for review by DSNY when submitting their building permit applications in the Department of Buildings. Refuse is delivered to one of eight export facilities - rail or marine transfer stations that containerize the waste and seal shipping containers for transport to disposal facilities upstate or in other states on the east coast. These facilities developed as part of our 20-

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year comprehensive solid waste management plan
reflect a shift away from refuse export by long-haul
truck and a commit to borough equity in managing
garbage. After the closure of the Freshkills
Landfill, almost all of New York City's refuse was
exposed by long-haul truck from privately operated
transfer stations. Because of the city's zoning and
siting restrictions these private transfer stations
are predominantly located in three neighborhoods - in
north Brooklyn, southeast Queens, and south Bronx.
The rail- and barge-based transfer stations built by
DSNY as part of the solid waste management plan have
dramatically reduced truck traffic associated with
refuse collection and hauling in these historically
overburdened communities. Together, these new
facilities, along with the use of an existing energy
to, from waste facility in New Jersey make up a
resilient and reliable network to export refuse.
They also have allowed the city to permanently reduce
the permitted capacity of transfer stations in
historically overburdened communities. In total, the
solid waste management plan has reduced truck traffic
associated with waste export by more than 60 million
miles per year, including more than 5 million miles

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in and around New York City and slash greenhouse gas emissions by 34,000 tons annually. In 2015 the city established a goal of sending zero waste to landfills, building off the department's robust curbside recycling program and several other diversion programs. In the last eight years DSNY has built the foundational programs, policies, and critical technical support and community engagement approaches to move towards that goal. However, as we've discussed in the past, the COVID-19 pandemic had disrupted our steady progress and we are working to restore and expand programs to get back on track towards this goal. We do see greenhouse gas emissions from solid waste involves reducing a volume of waste generated collected and beneficially using food and yard waste, and increased reuse in recycling remaining materials. To achieve our zero waste goals, the department will continue to evolve our current diversion programs while advancing new, improved, and expanded programs that target recyclables, organics, textiles and electronics, household items, and other nonrecyclable waste. We will do this in close partnership with other city agencies to ensure policy and programmatic alignment

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with waste management in the context of the city's built environment and public spaces. Collections of traditional recycling, metal, glass, and plastic, and cartons and comingled paper and cardboard, have increased from 548,000 tons in FY2014 to 686,000 tons in FY2021, an increase of more than 25%. As a result of substantial investment in processing infrastructure in New York City, including at the Sims Recycling Facility in Sunset Park and the Pratt Paper Mill on Staten Island, we have the capacity to take on and recycle even more material moving forward and to adapt to the changing composition of our recycling stream. Long-term contractors with local processing facility contracts have insulated New York City from the worst impacts of market disruptions and international trade restrictions that have forced some other municipalities to curtail or suspend their recycling programs. Organic waste, including food scraps and yard waste, is the most significant contributor to waste-related greenhouse gas emissions, and is also the largest fraction of New York City's waste stream, one-third in total. This material represents a significant opportunity to reduce emissions from landfill waste by diverting

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this material for beneficial use in carbon capture, including composting and anaerobic digestion. And in the case specifically of food waste, to minimize it at the source. Over the last decade DSNY has grown to be a national leader in providing drop-off opportunities to compost food scraps. Earlier this money we expanded the program to more than 200 sites citywide, the largest in the program's history, including at least one in every community board. As I mentioned earlier, we are also working to pilot smart bins to expand access to drop-off composting in neighborhoods without curbside collection. Last money DSNY restarted curbside compost collection, which had been suspended last year due to the fiscal crisis. This new iteration of the program allows buildings and residents to sign up and express interest in receiving weekly curbside compost service. Enrollment opened in August and we received more than 51,000 unique sign-ups to date, representing over 36,000 addresses that hold 900,000 households. We currently offer service to residents in Brooklyn Community Board 6 and we will add six additional districts at the beginning of December - Manhattan Community Board 6 and 7, Brooklyn Community

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2 Boards 1, 2, and 7, and Bronx Community Board 8. We
3 plan to add additional districts to the program in
4 spring as resources permit. The department has also
5 dramatically expanded non-curb-side services to
6 promote reuse and recycling and other products,
7 including Donate NYC, Refashion NYC, and East Cycle
8 NYC programs. In 2014 these programs, since 2014,
9 these programs have diverted more than 400,000 tons
10 of waste for reuse or recycling. Today free on-call
11 apartment building pickups are provided to more than
12 922,000 households for electronic recycling and more
13 than 200,000 households and hundreds of commercial
14 and institutional facilities for textile reuse. And
15 these programs continue to grow. In addition, the
16 department, in partnership with the City Council, has
17 taken steps to reduce the most problematic types of
18 waste, particularly single-use plastics. The
19 department has implemented bans on food service foam
20 products and plastic bags, along with a fee on paper
21 bags. And we are currently working to implement the
22 legislation to reduce the use of the plastic straws
23 and stirrers, which went into effect two weeks ago.
24 We look forward to working with City Council to enact
25 and implement additional policies to reduce the use

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3 of hard-to-recycle and single-use products, in favor
4 of reusable, recyclable, and compostable
5 alternatives. Diversion rates vary widely by
6 community boards, but over the past eight years the
7 number of community boards with a less than 10%
8 diversion rate has decreased from 12 in FY16 down to 2
9 in FY21. During this period, technical assistance
10 provided by DSNY and its partners to building
11 management companies, schools, NYCHA, and agency
12 facilities, has shown to be an important tool to
13 increase capacity and apply best practices to
14 separate recyclables for DSNY collection. The city's
15 commercial waste system has also seen advancements
16 during this administration. Commercial waste is
17 collected by private carters that are licensed and
18 registered by the Business Integrity Commission and
19 is disposed of at private transfer stations permitted
20 by the department and the New York State Department
21 of Environmental Conservation. The city embarked on
22 a comprehensive reform of this commercial waste
23 management system, first with the waste equity law
24 enacted in partnership with City Council in 2018, and
25 commercial waste zones, which we announced major
progress on earlier this morning. In August 2018 the

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City Council passed and Mayor de Blasio signed Local Law 152, also known as the Waste Equity Law. This law required the department to reduce permitted capacity of private transfer stations in four designated community districts historically overburdened by waste management trucks and infrastructure. The department implemented these reductions from October 2019 through September 2020. In total, DSNY reduced private transfer station capacity by more than 10,000 tons in these four districts, dramatically reducing the amount of waste that can pass through them. This will encourage a shift towards more fair and equitable distribution of waste management infrastructure in New York City. The total amount of waste handled at private transfer stations in New York City decreased from an average of 19,100 tons per day in calendar year 2019 to 15,912 tons per day in calendar year 2020. While some portion of this decrease is attributable to the permitted capacity reductions imposed on, under Local Law 152, it is also likely that a greater share of the decrease is attributable to the disruption of the commercial waste stream, ah, associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. The department will continue to

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3 assess the impacts of this law on flows of commercial
4 waste as the city continues to recover from the
5 COVID-19 pandemic. In 2019 Mayor de Blasio signed
6 Local Law 199, requiring the establishment of
7 commercial waste zones throughout New York City, the
8 result of years of planning, analysis, and
9 stakeholder engagement. The commercial waste zone
10 program will create a safe and efficient commercial
11 waste collection system that advances the city's
12 climate and zero waste goals while providing high-
13 quality, low-cost service to New York City
14 businesses. The department began the comprehensive
15 procurement process by issuing part one of the
16 request for proposals in November 2020. Part 1 of
17 the RFP requested information regarding specific
18 business character, financial, and licensing
19 requirements. Part two of the RFP was released
20 earlier today and requests the proposed plans related
21 to zero waste operations, waste management, health
22 and safety, and customer service, as well as pricing.
23 The department also promulgated several rules
24 implementing the program, including rules governing
25 customer service, operations, health and safety,
recycling and organics collection, and other

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3 administrative requirements. After considering
4 extensive public comments and testimony, the
5 department published final rules covering these areas
6 in the *City Record* earlier today. We expect the
7 transition period of the new zone system to begin in
8 2022 and last up to two years. The fiscal year 22
9 budget provides 4 million in funding for support and
10 implementation of commercial waste zones. This
11 includes funding for 28 new civilian staff, including
12 several already on board, or scheduled to start in
13 the coming weeks. It also includes OTPS funds for
14 implementation and support, communications, outreach,
15 and IT systems, and DSNY is fully resourced to pursue
16 this important program. We look forward to working
17 with the City Council and all stakeholders as we
18 advance this important program to bring much-needed
19 reform to the city's commercial waste sector. Our
20 work on these important topics is far from done. We
21 continue to expand and hone our programs, invest in
22 new technology and infrastructure, and work to
23 improve the effectiveness, equity, and sustainability
24 of our waste management systems. The department is
25 currently planning for an updated waste
characterization study due to be released in early

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2024, which will inform the planning of our updated comprehensive solid waste management plan in 2026, and we are providing input to the expansion of state and federal policies that can unlock critical investment to further expand our sustainable waste management efforts, such as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act signed into law by President Biden yesterday and then New York State's growing portfolio of expanded producer responsibility laws, which increase investment in critical waste management capacity and provides financial support for the critical role municipalities play in sustainable waste management services. We are pleased to discuss these topics with you today and continue these conversations in the future with a broad set of stakeholders, including the incoming members of the City Council, and we look forward to working with the incoming administration and our partner agencies in the 2023 update to Plan NYC and OneNYC, the city's strategic sustainability blueprints. In closing, I want to once again thank Chair Reynoso and all the members of this committee for your continued support. You are critical advocates as we work to keep New York City healthy,

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2 safe, and clean, and ensure long-term sustainability
3 in our communities. And we are grateful for your
4 commitment. Thank you for the opportunity to testify
5 this morning, and my staff and I are now happy to
6 answer any questions. Thank you.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you very much,
8 Commissioner. Um, please stay unmuted, if all of the
9 DSNY panelists could please stay unmuted during the
10 question and answer period. We will now turn it over
11 to questions from Chair Reynoso. Chair.

