

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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Wednesday, March 15, 2023
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HELD AT: Committee Room, City Hall

B E F O R E: Sandy Nurse, Chairperson

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Darren Kwong
WE ACT for Environmental Justice
and Indivisible Harlem

Vandra Thorburn
Founder and President
Vokashi

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2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good morning, and welcome to
3 the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste
4 Management. At this time, please place your phones
5 on vibrate or on silent mode. If you want to
6 testify, send it to testimony@council.nyc.gov. Once
7 again, that's testimony@council.nyc.gov. Thank you
8 for your cooperation. Chair, we are ready to begin.

9 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Good morning, everyone. Good
10 morning everyone. I'm Sandy Nurse. I'm Chair of the
11 Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management.
12 Welcome to our preliminary budget hearing.

13 Today, this committee will address the Mayor's
14 fiscal 2024 preliminary budget for the Department of
15 Sanitation. The department's proposed fiscal 2024
16 budget totals \$1.82 billion for programmatic funding,
17 broken into \$1.6 billion for personnel services
18 spending, and \$760 million in other-than-personnel
19 services spending. DSNY's proposed capital
20 commitment plan totals \$2.5 billion over five years
21 spread across 183 projects, and the 10-year capital
22 strategy plan, released every two years, totals \$3.8
23 billion for DSNY.

24 The city is at a pivotal stage in regards to
25 making progress on improving the cleanliness of its

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2 streets and public spaces. Fiscal 2024 will see the
3 expansion and implementation of two massively
4 important sanitation projects, the citywide Curbside
5 Composting Program and commercial waste zones. The
6 citywide Curbside Composting Program announced by the
7 Mayor in January will be live in four of the five
8 boroughs by the end of fiscal 2024, when the
9 commercial waste zones program will begin outreach
10 towards a first phase in the second half of the
11 calendar year 2024.

12 These programs are on top of the ongoing work
13 such as the twice-per-day, six-per-day-per-week
14 citywide litter basket service the Council funded in
15 fiscal 23, as well as the rest of DSNY's essential
16 services. The Committee and the Council as a whole
17 want to ensure that all of this unnecessary work is
18 fully funded and fully staffed in fiscal 2024.

19 Going into this preliminary budget cycle,
20 agencies city wide were instructed to cut their
21 civilian vacancies by 50%. DSNY cut 28 budgeted
22 positions for the fiscal year 2024 preliminary plan
23 in addition to 68 budgeted positions cut in the
24 November plan. These vacancies are a concern for the
25 council. A high priority of this committee is to

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2 baseline funding for litter baskets service, which
3 led to a drastic decrease in complaints, lot cleaning
4 and precision cleaning that were funded for fiscal
5 2023 but are not currently funded for fiscal 2024.

6 While we commend the Administration for not
7 cutting DSNY's budget as severely as in past years,
8 the fiscal 2024 budget is currently over \$50 million
9 below what the fiscal 2023 budget was at adoption.
10 The Council will be fighting for the inclusion of
11 adequate funding for many important programs in the
12 2024 executive budget, and would like to see them
13 baselined moving forward as this will save the city
14 in the long run.

15 The Committee looks forward to hearing about the
16 Agency's city wide capital investment strategy and
17 expense budget updates. DSNY Commissioner Jessica
18 Tisch, we look forward to your testimony today, along
19 with First Deputy Commissioner Javier Lojan, and
20 Deputy Commissioners Gregory Anderson and Joe
21 Antonelli.

22 Before we begin, the Committee may not get to all
23 of our questions, or you may not have responses, so
24 we will send a follow up letter for any unanswered
25 questions. I want to thank my staff Annel Hernandez,

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT⁷
2 as well as the committee staff Andrew Lane Lawless
3 and Ricky Chowla for helping in preparing for today's
4 hearing.