12 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you so much,
13 and I just want to also acknowledge the work. I
14 [inaudible] that's, ah, Andres in the background so I
15 apologize for that. Um, but I don't know if you guys
16 have read the committee report, but the work that was
17 done, ah, by the staff here in the City Council to
18 really sum up the work that we did before, during,
19 and after, um, it is, is incredible. Um, arguably
20 one of the best-written reports in [inaudible], in
21 present time. They're all great, but this one was
22 very special. So I just want to shout out Nadia
23 Johnson, ah, Ricky Trala, Jonathan Selzer, um, and
24 Jessica Steinberg-Alban, who is with us right now she
25 our committee counsel. So, um, to Terza Nasir, um,

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the work that, um, they've done in the infrastructure division and of course Jeff Baker that runs, ah, pretty the whole show. So I just want to thank everybody on the council side for this amazing report. Um, I know many times they don't feel people read them or see them, um, but, ah, they are very thorough and great reports, ah, that are put out all the time by this staff. So thank you for that work. Um, I also want to acknowledge we've been joined by Council Member Brannan, ah, Council Member Feliz, ah, and Council Member Gennaro. Ah, thank you so much for being here. Um, all folks that we hope are here long term, ah, in this committee, ah, and our continuing to effect change, ah, in a meaningful way, um, and now let me just get to the, to the questions. So can we, um, the, the commercial waste zones, you know, it took a long time for us to get to, to where we were, um, and I think a lot of just people just asking like, um, because of COVID and how things have turned out, you know, the need for delays and, ah, just where are we with the commercial waste zones? What can we expect? Ah, is there a internal time line, like would it give us a better sense, um, to communicate to businesses in our, in our communities?

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2 Um, exactly where we stand with the, with the Local
3 Law 199 and the commercial waste zones?

4 COMMISSIONER GRAYSON: Well, Chair, thank
5 you for the question. Yes, we're very happy that we
6 were able to, ah, continue the progress on commercial
7 waste zones, um, and really have, our part one of the
8 RFP was such an engaging process where we were, we
9 went out of our way to make sure that we spent extra
10 time talking to all the respondents who, you know,
11 wanted to express interest, to get them ready to
12 part, for part two, which the way more technical and
13 way more involved part of the RFP. And we're
14 thrilled to have released, you know, the rules in the
15 second half today. Um, for a little bit more
16 granularity on the, the current timeline I'm gonna
17 let Deputy Commissioner Greg Anderson step in and
18 give you exactly where we stand today. But this is
19 exciting. This is one of the best bills that this
20 council has put forward and passed, and, ah, we're
21 very happy that we got into part two. So, Greg,
22 please, give everybody an update on our timeline.

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GREGORY ANDERSON:

24 Sure. Thank you, Commissioner, um, and thank you,
25 Chair Reynoso for, for holding this hearing, and it's

3 been great working with you and, and the entire
4 committee, um, over the last eight years. So, as the
5 commissioner mentioned, we released part two of the
6 RFP, ah, just this morning, actually around an hour
7 ago it went out. Um, so we're, we're very excited
8 about that. Um, as the commissioner mentioned,
9 that's the bulk of what we were asking for from the
10 respondents. It includes the price proposals as well
11 as their plans for zero waste operations, waste
12 management, health and safety, customer service,
13 etcetera. Um, those are due back, ah, in March of
14 2022 and we anticipate it will take us a little bit
15 of time to get through all the responses. These are
16 very, ah, detailed responses because they, they will
17 shape the future of this industry over the next, um,
18 several decades, um, and we are optimistic that we'll
19 be able to begin the customer transition, ah, by the
20 end of calendar year 2022. So about a year delayed
21 from where we had originally hoped to be when we
22 were, when we, um, worked with the council to pass
23 Local Law 199, ah, two years ago, um, and actually
24 coming up, I think in, in just three days the two-
25 year anniversary of the signing of that bill. Um,
but, ah, you know, I think important that we took the

3 time to do this right, um, and to understand the
4 impact that COVID-19 had on the commercial waste
5 industry and, and sort of allow them to get back on
6 their feet before proceeding.

7 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Yeah, Deputy
8 Commissioner, can you expand on that just a bit? Um,
9 ah, part one, how was the response? Um, a lot of
10 folks are concerned about the fact that COVID and the
11 pandemic have put us in a position where we might be
12 seeing increased prices on the RFPs, what we will get
13 back related to pricing, it's not gonna be ideal.
14 Um, and you know, I, I made a commitment to do
15 everything I can to make sure the prices were as
16 equal to what they are now, or less, um, even though
17 we're implementing a much more complicated, ah, much
18 more expansive system with a lot more requirements.
19 So while I know that I might be, um, very optimistic
20 about the outcomes, um, the pandemic does concern me,
21 um, and I don't know if we're gonna get prices that
22 we might have to lock in for a significant amount of
23 time that are more reflective of the moment than it
24 is of the standard. So I just want to know, um, if
25 you guys can give us an update. And I guess part two
is where we're gonna see a lot of that. What is your

projection, I guess, related to how COVID impacted,
um, that could impact outcomes of, of the RFP?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GREGORY ANDERSON:

Yeah, so I, I think there's, there's a, a few, a few
different answers to that question. Um, the first is
that the way that we've designed the program, ah,
doesn't actually lock in prices over the long term.
All that we're doing in locking in maximum prices.
And so at any point customers and carters still have
the ability to negotiate the rate that the customer
is paying to the carter, um, the same way that they
can now. So you can go out to the three carters that
service your zone, say, hey, I want to get my, um, my
refuse and recycling picked up three times a week.
What, what's the best price you can give me? Um, and
all three carters can come back and say, you know,
here's the best price on a monthly basis that I can
offer you for that service. Um, so there is still a
level of competition in the system. Um, the second
is, you know, I, I do think that, that, obviously the
COVID-19 pandemic has had a lot of impacts on, um, on
our economy, on pricing, on the, the availability of
drivers, for example. That's something that I think
we, we're seeing nationwide. Um, what we are also

2 seeing is that companies like UPS, for example, that
3 treat their drivers really well don't have driver
4 shortages. So, you know, it's possible that
5 companies in this market that treat their drivers
6 really well will continue to, you know, be able to
7 operate and, and offer competitive pricing. Um, and
8 in the same way that we're seeing some costs
9 increase, we're also seeing incredibly robust
10 recycling markets right now, um, at levels that we
11 haven't seen in several years. Um, we've seen, ah,
12 prices for, ah, recycled commodities recover from,
13 ah, the impacts of, of some of the previous, ah,
14 market disruptions, the National Sword Program in
15 China. So I think there's a lot of different
16 factors, and the program is, is created to adapt to
17 those, um, changing economic factors and, and really
18 allow businesses make the, the smart choice and the
19 right choice, ah, for them.

20 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: That, that's good,
21 good to know. Um, yeah, just, just concerning. Um,
22 my, I got a couple of calls from some folks and, ah,
23 um, in businesses, small businesses, that are very
24 concerned, um, over the prices that they might be
25 getting because of COVID. Um, and they also have,

2 ah, uncertainty on their end. They don't know how
3 much waste they're gonna be having on a regular
4 basis, ah, just a lot of flexibility is gonna be
5 needed. I'm hoping that whoever does win these RFPs,
6 um, does their best to be as accommodating as
7 possible, which is kind of why we want this to
8 happen, right? We want the best players to have that
9 type of flexibility to be able to do this work. Um,
10 so we're thinking the early 2022, um, that's good,
11 um, you know, that's a month, a month away. Um, a
12 month and a half away. Is that when we're thinking
13 that the RFPs are gonna come back, um, can you just
14 explain that a little better so that I understand.
15 I, I just know when the zones are gonna be there,
16 when the trucks, when the businesses are gonna be
17 chosen, like just operationally fully functional.
18 When, when are we thinking?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GREGORY ANDERSON:

20 Sure. So the, the part two of the RFP that was
21 released this morning is due on March 17, 2022, St.
22 Patrick's Day, um, and we are, ah, expecting it'll,
23 it'll takes us several months, um, probably until
24 early summer, to get through the review and
25 evaluation of those proposals. Um, so then sometime

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2 late summer, um, or early fall we will make the
3 awards and then, ah, optimistically, start the
4 customer transition by the end of the calendar year.
5 So that's when, when businesses on the ground will
6 actually start to, um, both a) hear from Sanitation,
7 ah, about this program. Um, our, our goal is to have
8 as many different touch points with every, um,
9 commercial establishment in New York City as we can,
10 um, in person, phone, text, emails, whatever your
11 preferred method of communication we want to talk to
12 you about this. We want to educate you. We want to
13 give you the tools to make the right decision for
14 your business. Um, and that, that process, that
15 outreach should, ah, start sometime in the fall so
16 that, ah, um, businesses have the tools they need to
17 select their carter starting, ah, by the end of the
18 year.

19 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: OK.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GREGORY ANDERSON:

21 And, again, we're, we're anticipating this will be a
22 phased transition. So it will not be everyone at
23 once. Um, we'll probably start with a smaller group
24 just to make sure we understand the mechanics and,
25 um, and that we're not biting off more than we can

2 chew, and over the course of, um, up to two years, so
3 from 2022 through 2024, um, continue that transition
4 process.

5 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Um, I want to allow
6 for, ah, I have a ton of questions, um, and I want
7 to, but I want to allow for my fellow council members
8 should they have any questions to ask. Ah, ah,
9 first, ah, because I'm gonna be here the whole time
10 and they might have other things they might need to
11 do, but I just want to ask one more set of questions,
12 um, which is, ah, the waste equity legislation, um,
13 its impact on permanent capacity. Ah, I just wanted
14 to know if we have, ah, just some numbers as to the
15 changes, ah, in each community, by community board,
16 ah, District 1 in Brooklyn, of course, ah, Queens
17 District 12, Bronx Community District 1, and Bronx
18 Community Board District 2. Um, would love to know
19 what the reduction, the, the actual reduction is, um,
20 in permitted capacity and whether or not, ah, the
21 numbers you are giving me are also impacted by COVID,
22 which could probably, I assume, significant a
23 significant reduction in commercial waste, ah, but
24 would love to know like the status of the waste
25 equity situation.

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2 COMMISSIONER GRAYSON: Ah, understood.

3 Thank you, Chair. Ah, great question. Um, first and
4 foremost, to address just one topic. , ah, in the
5 interim she our firm belief that the COVID impact is
6 gonna definitely be part of the transfer station
7 capacity reduction, ah, just in the overall tonnage,
8 because we saw what it did to the commercial sector.
9 So that's definitely going to see, ah, be, be baked
10 into that number. However, the permitted capacity is
11 definitely down. Um, again, as I said, and, and
12 addressed it on the testimony as well, um, we were at
13 about 19,000 tons per day in, you know, calendar year
14 2019, down to 15,000, almost 16,000 tons per day, ah,
15 and that's overall, um, in, in all four community
16 boards. We will definitely follow back up with you
17 unless and I will see if, if Commissioner, Deputy
18 Commissioner Anderson, you know, Greg has the
19 granular stats for each community board specifically,
20 but if we don't have it with us today I will get it
21 to you, ah, immediately following. So Greg, do you
22 have the individual stats or should we have to follow
23 up with the council?

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GREGORY ANDERSON:

25 Yeah, I, I have everything right here.

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2 COMMISSIONER GRAYSON: OK.

3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GREGORY ANDERSON:

4 Um, so in terms of the reduction in permitted
5 capacity, um, 'cause, because there, there are two,
6 two different things that we're, um, looking at here.
7 One is permitted capacity, which is the amount of
8 waste that the transfer stations are allowed to take.
9 Um, the total reduction in permitted capacity
10 citywide was, ah, 10,127 tons per day, um, in those
11 four districts. The greatest reduction was in
12 Brooklyn Community District 1, 771,000 tons, or 36%
13 overall reduction in capacity in that district. Um,
14 in Bronx 1, 898,000 tons per day, reduction 13%
15 reduction. Um, Bronx 2, ah, 1457 tons per day,
16 that's a 30% reduction, and Queens 12, 660 tons per
17 day, that's a 29% reduction. Um, when we compare
18 that to actual changes in through-put, there is a big
19 disclaimer here, as the Commissioner mentioned. The,
20 the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on commercial
21 waste through-put was huge. Um, the decrease
22 between, ah, 2019 and 2020, um, was a, a big change,
23 um, about 25% reduction overall in commercial waste
24 through-put at these, at these private transfer
25 stations, and, ah, particularly just from Quarter 1

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2 to Quarter 2, ah, an absolutely, ah, massive change,
3 and all of this information is in our Local Law 152
4 report, ah, that we also released this morning. Ah,
5 so big, big dump of information, ah, ahead of this
6 hearing, trying to get everything out, um, for public
7 consumption. Um, so I think, you know, we can
8 certainly share that with, with all the members of
9 the committee and you can look through that. If you
10 want to talk through any of the, the specifics of, of
11 particular districts or transfer stations we're happy
12 to do that in the future.

13 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Yeah. No, no, we
14 know that the permitted capacity was shut down. I
15 just wanted to know what the actual returns were
16 [inaudible] right, at this point very hard to gauge,
17 um, considering COVID. Um, so I'm gonna, my next set
18 of questions are gonna be related to containerized
19 waste, organics, um, and just the expansion of
20 everything that needs to happen to get to zero waste,
21 including the study for Save as You Throw. Um, but I
22 want to turn it over to my colleagues. Please,
23 colleagues, um, raise your hands and, ah, Committee
24 Counsel will call on you, um, when, when she sees
25 you.

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair. I
3 will now call on council members to ask their
4 questions in the order they have used the Zoom raise
5 hand function. If you would like to ask a question
6 and have not yet used the Zoom raise hand function
7 please raise it now. Council members, please keep
8 your questions to five minutes. The Sergeant at Arms
9 will keep a timer and will let you know when your
10 time is up. You should begin once I have called on
11 you the sergeant has announced that you may begin
12 before asking your questions. First, we will hear
13 from Council Member Chin.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Hi, good morning.
16 Ah, thank you, Chair, for your leadership on this
17 committee and, ah, thank you to Commissioner and
18 Deputy Commissioner, ah, for your partnership. Um,
19 you know, I signed up for this committee this term
20 because I want to make sure that the commercial waste
21 zone management system get passed. I mean, that was
22 my, ah, reason for joining this committee, ah, even
23 though I worked on, also on the, the plastic bag ban
24 and, and all those other issue. So are the
25 commercial waste zone, um, I wanted to make sure that

2 the priorities are sent in some of those specific
3 area and we've been pushing to make sure that lower
4 Manhattan, ah, you know, get the priorities for the
5 commercial waste zone, especially in area like SoHo,
6 ah, Chinatown, because there's so many small
7 businesses and there's so many private carter
8 company, ah, that exists in those area and the
9 complaints that we hear constantly is that those
10 commercial waste truck just keeps on coming. Ah, and
11 it doesn't really make sense to have so many
12 different company coming down one street. Ah, like
13 for example, Stone Street in lower Manhattan. We
14 like, one company could just take care of the whole
15 block. But in reality there are more than that.
16 That's one question. The other one is, ah, I really
17 am interested in how effective is the, ah, is the tax
18 on the, ah, paper bag, ah, in terms of the plastic
19 bag, ah, ban that, that went into effect. Ah, like
20 how, like was the like decrease in tonnage, ah, of
21 plastic, ah, bag, you know, of bags collection and
22 also like how much, ah, fees were we able to
23 generate, ah, from this collection? I know that the
24 Sanitation Department, you know, utilize resources,
25 even produce more of the useful bag, and we see those

2 orange bags everywhere. And like my office we give
3 them out at every public event that we give to them,
4 yeah, people really utilize, ah, those bags. I
5 really want to see how, um, successful that is. And
6 my third question is, Commissioner, when you were
7 testifying you talked about really looking at more
8 efficient, ah, residential garbage collection, ah, in
9 terms of utilizing the street versus a sidewalk, and
10 examples like in lower Manhattan. I mean, every time
11 I walk by during sanitation pickup day the, the
12 garbage comes out very early and it takes out, takes
13 up more than half the sidewalk. And they piled up
14 real high, taller than me, and it's just like there's
15 so much garbage and there's no walking, you know,
16 walkable space. Ah, so I'm really interested in
17 hearing how, um, you know, you can implement that,
18 like utilizing some of the parking space, ah, for the
19 garbage so that we could free up sidewalk space for
20 pedestrian, especially in lower Manhattan where the
21 sidewalks are so narrow and you have a lot of
22 pedestrian because of all the, you know, businesses
23 and the retail, I mean all the office space. It's
24 really, ah, very difficult for, you know, mothers
25 with baby carriage to go, to stroll by, there's just

no more sidewalk space. So, yeah, those are my three questions.

COMMISSIONER GRAYSON: Oh, thank you so much, Councilwoman, and we appreciate all the work we've been able to do together. Um, first and foremost, let me address the commercial waste zones. You couldn't have said it any better. Ah, that's what, that's why this legislation was so important and that's why making sure that we get through the, the second part of the RFP and we take the time to do it correctly and review all the submissions, and make sure that these zones, when implemented, we could have a strong outreach campaign and make sure that all the small businesses in lower Manhattan and all the impacted areas, um, know exactly what's expected of them, how they can, you know, make their arrangements with their new carter who will have been awarded in, inside the zone. And then once we have that in place you're gonna clearly see a, a reduction in the amount of trucks that are traversing through. It's, that's the entire beauty of what it was designed to do and that's exactly where it's going to go. As far as, ah, where we're going first, we're gonna have it go in with the submission. We totally

understand all the high-density areas, particularly lower Manhattan. But we're gonna make sure that the submissions are correct, um, and make sure that the, the vendors that, that have submitted their secondary responses know what's expected of them, and we look to definitely have that moving towards that end of the year FY22 goal, ah, that my colleague had mentioned earlier. As far as, ah, the, hopefully getting more, ah, set-outs or expanding the proposals for what is a clean curb's model, which is taking set-outs off the curb and putting it into potential parking spaces, we're very excited to where we get to work all the stakeholders, including the local community, our partners at DOT and traffic management. We want to make sure that when we propose these solutions and evaluation how effective they are, that they are in fact making the, a problem go away. So the first step is going to be is to find out where to place these bins or containers and who's going to manage them, work together locally at the, on the street level...

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

COMMISSIONER GRAYSON: ...where the bins are going to be hosted, and then making sure that

2 it's not creating a problem, but creating a solution,
3 because that's the main goal. Um, and I think that,
4 ah, as far as, um, what was your last question, I'm
5 sorry, you had three?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Oh, the plastic
7 bags.

8 COMMISSIONER GRAYSON: Yes, the plastic
9 bags. Well, actually, this is great legislation and
10 because it's film bag, I'm not gonna say that there's
11 no dramatic impact on tonnage, but it is definitely
12 impacting our behavior, and we, there is definitely a
13 financial outcome in that. And I'm going to let
14 Deputy Commissioner Bridget Anderson give you some
15 stats on that. But it is more important to see the
16 people's behavior change, and you nailed it. Seeing
17 those orange bags out there everywhere, that's a
18 beautiful sight to see. I don't know that you're
19 always going to see a dramatic decrease in, in media
20 tonnage year over year, but we definitely seen the
21 behavior and we'll take that to start. But
22 Commissioner Anderson, do you want to give us some
23 stats on the dollar figures?