5 I want to recognize council members Amanda
6 Fariás, Councilmember Chi Ossé, Councilmember Eric
7 Bottcher for being here with us now. We have
8 Councilmember Marjorie Velázquez on Zoom as well.

9 So with that said, I'll turn it over to Counsel
10 for the Committee to administer the oath.

11 COUNSEL: Thank you Chair. Chris Sartori,
12 Committee Counsel. Do you affirm to tell the truth,
13 the whole truth and nothing but the truth and your
14 testimony before this committee and to respond
15 honestly to council member questions?

16 ALL: I do.

17 COUNSEL: Thank you.

18 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Good morning Chair Nurse and
19 members of the City Council Committee on Sanitation
20 and Solid Waste Management. I am Jessica Tisch
21 Commissioner the New York City Department of
22 Sanitation. I am joined today by First Deputy
23 Commissioner Javier Lojan, Joseph Antonelli, Deputy
24 Commissioner for Management and Budget, and Gregory
25 Anderson Deputy Commissioner for Policy and Strategic

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2 Initiatives. Thank you for the opportunity to
3 testify today on DSNY 's fiscal year 2024 preliminary
4 budget.

5 When Mayor Adams took office last year, New York
6 City was filthy. The previous administration gutted
7 core cleanliness functions at DSNY during the
8 pandemic, slashing funding for basic services like
9 litter basket collection and street cleaning.
10 Combined with staffing shortages related to the
11 ongoing pandemic, these cuts have created service
12 levels among the lowest we've seen in decades: missed
13 collections increased, cleanliness complaints
14 increased, basic enforcement decreased, and the city
15 was viscerally and visibly dirtier.

16 In the first year of the Adams administration,
17 the narrative has begun to change. Mayor Adams has
18 made unprecedented new investments in restoring
19 cleaning programs and so much more. Today we have
20 more than 8000 uniformed sanitation workers and
21 officers, the highest uniform headcount in two
22 decades.

23 Before I address the specifics of our FY 24
24 budget, I'll discuss a few highlights of our new
25

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2 programs and priorities as we work to get stuff
3 clean.

4 First, DSNY is implementing one of the most
5 important changes to waste management in decades next
6 month, changing the rules around waste set out to
7 eliminate the five o'clock shadow of black bags on
8 the curb. Currently, trash and recycling may be
9 placed out on the curb after 4pm the night before
10 collection, the earliest of any major American city,
11 meaning that in many neighborhoods, these items can
12 sit out for more than 14 hours a day, including
13 during the evening and a.m. pedestrian rush hours.

14 The new rules which take effect on April 1st give
15 two options for residential and commercial
16 properties: Residential properties will be able to
17 set out waste and bags at the curb starting at 8
18 p.m., or in containers of 55 gallons or less with a
19 lid starting at 6 p.m. Commercial properties and
20 establishments will be able to set waste in bags at
21 the curb starting at 8 p.m., or in containers with a
22 lid starting one hour before closing.

23 In addition to these new proposed rules, DSNY is
24 doing more of its collection on the midnight shift
25

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2 than pre pandemic, further reducing the amount of
3 time that trash sits on the street.

4 This month. DSNY has rolled out an aggressive
5 marketing and communications campaign to educate the
6 public about the new rules, including mailers to
7 every home and business, ads on social media, digital
8 and print platforms, and dozens of meetings with
9 business groups, community organizations, and other
10 stakeholders.