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRIDGET ANDERSON:
25 Sure, yeah. I, the good news is, ah, there's revenue

coming in. So the state collects the, the revenue from the paper bag fees and a portion of that comes back to New York City. So we have already realized, ah, significant money. Ah, in December 2020, for example, ah, \$473,000 came back to us, and that was just one portion of one year. And we are using that to pay for those orange bags. We're using that to pay for the distribution of bags, reusable bags, um, in as many targeted, outreach opportunities as we can and as many, um, broad opportunities as we can. Ah, so we're very excited about the, the revenue that's coming in. It's, it's helping us pay for the reusable solution, um, and, ah, we're actually making sure that we continue to procure bags so we have plenty to, to provide New Yorkers, 'cause we know we haven't hit everybody. Um, as far as understanding the impact of the plastic bag ban, we are conducting our next waste characterization study starting next summer. So we will have new updated data citywide about, um, how many plastic shopping bags are in the waste stream, and so we're looking forward to, I anticipate we will see a significant reduction, ah, but we won't know that until we've conducted that study. Um, I will say there's one interesting, ah,

3 thing that's happening and some of you may have
4 noticed this, where, um, paper bags were the assumed
5 alternative product, but there are also these
6 alternative, ah, sort of woven bags that are, ah,
7 they may be reusable to a certain design, but not
8 reusable a hundred, for a hundred washes. Um,
9 stores, we have seen charging like, you know, they
10 are allowed to charge for bags, you know, as much as
11 they want. They have to charge 5 cents. Um, and so
12 we're working with the state to understand whether or
13 not if there's a non-paper bag alternative that's
14 being, ah, given out and charged is that, is there
15 any money that could be recoupled from that as well.
16 So, ah, we do see, ah, huge improves. I think litter
17 reduction is, is one of the biggest benefits of
18 reducing plastic bags, um, and like I said, we'll see
19 the tonnages once we conduct that study.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Great, thank you.

21 Thank you, Chair.

22 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you, Council
23 Member, and, and I just want to say that the plastic
24 bag work was absolutely amazing. Another long, what
25 I thought was an unnecessary fight, um, and to see
the outcomes of this work and I always go back to

like New York exceptionalism on a lot of these things. These things that seem very tough from the outside looking in, um, New York is always ready. They're always ready. We're arguably one of the most resilient people in this entire country. Um, there's no task that we won't set up for, that we won't succeed in, and the plastic bag stuff was like a perfect example of that. All that fighting to now see, you know, every time I go into the bodega, I go into the supermarket, someone is carrying a bag, um, of some sort. Ah, it is actually remarkable. And I think, you know, of the achievements that we were able to accomplish in this committee that was one of the, the, the bigger ones and the highlights of this committee. So I just want to say thank you so much, Council Member Chin, for like your advocacy on that, and for being on the committee and supporting commercial waste zones we needed every vote. So thank you for being here, ah, I appreciate that. Um, Committee Counsel, um, calling on the next council members?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, thank you, Chair. Ah, next we will call on Council Member Riley.

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2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Ah, thank you,
4 Chair. Ah, thank you also to Commissioner Grayson,
5 ah, for your hard work, like your men and women have
6 been doing amazing work, um, in the northeast section
7 of the Bronx. Um, my concern comes again, um, about
8 the rats, um, that's kind of infesting our
9 communities. Ah, the other day I was actually, ah,
10 driving, ah, down my block and there was a hawk, um,
11 that actually captured a rat and was actually eating
12 the rat right in front of my neighbor's, um, like
13 driveway. Um, I know this is like a, a real, ah,
14 issue amongst New Yorkers, that we're seeing rats go
15 into playgrounds, um, climbing into trash cans and
16 things of that nature, and we do understand, I
17 believe, last, ah, hearing you did mention the fact
18 that the way that we, um, put out our garbage, a lot
19 of New Yorkers, ah, put out their garbage, ah, not in
20 the garbage can, so do you feel like any legislation
21 to kind of, you know, ah, push New Yorkers to kind
22 of, um, distribute, I mean, put their garbage out,
23 um, in bins or, or garbage cans will kind of, ah,
24 limit the amount of rats that we're kind of seeing in
25

2 our community? Um, that's really just my concern
3 today, just how we are addressing this rat issue.

4 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you,
5 Councilman. And yes, I, I do believe that when you
6 have, we set out, most residents are setting out
7 their refuse at the curb, and I think that, that one
8 of the main goals, ah, that we have as a department
9 in working with council, working with the next
10 administration, and continuing onward is figuring out
11 a way to have curbside organics. And I think that
12 right now the last iteration that we had with the
13 program was in a sealed brown bin for all the
14 residential units and we were still working, ah, to
15 figure out what would be the high-rise solutions, um,
16 and figuring out the containers that would host that,
17 or the other methods of collection that would host
18 that as far as the large-scale buildings. And I
19 think that right now, ah, that is one part of the
20 future of where we can go to reduce the amount of
21 curb set out to reduce accessibility to food source
22 for rodents. So I think that as we continue to
23 expand curbside collection of organics and set out
24 separation that's a good way. I still would
25 encourage any neighborhood to consider whether or

not, and especially it's harder in the big buildings where storage is an issue, um, to potentially switch to a can, even though we give out the brown bin with the snap, with the snap seal and it's very, you know, safe and, and it's hard for rodents to get into it, any regular can, can also do, you know, be preventative in a certain way. And I think that if, you know, in any area where you have higher, ah, sightings of rats, um, that I think that that might be something to talk about, especially in those neighborhoods, to say look, maybe you want to go to a container as opposed to bag set out. There are also plenty of parts of New York City that bag set out is perfectly OK and the rat sightings aren't as high and it's really, you know, neighborhood specific and density specific I would, I would say. Um, as far, definitely what I, what I do want to circle back with you on after this, and we will reach out to your office, is I want to make sure that, you know, we know exactly where we're talking, where we're seeing all the high sightings, so that we're doing all I can on as far as spillage or any residual cleaning. If there's something else we could do locally to work with you, compounded with teaming up with DOHMH, who

does the mitigation programs on the rat trappings,
because I think that there is, I can't, I mean, look,
ah, I'm a lifelong New Yorker. Rats are a reality.
But we can certainly do what we can, um, and I want
to make sure that we're meeting that, ah, head on.
But I do believe that, you know, ah, encouraging can
use or container us where it, where we're certainly
having that program is gonna definitely shift the way
the rodents behave just by eliminating accessibility
to food source. And one of the ways that we were on
the path to do prior to the setbacks of the COVID-19
pandemic, was definitely with the curbside organics
program and expanding that. We had these lovely bins
that were out and was taking some of the most
attractive food sources, so to speak, to rodents and
putting it into a sealed bag for us to collect. So I
think that that's something moving forward that we
could all work towards.

COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Right. Thank you,
Commissioner, and thank you, Chair.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you, Council
Member Riley. And, um, Commissioner, I just want to
talk about some progress, you know, I, I feel like
shouldn't have to come new legislation. I just feel

like there's internal policy that could be created by the Department of Sanitation that could help solve for these problems. The rat issue is, is, is quickly, you know, weather, it's anecdotal, or however you want to see it. It just seems, it seems to be an increase, that we're getting a lot of calls about in our, in our districts. Um, containerized waste, um, why is that not something that you encourage or that the administration does outside of having, um, the city, you know, force your hand on something that I think we agree on, right? I always say that one of the biggest concerns I've had with the administration is that we have to drag him to get to a place where he wants to be, right? Like it's just, it's like taking a kid to a park, if you're gonna drag him there it just doesn't make any sense. Um, you know you want to be there. You know it makes a lot of sense. Containerized waste is done in every other large like developed city, um, you know, it's just, we're just so outdate putting our trash in front of our homes. Why not just let the administration move forward with some type of process that gets us there, instead of having to wait for us to write legislation for it?

2 COMMISSIONER GRAYSON: Well, I think
3 that, I think that the, there's, there's, there's a
4 couple of different facets to that question, and I
5 totally appreciate the concept. I think that, you
6 know, New Yorkers for a very long time have been, you
7 know, whether they want to understand it or not, and
8 excuse the pun, they put out their set out, you know,
9 in the Burger King model. It's however they can get
10 it out. So it's the building owners can put it.
11 Sometimes they choose bags or sometimes they choose
12 cans, and it really comes into storage and
13 feasibility of storage. And this leads back into,
14 you know, literally the behavior from the kitchen to
15 the curb and every household in the city. If you
16 have a place to store you, you can buy storage bins
17 and keep it there. And if you don't have a place to
18 store it you're gonna rely on whatever the incumbent
19 building infrastructure is where you live in, ah, to
20 store it until the collection day. I think that, ah,
21 containerized, or having a specifically sealed set
22 out location is something that definitely has to be
23 looked at, ah, throughout every block of, of New York
24 City, if, if it's feasible [inaudible] upon, because
25 it does take away parking spaces and also, ah, adds

to a question of ownership or stewardship, so to speak, because while everyone would agree that maybe a sealed container would be better, ah, for where you would set out waste, I don't know that everybody would agree where exactly that container is located. Being someone to tries to site sanitation facilities all the time, and with your partnership, and you've been trying to help us, you'll agree that people want something, want something to be done with garbage as long as it's not in front of their house. So it's an interesting concept and that's why committees like this and conversations like this, where we can exchange good ideas. You're 100% right, Chair. There is definitely a better way to, you know, do set outs and talk about that. But I think that it's a far-reaching conversation that you have to, because one thing that we can all be sure of is that New York City has never been something that could be painted with one brush. And I think that having a committee like this do such great work over the past eight years under your leadership and even prior, this committee being founded to figure out what the waste stream and the waste stream management for the city from its entire, you know, inception is something

that's amazing, and I look forward to where we can have those conversations. So net, do I think the containerized collection is a way to look at?

Absolutely. I'm very excited about these RFPs that are coming out. I'm very excited to look and, and see how it could be done, not only on the commercial sector, but in the residential sector. And I don't think that we have to wait for everything. But I do think that we need to understand more as an agency, 'cause one thing I can tell you, we have not been servicing in, ah, a centrally located pen on regular residential blocks. I could tell you now that for years we have collected from centrally located penalties inside NYCHA campuses and other big buildings, and it does have its advantageous policy there. Ah, a lot of it, though, takes a lot of real estate, and that's one of the biggest things that is our obstacle. Everything involves managing the waste stream, requires a commitment of real estate, whether it be inside on the curb, or on side the campus or inside the existing property line. And it's trying to meet those challenges head on and giving people the awareness that we're, we're completely cognizant of the real estate challenges and some of the

3 existing building infrastructure challenges,
4 particularly in the high-rise, where you're
5 struggling to make sure that you have living space
6 and also waste management space and trying to make
7 sure everybody's educated to know this is what you
8 need to do to manage waste stream well, and, more
9 importantly, how we as the department could evolve
10 with that so that we're giving efficient curbside
11 collection and/or efficient containerized collection
12 and I really do think you're on to something, and I
13 don't, and I'm not saying that just because it's you.
14 There's something there, but it's definitely gonna
15 take a lot more work and a lot more conversations as
16 we move forward.

17 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: I hear you. And,
18 and, look, I hear you on, on how complicated these
19 things can be. But, and I say this all the time, and
20 it's just, it's a matter of like reestablishing
21 culture, reestablishing, you know, what this, what
22 trash is for this city, um, and an example of things
23 people don't like, that they are forced to do, and
24 now, and, and never fight. It's trees in front of
25 their properties. People don't like trees in front
of their properties and the Department of Parks and

the City of New York says deal with it, too bad, because it's not about you, it's about the greater good, and another thing is that trees are put inside, in, in, ah, sidewalks, Commissioner. Sidewalks. Not on streets where they're taking up parking spaces, on sidewalks where people that are handicapped, people with strollers, are taken away from pedestrian space and we're supposed to be prioritizing pedestrians over, over everything, right? Pedestrians are supposed to be the number one. And the pedestrians and homeowners sacrifice their space, ah, for the greater good, um, and I am, ah, ah, a giver of medicine, Commissioner. Um, you may not like it, but it's good for you, and, ah, I will be fighting as the, the borough president to make sure that this is something that gets accomplished sooner rather than later, 'cause we're gonna [inaudible] for a better, not only is it better for you guys, it's more efficient for the, the workers. The workers might not have to, like the, the, the tax on their bodies would go down if it's containerized waste and maybe we have trucks that could like pop it up. I don't what, you know, what we can do, um, but there's ways. It, it saves on time and it also solves the rat

issue. The rat issue in this city is not about anything more than the fact that they have access, accessible to them food, very high-quality food, we're the food capitol of the world. Um, these rats are eating good food, um, and the way we get rid of it is by hiding it, making sure we lock it up. The same way we were locking it up with organics, we can do that and containerized waste is the future, and I want to give people their medicine. I want to take away their parking spots, and I want to put in containers, and it might be in front of your house. [inaudible] do something with all your taxes, in front the houses that [inaudible], well, we can figure a way to incentivize people to want to do it. But we, that's what we are, New York, we're exceptional, we figure it out and then we do it. We just do it. And I hope that, um, I don't want it to be, I guess what I don't want it to be is legislation. I want the mayor and the City of New York to just say, hey, this is the wave of the future, you know, let's, let's just start getting to work on exactly how that happens. And I know that this team that you have is more than ready, willing, and able to figure that out. So I'm really excited

about that. Um, but I just want to say trees is a perfect example. Nobody asks anybody about trees. They just get put right in front of your house and you just take it. And I got a tree pit in front of mine, um, and I'm a renter, and I got a tree pit in front of mine and it is the, the bane of my existence. A lot of cleaning I have to do for that. Um, it's something else. Um, but, I just wanted to say that containerized waste is something that's important to me. Ah, another thing that's important to me is organic, organic recycling, organics recycling. Commissioner, it hurt, it hurts me to my soul, to my soul, this, this half, half, half system, half step system that we have in place right now in the City of New York to handle organic waste. Um, it was my pride and joy, even as a pilot program, that we had, ah, organics recycling in these neighborhoods, um, and to see that go away, um, you know, and I thought like COVID was more of an excuse to take it away than it was, um, a reality of the need to take it away. Ah, but can we just talk about organics? Um, it is initially expensive, as some things are, right? You spend money up front in hopes that you save money later on, but what's more

2 expensive is the impacts that organic waste has on
3 our city, on our future, though that is, that is
4 incalculable, that's the word, um, ah, and, and
5 things that we can't solve for long term because we
6 not doing the work today. We don't spend a million
7 here, we're gonna spend 10 million in 10 years. So I
8 just want to have a conversation about what, what, if
9 any, conversations are being had about organic waste
10 in this administration in the last month and a half,
11 um, and whether or not it's been a priority, ah, for
12 the mayor. Um, for this group here, trust me, I know
13 everyone here very well. I know they care deeply
14 about this stuff. So I'm not asking you, you know,
15 or I'm not asking the team, the deputy commissioners,
16 but in this administration is that something you guys
17 are talking about?

18 COMMISSIONER GRAYSON: It's a great
19 question and yes, um, you know, we are very excited,
20 ah, and we've been working with the administration
21 and on the expansion of the next six districts that
22 come in December on the current opt-in program. This
23 is another opportunity for us to expand into more
24 community boards throughout the city for what is a
25 valuable program for us because the, the

3 communication cycle that we have with all of those
4 who expressed interest, and we've been able to, for
5 the first time every, really have a direct line of
6 communication with everybody who has signed up, um,
7 and letting them know that, you know, this is your
8 collection day. Please make sure your, have your
9 bin. Please make sure you're participating. And in
10 the month of October it is excellent that we were
11 able to divert over 40 tons of organic material in
12 one community board. So, you know, when you think
13 about it, this is exactly where we need to be, um, as
14 we build steps. The other [inaudible] side of the
15 current way that we're doing this, you know,
16 reintroduction of the program, is by seeing these
17 expressions of interest and trying to understand, you
18 know, the behavior change that's going to be needed
19 globally. You know, you spoke before about medicine
20 and doing things because they were right. And it is
21 undeniable that tackling the organics waste stream
22 and making it a mandatory citywide program is the
23 only way we're ever gonna really put a dent into our
24 zero waste goal. We need that. Um, we said that
25 before. We spoke about it at the last hearing. We
spoke about it almost a year ago. Um, this is

3 exactly where we need to tackle and it is through
4 your leadership, through the partnership and the
5 council and this committee, but working with the
6 administration, um, you know, we really took that
7 cannon hole with the COVID-19, ah, you know,
8 pandemic, and what happened to us on the budget. And
9 we had to retrench. And, and we need to now build
10 back in this incredible time in New York City where
11 people have gone through some of the most adaptive
12 change we've ever seen in the last, you know, 19
13 months. Look what we're doing. People's behavior
14 changed factions of every way they're living their
15 everyday lives have really taken a step forward. Now
16 more than ever we have this amazing opportunity to
17 continue to build towards changing people's behavior,
18 what is gonna be the right cocktail. I cannot wait
19 to see where we go from here. Um, we're gonna learn
20 a lot from this current program as we get through the
21 end of this fiscal year and into the next calendar
22 year working with the new administration. Have some
23 things to talk about, about the, the relatable
24 behavioral change we've seen just in all those who
25 opted in, looking to expand, and knowing exactly who
didn't opt in to target another thing that you've

2 have been a big champion for this council and this
3 committee has been a big champion for, which is a
4 more robust communication strategy. I think that,
5 that in the end what we're going to need is to
6 implement one of the biggest outreach campaigns ever
7 to get people to change their behavior, coupled with,
8 I mean, we're talking, we need to be out there in
9 full force to be able to roll something out
10 throughout the whole entire city. I think that
11 organics waste is exactly how we do it. I think we
12 have to work together to solve some of the other
13 unknowns, which is what is the high-rise solution,
14 what is the high density solution, and if that is
15 some of the new programs and the new accessibility
16 points and the new touch points that we can have with
17 expanded, you know, local networks and the 200-plus
18 food scrap drop-off providers, ah, we're very excited
19 to see the use and buy-in that we're gonna get from
20 this smart bin program. I mean, this would give us a
21 way that you could have, again, tailor-made, ah, bins
22 that are going to only allow people who wave their
23 smart phone in front of it, or the RFID card that
24 they're provided, access. This is people who are
25 buying in to living a sustainable life and providing

2 access to that, within collection service from DSNY
3 to make sure that the back end of that product goes
4 exactly to where it wants to be and is diverted
5 properly. So I think that where are we in
6 composting? I think that we're at the beginnings of
7 where we go next, and I think that we have, ah, a lot
8 to commit to. Um, you know, we talk about the term,
9 and I know that it's something, Zero By 30. Ah, we
10 have already stated, ah, the last time we were all
11 together in this caucus that Zero By 30 probably is
12 shaky, um, but that doesn't mean it's undoable. Ah,
13 that doesn't mean it, that we can't as a city come
14 together and do some incredible behavior change, that
15 we can't as a city come together and make all the
16 constituents know where the accessibility is, how
17 they can make really good choices, how do we expend
18 to get more households and more high-rise buildings
19 on the textile program and the e-cycle program and
20 the, you know, expanding opportunities to donate.
21 And I think that we are ripe for some incredible
22 behavior change, for some incredible leaps forward,
23 and I think that there will be an entire caucus of
24 stakeholders that have to be involved, including the
25 partners that we have, partner agencies, community-

based organizations, this council, the next administration, the waste industry, as we all look to solve what happens. We are really excited about what we can get out of the, and learn about the changes in the waste stream that have come post pandemic in our next waste characterization study. The, that study, we are trying to do what we can. We're working with the administration to try to come up with the most robust study that we can come up so we could see all the nuances because if we don't know what's in the waste stream dynamically it's gonna be very hard to plan the long-term recycling goals without knowing exactly what the current makeup is, and then as we do that by neighborhood, by community board, as we look at that strata data that comes in we can plan the communication strategy and, more importantly, we are just a short time away from the next iteration of the solid waste management due in 2026. That critical information about what's happening inside each [inaudible], what is happening in every household from the kitchen to the curb, so to speak. We need to understand what that is. We need to understand how to best communicate through this rich, beautiful, diverse culture that we have throughout all New York