11 We have taken we have also taken aim at something
12 that every New Yorker was aware of: The way in which
13 the city became meaningfully dirtier over the course
14 of the pandemic following deep cuts to the budget for
15 the department's cleanliness function that took
16 effect in March of 2020. To that end, Mayor Adams
17 has restored several cleaning services as part of his
18 plan to get stuff clean, but he hasn't just restored
19 them. He's gone beyond giving us the highest level
20 of service for these basic cleanliness functions in
21 history. Together, these initiatives represent a
22 total investment of \$53.2 million in the current
23 fiscal year, the largest investment in new
24 cleanliness programs in decades, and they total
25 nearly 250 additional uniformed personnel for the

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2 agency. Last July in partnership with the City
3 Council we added \$22 million in supplemental service
4 for the more than 23,000 corner litter baskets across
5 New York City. This represents a 74% increase in
6 service above the baseline funding level and has led
7 to a decrease in 311 complaints for overflowing
8 litter baskets by more than 50% compared to last
9 fiscal year. Baskets are emptied 50,000 times more
10 often city wide each week, and we've seen the largest
11 year-over-year decrease in complaints ever. November
12 we added \$4.8 million to provide supplemental service
13 for litter baskets on DOT bridges and around parks,
14 some of the most highly traffic tourist areas in the
15 city. Together these investments fund 889 weekly
16 litter basket crews up from a pre pandemic high of
17 736 Weekly crews, and the highest level of litter
18 baskets service on record at DSNY.

19 Regular cleaning for some of our most visible
20 areas which is so essential to our recovery. Last
21 July, DSNY fully restored street cleaning operations
22 after more than two years of cuts to sweeping
23 frequency. Mechanical brooms are the city's most
24 effective tools for street cleaning, sweeping litter
25 from along the curb on thousands of miles of New York

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2 City streets and they've been handcuffed, effectively
3 assigned to desk duty. This restoration of a
4 critical cleaning operation, alongside new management
5 and analytical tools to track performance, has
6 contributed to noticeably cleaner streets. However,
7 our street sweepers are only as good as New Yorkers'
8 compliance with parking regulations, and we need New
9 Yorkers to move their cars for ASP, so our street
10 sweepers can do their jobs. They should know that if
11 they don't, they will receive a ticket, and their
12 street will look dirtier for it. Last fall, we also
13 restored supplemental sweeping of highway on ramps
14 and off ramps, often one of the first places that
15 visitors and commuters see when they come to New
16 York, and an area that contributed to New York's
17 reputation as trash city. With \$470,000 in new funds
18 this year, and \$1.1 million in baseline funding
19 thereafter, we're cleaning more than 150 miles of
20 ramps an average of once a month.

21 But what about our neighborhoods? For far too
22 long, no man's land areas -- the walkways, median
23 steps, streets, overpasses, and other areas around
24 the city -- harbored dirty, litter-filled conditions.
25 These areas fell between the bureaucratic

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2 jurisdictional cracks and no agency had the resources
3 or the mandate to clean them.

4 In November DSNY created a new targeted
5 neighborhood task force unit to regularly clean these
6 areas for the first time ever. We're addressing over
7 1500 of them in every community in the city. This
8 unit funded for \$7.1 million in fiscal year 23 will
9 grow to 141 dedicated sanitation workers this year.
10 Already, it's having an impact on overlooked spaces
11 across the five boroughs, and nearly every location
12 originally identified for cleaning has been cleaned
13 at least twice with additional new locations being
14 added each week.

15 We are doing our part to clean up New York City,
16 but every New Yorker has a role to play in
17 maintaining the cleanliness of our neighborhoods. In
18 a city this size, it can't just be the 10,000 members
19 of the sanitation department doing this important
20 work. We have a new focus on enforcing basic
21 cleanliness rules, cleaning the sidewalk in front of
22 a chain store, putting trash out when you're supposed
23 to, and in an orderly manner, the kinds of things
24 that keep our streets clean. These are the most
25 basic cleanliness rules, not enforcement for

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2 enforcement's sake. For things like filthy sidewalks
3 loose trash uncovered receptacles that attract rats,
4 the sorts of basic cleanliness requirements that make
5 for good neighbors and good neighborhoods, we're
6 looking at an 80% increase in summons issuance year
7 to date as compared to the same period in 2022. And
8 one of the most crucial regulations, the requirement
9 that property owners keep their sidewalks clean, we
10 have written nearly 12,000 summonses this year alone
11 up 79% compared to the same time last year.