2 City, make sure that everybody understands what it is
3 so that we could all make those big changes on
4 sustainability as we move forward. I cannot wait to
5 work, to continue working with you in your next role,
6 but also this council. This is exactly where all
7 this can happen. Um, do I want more organizations
8 today? Absolutely. Are we having those
9 conversations? Yes, we're looking to expand in
10 December with six more districts and then more than
11 likely in the spring with even more districts. So
12 that work will continue, our outreach, and Deputy
13 Commissioner Bridget Anderson's team going literally
14 door to door, tabling events, trying to educate
15 everybody who signs up. That will continue and, more
16 importantly, the conversations on to where we're
17 gonna be, leading into the next fiscal year and the
18 next budget, those are continuing as well.

19 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Well, Commissioner,
20 I, I appreciate that, and I just hope the next mayor
21 really allows you to, you know, loosens the reins and
22 allows you to go and do what you know how to do. I
23 always think we should just allow for the experts to
24 kind of do their work. Um, you know exactly what the
25 city needs. You have been doing this for such a long

time. You have a great team around you. And I just hope that the mayor allows for experts to dictate the future of this city and these agencies, um, because if they did, you know, you, I, you're a very practical, um, hard-working folks that can really figure out how to solve for a lot of these issues. The only thing that gets in the way is politics. Politics getting in the way of being able to do real work that can make a, a meaningful difference in the city. Um, so I'm hoping that the next administration and the next council really empower you, um, so that you can move forward with a lot of these issues, because I can't stand it that we have to stand here and, you know, not fight, but discuss things that we agree on, right? Like I can't, I don't like having a discussion about things that we agree on. And the advocates are gonna talk to you, they're gonna say a few words after this, and you're gonna see everything they say you're probably gonna agree with, um, and it's just we can't get it done, um, I think because of politics, um, over, over policy. So I'm hoping we can get through that. Um, I, I do want to not take too long and allow for the advocates to say a few words as well, um, ah, before we have to close out,

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2 but just want to say, um, that, ah, again, I, I want
3 this to be about where we go moving forward. I do
4 think containerized waste, bringing back alternate
5 side of the street parking, um, mandatory organics,
6 um, are all things that we need to have a very
7 serious conversation about, um, and I'm hoping that
8 the next administer and the next group of, ah, of,
9 ah, council members take it on, um, and I just want
10 to say to, to you all, um, Bridget Anderson, Gregory
11 Anderson, Commissioner Grayson, I can't tell you how,
12 how proud and great, ah, and, and grateful I am, um,
13 that you guys are at the helm of this work. Ah,
14 folks that don't who these, the deputy commissioners
15 are, um, these are extraordinary people that believe,
16 believe in the mission, ah, and are as bright as they
17 come, and if given the opportunity could do amazing
18 work here. Ah, but when I sat on a panel with
19 Bridget and we're going at it about, you know, pay as
20 you throw or save as you throw, save as you throw, I
21 don't want to get in trouble, um, or, ah, just, ah,
22 understanding, um, you know, the, the work and the
23 data and the information that needs to be presented
24 to the general public to get things done, um, and the
25 availability of, ah, Commissioner Gregory Anderson as

well, I can't tell you how grateful I am to you both,
ah, for the work that you've done. And Commissioner
Grayson, um, you know, the former commissioner, you
know, you know, high heels to follow, um, and I can
tell you that you've done an amazing job, and I can't
tell how grateful I am. You know, I think a lot of
people didn't know who you were and didn't know what
to expect, um, but you're, you know, extremely sharp,
you know, from beginning to end, ah, you're family,
and the history in sanitation. Um, you're
progressive, like policy wonks, ah, policy like
chops, ah, when it comes to a lot of this work are
things that were unexpected and like highly, um,
highly grateful that you are the commissioner and,
ah, this is my, ah, five-second pitch to the next
administration, that if you want to get things done
these are the people you keep, you keep around you
for sure. Um, so I want to say thank you all very,
very much. I can't tell you how happy I am to have
chaired this committee for the last, ah, ah, eight
years, um, especially with you guys helping me do it.
And I want to allow for arguably folks that I don't
think ever missed a hearing, um, are these advocates
that keep me, keep me centered, keep me, keep me, ah,

2 ah, ah, on top of it, let me tell you, unwavering
3 advocates, um, like, ah, Justin [inaudible] Goldstein
4 and I want to give them an opportunity to say a few
5 words, if you guys could just stay on, um, while, ah,
6 they kind of give us, um, of where we've been and
7 where we're going situation, ah, because what they
8 say now is gonna be what we'll realize in 10 years,
9 ah, which is kind of how it always happens. Ah, but
10 again, thank you all. I really appreciate you guys.

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRIDGET ANDERSON:

12 Thank you, Chair.

13 COMMISSIONER GRAYSON: Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Um, so, ah,
15 Committee Counsel, if you can call on, ah, I think
16 we're done with the council members, so if there, ah,
17 public speaking portion?

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, Chair. Thank
19 you very much. We will now turn to public testimony.
20 I'd like to remind everyone that we will be calling
21 on individuals one by one to testify. Each panelist
22 will be given three minutes to speak. Please begin
23 once the sergeant has started the time and given you
24 the cue to begin. Council members who have questions
25 for a particular panelist should use the raise hand

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3 function in Zoom and I will call on you after the
4 panelist has completed their testimony. For
5 panelists, once your name is called a member of our
6 staff will unmute you and the Sergeant at Arms will
7 give you the go-ahead to begin upon setting the time.
8 Please wait for the sergeant to announce that you may
9 begin before delivering your testimony. First, we
10 will hear from Eric Goldstein, followed by Justin
11 Wood, followed by Kathy Nizzari. Eric Goldstein, you
12 may begin when the sergeant calls time.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

14 ERIC GOLDSTEIN: Good morning, Chairman
15 Reynoso and Council Member Chin. Ah, I think it's
16 exceptionally fitting that the two of you are here
17 for this hearing because you have been such great
18 leaders all the way through on so many of these
19 critical issues and we really appreciate your
20 leadership. I'm Eric Goldstein, from the National
21 Resources Defense Council. I'll be summarizing, ah,
22 our detailed written testimony today. Thank you for
23 holding today's oversight hearing. We hope and pray
24 it's not the last committee hearing of the year since
25 there's still so much important work for this
committee and council to complete before December 31.

Ah, but if it is indeed the committee's final hearing for oversight we want to take a moment to thank all of the committee members and your staffs, and to acknowledge the critical waste legislation that you have moved forward over the past eight years.

Commercial waste zoning, the waste equity law, plastic and paper carry-out bags, polystyrene foam food and beverage containers, funding for essential sanitation services, including the, ah, completion of the marine transfer stations, and even, ah, resuscitation of the community composting program, although that is just barely alive. And that's just some of the highlights of the work that you and we and your committee colleagues, in conjunction with Commissioners Garcia and Grayson have done, ah, over the past years. It is an impressive record. Turning to the topic of today's hearing, we highlight one major advance that's now underway and two that are critically needed. As noted above, we can all celebrate that this committee led the way in collaboration with form Sanitation Commissioner Garcia, Commissioner Grayson, and the Anderson twins, ah, in advancing the commercial waste zoning law. This is historic legislation, which the department

even today is working diligently to achieve and promises to completely transform commercial waste handling in the City of New York. Ensuring its full implementation in 2022 must continue to be a top City Council priority. Without question, the biggest advance in New York City has not moved forward with is universal curbside composting collection. The current methods of disposing of the overwhelming bulk of the city's organics, land filling and incineration, are fraught with environmental problems. The, ah, current program of voluntary collections, while well intended, is unfortunately only a drop in a bucket and does not hold the potential to address the problem the way it needs to be addressed. Every major New York City planning document that has examined this issue, from Mayor Bloomberg's Plan YC to Mayor de Blasio's One New York City, to Speaker Johnson's own March 2020 Climate and Sustainability Plan, highlighted the importance of universal curbside composting collection. Yet inexplicably this legislation to create a universal curbside collection program for every city household has not been introduced.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

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2 ERIC GOLDSTEIN: This committee should
3 not close shop for the year without at least holding
4 a hearing or getting legislation introduced for the
5 sensible and urgently needed idea, which is advancing
6 or already in place in leading cities across North
7 America. Another solid waste management advance
8 that's long been waiting in the wings is municipal
9 route collection and collection schedule adjustments.
10 One of the biggest challenges the city is facing in
11 its efforts to make the Sanitation Department a
12 leader in sustainability is ensuring that our waste
13 handling practices are cost effective and a key
14 strategy that municipalities across North America are
15 applying is the idea of adjusting collection routes
16 to better accomplish sustainability goals. This
17 means, for example, adding additional collections for
18 materials we want to encourage, like organics and
19 recycling, while cutting back on collections for
20 regular household trash. This would result in the
21 same number of total collections to New York City
22 households, the same level of service, but help
23 maximize collection efficiency. Just such approach
24 has been advancing in Toronto and Vancouver, for
25 example, where they have cut back on the number of

2 garbage and recycling pickups while adding additional
3 collections for food scraps and yard waste.

4 Obviously such, ah, route adjustments will require
5 cooperation with our friends in the sanitation union.

6 But we know such efforts can ultimately succeed and
7 we hope the incoming Adams administration and the new
8 council make such negotiations a priority. Two final

9 points. A very sensible legislative proposal, Intro

10 775-B, Skip the Stuff, would make plastic utensils,

11 napkins, condiments, etcetera, available to

12 restaurant take-out customers only on request. This

13 bill has the support of the restaurant industry and

14 the New York City Hospitality Alliance. It would

15 save restaurant owners hundreds, if not thousands, of

16 dollars a year. That's the experience in Los

17 Angeles, where the sponsor of this similar bill in

18 Los Angeles reports they're saving restaurants that

19 have implemented it, are saving \$3000 a year. The

20 bill now has 26 sponsors, the majority of the

21 council. There's absolutely no excuse for

22 withholding a vote on this bill before December 31,

23 and this committee should get back together and hold

24 a vote on this bill before the year closes. We're

25 looking to Speaker Corey Johnson, who's been a friend

of the environment on many fronts, to allow a hearing and a vote on this no-brainer of a bill before December 31. Finally, we urge the council to make this the last, ah, committee hearing held via Zoom. Sensible restrictions like mask wearing and proof of vaccination should of course be required. But the council and the public will all benefit from the restoration of in-person hearings and the time for that step has now arrived. And, as you've done, ah, Chair Reynoso, we want to thank, ah, the staffs of the committee, including, ah, Nadia and Jeff Baker and Jessica and, ah, Ricky, everyone who's been working behind the scenes, ah, for their good work over the period in which you've chaired the committee. What you have done, ah, with Council Member Chin and the other members of this committee is really noteworthy, but, of course, there's much more work to be done and we hope you're not putting your pencil case away just yet. Thank you for your attention.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you, thank you, Eric. I just want say, ah, fighting to the end, let me tell ya, Eric, you don't quit, ah, and I appreciate that of you, um, and if I get the

opportunity to host another hearing for the, the
utensil bill, um, I will be more than happy to make
sure I can, I can do that. I just want to say in my
next capacity, even though it doesn't happen often,
borough presidents are also allowed to hold hearings,
um, and really want to make sure that a lot of the
things that we're doing we continue to do, um, ah,
there. Ah, so thank you so much, Eric, for
everything that you've done. Um, I don't want this
to be my last hearing. Ah, you know, it will be
December, ah, so a lot of transition work is
happening, ah, and, ah, you know, Christmas and
Hanukah, and, and all these holidays. Ah, so we'll
see. I, I know, maybe on Christmas day we can do
something, Eric. Ah, it'll be, it'll be a lot of
fun. Um, ah, time and half. Ah, but I really
appreciate you. Thank you so much for everything
you've done and this won't be the last, Eric. We're
family, so we'll be seeing a lot of each other
throughout, through our lives. So, so I appreciate
you very much for being in all these hearings and
helping me out and helping, ah, [inaudible]. Thank
you.

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2 ERIC GOLDSTEIN: Amen to that. Thanks to
3 Asher as well.

4 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Yes, ah, Asher
5 Freeman is not on, but he's, ah, he's been doing a
6 lot of work with our office as the legislative
7 director, um, and he will be brought on with me so
8 hopefully we continue that work. Thank you, Eric.
9 Ah, I think, ah, Justin is next, ah, Committee
10 Counsel?

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, thank you,
12 Chair. We will now hear from Justin Wood, followed
13 by Kathy Nizzari. Justin Wood, you may begin when
14 the sergeant calls time.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

16 JUSTIN WOOD: Good morning, everyone.
17 I'm Justin Wood. I'm the director of policy at New
18 York Lawyers for the Public Interest and a member of
19 the Transformed on Trash NYC and Save Our Compost
20 Coalitions. Um, thank you so much, Chair Reynoso.
21 Thank you to, ah, Council Member Chin. Thank you,
22 Commissioner Grayson, and to the absolutely
23 formidable council and agency staff teams who have
24 been working so well with communities, workers,
25 businesses, and all of the New Yorkers who have so

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2 much at stake in our huge solid waste system. Um, so
3 I'm just gonna echo some of what, ah, Eric said and,
4 and what so many have been saying. Ah, it's just a,
5 it's, it's been a tremendous eight years in, in many
6 ways. Together we've achieved what previous
7 administrations and councils didn't. Legislation
8 addressing the longstanding inequities of the waste
9 system, policies that will address the notorious
10 inefficiency, worker exploitation, public safety, and
11 outsized pollution that's been endemic to the
12 commercial waste system for decades. So this is a
13 really exciting day with commercial waste zones
14 moving forward and momentous that, ah, this hearing
15 is, is happening at the same time. Of course, we
16 have some further suggestions. I want to echo
17 everything that, um, my colleague, Eric, said, and a
18 few other suggestions of the major work that, that
19 lies ahead for the next administration and council,
20 and hopefully ongoing members of, of this council's
21 Sanitation Committee. Um, first of all, we'd like to
22 continue the progress on waste equity by allowing
23 both commercial and residential waste to be processed
24 at the city's state-of-the-art marine and rail
25 facilities. This is something that's in the solid

2 waste plan for these facilities [inaudible] open to
3 commercial [inaudible] staffed appropriately, um, and
4 should be reviewed as a part of [inaudible] zone
5 system that's being implemented in the coming months
6 and the RFPs that were released today. This would
7 further reduce truck miles, improve public safety in
8 the districts currently, ah, overly burdened with
9 commercial waste and diesel trucks and would allow
10 material to flow to public facilities that have good
11 safety practices and good union jobs. Second, I
12 agree with everything that, that folks have been
13 talking about. We need to rapidly increase
14 recycling, especially organics recycling, in both the
15 residential and commercial sectors. And for
16 commercial this means ensuring that the commercial
17 waste zone providers, ah, bidding for these zones,
18 are prepared to make major investments and work hand-
19 in-hand with our customer base to tackle [inaudible].
20 I also [inaudible] these businesses need to be
21 [inaudible] waste reduction and recycling. So in
22 addition to aggressively negotiating with the waste,
23 ah, companies' bidding to ensure that they're
24 building the right facilities and investing heavily
25 in customer education, we would urge the city and

2 sanitation department to continue to look for ways to
3 ensure that independent and expert waste auditors...

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 JUSTIN WOOD: ...are available to every
6 commercial customer. I just have a couple more, then
7 I can wrap up. For the residential sector we agree
8 that this requires a universal mandatory organics
9 recycling program that treats food and yard waste
10 like any other recyclable material. This is critical
11 to giving the millions of New Yorkers who rent or own
12 apartments in multifamily buildings access to this
13 basic, common sense, form of recycle, recycling.
14 [inaudible] the commissioner [inaudible] on plastic
15 bags and the same with food waste and other plastics.
16 Finally, we know that in both sectors composting
17 recycling is a major generator of good local green
18 and hopefully union jobs and that both are critical
19 to reducing the lifecycle climate emissions from
20 waste, which we noted the state's Climate Action
21 Council has now determined is a much larger
22 contributor to our footprint than previously
23 estimated. So we're really hoping to continue to
24 work with all of you and we look forward to the
25 transition to the next Sanitation Committee and, um,

2 building on this historic progress. Thank you very
3 much.

4 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you, Justin.
5 So much for your work as well in, in this movement.
6 Um, you've been a staple in, in the work that we've
7 been able to do and, you know, for always having my
8 back in these meetings, ah, when, ah, things get
9 really difficult, um, and, and again, just centering
10 the work we're doing. Um, I tell you, a lot of
11 people don't know that, um, there's a lot of pushback
12 and a lot of power, powerful interests that really
13 make our jobs very difficult, um, and when you have
14 folks like Justin around you, ah, it makes it that
15 much easier. It is somebody you want in the trenches
16 with you. So thank you so much, Justin, for, for all
17 the work that you've done.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair.
19 Next we will hear from Kathy Nizzari, followed by
20 Alex Shapanka. Kathy Nizzari, you may begin when the
21 sergeant calls time.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

23 KATHY NIZZARI: Thank you, Jessica. Good
24 morning, Chairman Reynoso and members of the
25 Sanitation Committee. I'm Kathy Nizzari, on behalf

2 of Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board. Thank you
3 for the opportunity to speak today. First, we
4 congratulate and thank Chair Reynoso for all your
5 hard work on, among so much, commercial waste zones
6 and addressing waste as an equity issue. I believe
7 you are the first council member to do so. It has
8 been a pleasure working with you and your staff.
9 We're wishing you the very best in your new role as
10 Brooklyn Borough president and hope the incoming
11 Sanitation chair can fill your shoes. Looking ahead,
12 we believe it is critical that zero waste [inaudible]
13 also include end to incineration or we are trading
14 one environmental problem for another. Our coalition
15 [inaudible] that includes us, [inaudible] use,
16 Cafeteria Culture, Food and Water Watch, It's Easy
17 Being Green, Oceanic Global, 350 NYC, and Upstream
18 urges you to pass Intro 844 and Intro 2250 before the
19 end of this session. Codifying and requiring DSNY to
20 create a comprehensive zero waste plan, a vital first
21 step to addressing municipal solid waste. The
22 pandemic has only amplified the need to act now.
23 Municipal solid waste is a significant contributor to
24 greenhouse gas, yet it is repeatedly overlooked when
25 discussing climate change mitigation. We paid more

2 than 420 million dollars to bury and burn waste last
3 year, generating pollution and environmental
4 [inaudible]. Solid waste not only intersects with
5 environmental issues, but also with public health,
6 social, and environmental justice. Much of
7 Manhattan's waste is incinerated [inaudible]
8 significantly impacting public health and quality of
9 life of New York's lower income communities of color
10 where the childhood asthma rates of 25% is three
11 times higher than the national average. This public
12 health issue cannot be ignored. [inaudible]
13 communities have also suffered the most from
14 destructive waste management policies, exemplified by
15 the more than 70% of our truck transportation
16 [inaudible]. It is crucial to address the recycling
17 rate of just 1.5% in NYCHA in a sustainable way, as
18 well as the broader city [inaudible] nearly 18%. And
19 we cannot emphasize enough mandatory curbside
20 organics would reduce our waste stream by nearly 40%.
21 Encapsulated here are proven strategies to reduce
22 solid waste and its associated emissions. We are
23 happy to discuss them further with you offline. We
24 allocate funding for waste export to landfill and
25

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2 incinerators from zero waste programs, imbed
3 [inaudible]...