12 But enforcement only goes so far when the penalty
13 for inaction is too low. Right now fines for basic
14 sanitation rules are set by local law at just \$50, an
15 amount that in my opinion is far too low. This was
16 reduced from \$100 by City Council in 2021, sending
17 the message that cleanliness is not a top priority in
18 our city. I am calling on this Council to reverse
19 course and create stiffer penalties. I'm eager to
20 work with you to make this happen.

21 I'd also like to provide an update on our illegal
22 dumping enforcement, one of this administration's
23 most successful operations at the intersection of
24 safety and cleanliness, where for far too long, the
25 only strategy was to just to clean it up and let it

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happen all over again. Illegal dumping is the theft of public space where someone, usually a crooked contractor or an out-of-towner comes to what they think is a neighborhood that no one will care about, a place they can just leave their trash on our streets. This doesn't affect every neighborhood, but the ones that does affect feel it profoundly, and that should matter to every New Yorker.

Dumpers are wrong about two things: They're wrong to think that no one cares about Hunts Point or East New York or Glendale or any of the other neighborhoods where this has been a problem for too long. And they're wrong to think that they'll get away with it.

For the first time in New York City, they won't. That's because of our new city wide illegal dumping enforcement camera network that will grow each week to more than 250 cameras this summer. And it's because of the work of our dedicated sanitation police officers who use that camera network in their investigations to catch dumpers and hold them accountable. Based on this new strategy both vehicle impounds and the \$4,000 summons for illegal dumping are up 450% year-to-date versus the same period in

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2 2022. Our message to dumpers is clear. Your days of
3 dumping in our neighborhoods are long past over.

4 Last month, I joined Mayor Adams to announce a
5 roadmap to implement the nation's largest Composting
6 Program, which will provide universal composting
7 service to every New Yorker for the first time ever
8 over the next 19 months. While Curbside Composting
9 Programs have existed in New York City for the last
10 decade, none have ever served more than approximately
11 40 percent of the city. This will be the first ever
12 specific planning commitment to reach 100% coverage
13 citywide, providing residents with a simple,
14 universal weekly collection of leaf and yard waste,
15 food scraps, and food soiled paper products. It is
16 also the first program designed as a service for mass
17 market use by all New Yorkers. This announcement
18 came on the heels of the cost-effective first phase
19 in Queens last fall, which collected nearly 13
20 million pounds of yard and food waste, more than
21 three times the material per district than the legacy
22 opt-in program.

23 The new program is built on a number of
24 efficiencies that drive costs down including the use
25 of dual-bin trucks, and a right-sizing of the

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workforce to reduce overtime. The leaf and yard

waste first approach was designed based on an

analysis of successful programs in other cities.

Unlike past composting programs, there will be no

signup required for this new program. Residents will

simply set out anything from their kitchen or their

garden in a separate bin on their recycling day, and

DSNY will pick up those materials to turn them into

usable compost or clean renewable energy.

DSNY is working with OMB to refine the costs

associated with this program, which we expect to be

funded in the executive budget. This universal

curbside program is part of a comprehensive approach

to organic waste diversion. Earlier this year, we

completed the installation of 250 smart compost bins

across all five boroughs. These bins are accessible

24 hours per day via a new app for iOS and Android

called NYC compost. New smart compost bin service

covers a number of traditionally underserved

communities, including Bushwick, Bed Stuy, Castle

Hill, Harlem, Highbridge the north shore of Staten

Island, Parkchester, the area around Queensbridge

Houses, and Washington Heights. Across these

communities, the bins have been greeted by

enthusiastic usage, and have diverted pristine compostable material from landfill, and where feasible we are servicing these bins using existing school organics trucks. As Manhattan will receive curbside service last, DSNY is also adding an additional 150 smart compost bins borough wide beginning in June, for a total of 400 citywide.