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 KATHY NIZZARI: ...to every [inaudible]
6 replicate successful programs from other cities,
7 successful NYCHA program [inaudible] guidelines for
8 architects, developers, [inaudible], city planners.
9 [inaudible] looks forward to working with you on
10 these goals and thank [inaudible].

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Kathy, your, your
12 video went in and out. I just want to make sure that
13 you were able to finish your testimony. Are you
14 finished? If someone could unmute, or just give me a
15 thumbs up.

16 KATHY NIZZARI: [inaudible]

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: OK. Thank you very
18 much. All right, next we will hear from Alex
19 Shapanka, followed by Oliver Wright. Alex Shapanka,
20 you may begin when the sergeant calls time.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

22 ALEX SHAPANKA: Thank you. And thank
23 you, Chair Reynoso and members of the City Council,
24 and good morning to DSNY, who is here today. Um, I'm
25 Alex Shapanka, assistant vice president of policy at

2 Real Estate Board of New York. Um, DSNY faces the
3 daunting challenge of overseeing the collection of
4 and disposal of more than 14 million tons of waste
5 produced annually by New York City's businesses,
6 residents, and institutions. We think proper waste
7 management of the city's waste is essential for New
8 York's quality of life and public health, and it's a
9 task that DSNY recognizes and constantly searches for
10 means of improving. Over the past several years DSNY
11 and City Council under Chair Reynoso's leadership
12 have implemented programs in attempts to reduce the
13 presence of semi-exposed waste in the public domain
14 and improve city's waste management more broadly.
15 Some of the city's initiatives to improve waste
16 collection and management include, but are certainly
17 not limited to, Local Law 152 of 2018, known as the
18 Waste Equity Law, ah, the creation of commercial
19 waste zones, as well as a pilot program for waste
20 containerization, and residential composting. The
21 benefits of these programs cannot be understated and
22 range from their, ah, reduction of traffic
23 congestion, greenhouse gas emissions, increased
24 worker safety, fewer trash bags present on public
25 walkways and sidewalks, as well as landfill

2 diversion. You know, REBNY supports the city's
3 continued commitment to bettering its services by
4 imaging and implementing new solutions to keep our
5 streets clean and New Yorkers safe and healthy. In
6 the interest of time I'm just gonna highlight a
7 couple of the more salient programs that the
8 [inaudible] industry cares about. Ah, in 2019
9 council passed Local Law 199 to create commercial
10 waste zones. Note this program will divide five
11 boroughs into 20 zones, for which the city's
12 contracts will be awarded to up to three carting
13 companies for the collection of waste within each
14 zone. The city's approach seeks to reduce the truck
15 traffic and the commercial waste collection by 50%,
16 as well as strengthen the, the services and standards
17 within the industry. You know, REBNY along with
18 other key stakeholders has worked with DSNY as well
19 as City Council in the development of the commercial
20 waste zones law and we appreciate the city's
21 partnership and willingness to ensure that such a
22 transformative improvement to private sanitation
23 management is not a rupture from the existing
24 commercial practices. REBNY also thanks DSNY for its
25 continued partnership and thoughtfulness about the

2 development of the program's framework and
3 [inaudible] implementation which included delaying
4 its rollout because of the disruption caused by the
5 COVID-19 pandemic. We encourage DSNY to continue its
6 measured as it finalizes the draft rule makings, um,
7 that will be build, that will build the program
8 structure as well as its eventual implementation,
9 including its instituting the commercial waste zones
10 in phases to allow for a proper review of the program
11 and address any potential challenges it may face.

12 And congrats to DSNY, I believe the second round of
13 the RFP was announced this morning, so I'm sure you
14 all are very busy with that. Ah, the other piece we
15 wanted to, to quickly comment on is containerization.
16 In an effort to mitigate the presence of waste and
17 odors in the streets DSNY created the Clean Curbs
18 pilot program in 2020, which allows for private
19 entities and BIDs to apply for opportunity to have...

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

21 ALEX SHAPANKA: ...[inaudible] containers
22 of trash. If I can continue just for one more
23 minute, I'll be brief. Um, you know, REBNY supports
24 the pilot program and encourages DSNY to work with
25 the Department of Transportation to publicly report

2 any of the operations of the program as part of
3 exploring, ah, possibility of expanding its scale.
4 Um, it additionally, in recent years the agency has
5 put forward ideas to expand the use of containerized
6 waste systems in residential buildings. REBNY looks
7 forward to continuing discussions with city agencies
8 to consider how that would best be implemented to not
9 be overly disruptive to development. Um, and that's
10 it. Thank you.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you very much.
12 We will next hear from Oliver Wright. Oliver Wright,
13 you may begin when the sergeant calls time.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

15 OLIVER WRIGHT: Good afternoon, Chairman
16 Reynoso and members of the Sanitation Committee. My
17 name is Oliver Wright and I am pleased to provide
18 testimony at this oversight hearing on behalf of the
19 Brooklyn Solid Waste Advisory Board. I'd like to
20 begin by thank Council Member Reynoso for his hard
21 work and dedication as chairman of this committee and
22 by wishing him the best in his new role as Brooklyn
23 Borough president. A big thank you, of course, as
24 well to the rest of the committee and to DSNY for all
25 your excellent work. The Brooklyn SWAB looks forward

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3 to continuing to work with Reynoso and with the
4 Sanitation and Solid Waste Committee and DSNY in 2022
5 and beyond. With regard to the city's zero waste
6 goals and the creation of a zero waste plan, the
7 Brooklyn SWAB has previously highlighted for DSNY to
8 be given appropriate resourcing and support to take
9 and approach this really holistic, evidence-based,
10 and outcomes-driven, and to create a, a thorough plan
11 towards zero waste that outlines, ah, a policy
12 package where every initiative has a deadline and
13 quantifiable goal. This plan would bring together
14 existing data of quantities, characterization studies
15 and processing capacity, analyses of current and
16 potential expenditure across all waste streams,
17 opportunities for collaboration across departments, a
18 focus on environmental justice and equity issues,
19 innovations in technology and business models,
20 legislative approaches such as EPR and the existing
21 and potential impacts of community and nonprofit
22 initiatives. As such, while we encourage the City
23 Council to pass Intros 844 and 2250 before the end of
24 this session as an important commitment for the city,
25 the planning process outlined in Intro 2250 would
need to be greatly expanded in timeline and scope to

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produce a really meaningful set actions. The Sanitation Committee played a crucial role in defending and reestablishing community composting in the face of COVID-related budget cuts in 2020. The further development of curbside collection is alongside local solutions for collection and processing of organic waste is a key component of the city's move to zero waste, of its response to the ongoing climate crisis, and an opportunity to address issues of equity and environmental justice. The Brooklyn SWAB looks forward to continuing to work with DSNY and the Sanitation Committee towards a citywide organics program that will make New York a cleaner, greener, and more equitable place. A hallmark of Council Member Reynoso's term as chair has been the championing of environmental justice issue, issues, um, typified by the approach to the introduction of commercial waste zones. It's our recommendation that environmental justice remain a priority for the next committee chair, just as we're confident it will remain a priority for the incoming Brooklyn Borough president. And, and finally I'd just like to echo my [inaudible] NYC Coalition colleague, Eric Goldstein's, ah, call for a hearing

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2 and vote on the Skip the Stuff bill before the end of
3 this session. Thank you for your consideration.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you very much.

5 I just want to remind panelists that if you have
6 written testimony that you can submit that at
7 testimony@council.nyc.gov. If we have inadvertently
8 missed anyone who has registered to testify today and
9 has yet to have been called please use the Zoom raise
10 hand function and you will be called on in the order
11 that your hand has been raised. Seeing none, I will
12 now turn it over to Chair Reynoso to offer closing
13 remarks. Chair.

14 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: OK. Thank you so
15 much. Ah, I was reading so I couldn't thank, um, the
16 Manhattan and Brooklyn SWAB, and all the SWABs in the
17 City of New York. Um, we all know that this works
18 takes an inside and outside game. Um, we, you know,
19 these ideas are not born with elected officials.
20 They're not born with legislative, they come from
21 like grassroots folks on the ground doing this work,
22 and the SWAB is spending volunteer time, um, out of
23 their lives to, ah, push forward, um, an agenda that
24 is like pro, you know, pro positive trash handling,
25 um, and just an environmental justice [inaudible]

folks. I just want to thank the SWABs for the work they do. Alex and REBNY, ah, thank you so much. Ah we have a lot work to do and, um, we see REBNY as a, a needed partner, um, and I, ah, I want to say a hopeful ally in a lot of the work we're doing because you can help move a lot of the work that we think we need to move, um, to get so, this, this city to where it needs to be. Um, we're [inaudible] having REBNY as an ally can do more of that than not. So we're really looking forward to continuing to work together. So thank you for your testimony, Alex. And, ah, to all, ah, I guess the common, ah, the consensus here is that hopefully this is not our last hearing because we got more work to do. Um, so we're really excited about that. Ah, thank you all so much, um, and have a good day, ah, and spread love. It's the Brooklyn way. Peace. And Margaret, it's OK to be from the second-best borough in, in New York. It's OK, Margaret [laughs]. Take care guys, take care.

C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date December 19, 2021