We also announced a major milestone last week and efforts to expand composting and City Public Schools, completing the rollout of curbside composting service at every school in the Bronx. Over the next year, we will expand service for the remaining 533 schools, largely in Brooklyn and Queens, delivering on our commitment to provide composting to every public school by the end of the 24 school year.

Cities in Europe, Asia, and South America have introduced new innovations in waste collection over the past two decades. New York City however, is stuck in the past. In October, we launched a study of containerization practices and feasibility in New York City. This study is largely complete, and we expect to release a public report in the coming weeks. A few highlights: Implementing shared containers in New York City involves significant

complexity, including new trucks and containers that have never before been used in North America at scale. It also requires substantial curb space, taking away space use for parking, open restaurants and other uses, and it requires significant increases to service frequency. Some cities in Europe provide collection service as often as once or twice per day.

In parallel DSNY has conducted a small pilot of containerization through our clean curbs program. Since the first installation was announced last April we have installed more than 40 total clean curbs containers in all five boroughs. We have provided grants totaling \$375,000 to 19 Business Improvement Districts and community organizations for clean curbs installations in all five boroughs. In November, we also launched the clean curbs residential pilot on 45th Street between 9th and 10th avenues in Manhattan. This pilot has taught us a lot: Most importantly, that behavior change will be key to any adoption of containerization at scale. This block has been advocating for waste containerization for years. And despite consistent education and outreach efforts, there is regularly waste placed outside the containers every day of the week despite the

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2 containers not being full. This is an incredibly
3 resource-intensive pilot, and this approach is not
4 scalable beyond its current scope.

5 Preliminary budget includes \$1.93 billion in
6 expense funds in fiscal year 2023 and \$1.82 billion
7 in fiscal year 2024, reflecting increases of \$55.9
8 million and \$4.5 million respectively, from the
9 budget adopted last June. The fiscal year 2024
10 expense budget includes \$1.06 billion for personal
11 services, to support a total budgeted headcount of
12 9551 full time positions, including 7649 uniformed
13 positions, and 1902 civilian positions and \$760
14 million for other-than-personal services. DSNY's
15 fiscal year 2024 preliminary budget includes \$4.17
16 billion in capital funding in the 10-year plan,
17 including \$1.48 billion for garages and facilities,
18 \$2.48 billion for equipment, \$72.6 million for IT,
19 and \$135.3 million for solid waste management
20 infrastructure. The capital budget includes new
21 funding of \$100 million to purchase 244 additional
22 new trucks, allowing us to dramatically increase the
23 pace of purchases of rear loader and dual BUS is
24 normal collection trucks. We are aggressively moving
25 to bring in these new vehicles, which will bring down

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2 the average age of our fleet and improve out-of-
3 service rates.

4 The capital budget also includes funding for
5 several major facilities projects, including \$170
6 million in additional funding for the construction of
7 a new garage for Bronx districts 9, 10, and 11, with
8 construction of temporary space scheduled to begin in
9 2024, and \$140 million in additional funding for the
10 construction of a new garage for Queens district 1,
11 with construction of the new garage scheduled to
12 begin in 2027. Together, these investments will
13 begin to address critical infrastructure needs for
14 our sanitation garages, many of which are in
15 desperate need of repair.

16 Thank you for the opportunity to testify today
17 and my staff and I look forward to answering your
18 questions.

19 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you, Commissioner.
20 We're going to start on the issue of the citywide
21 organics program, focused on the pilot, and then I'll
22 open it up for some of you all to ask questions.

23 So just to begin, can you walk us through the
24 overall startup cost of the Queen's compost-- the
25

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2 Queen's organic pilot, inclusive of outreach, new
3 hires, and equipment?

4 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Yes. DSNY-- Before we
5 started the Queen's rollout, we had existing funding
6 related to organics of \$4.15 million in OTPS funds.
7 That money was initially slated for the legacy opt-in
8 program and FY 23. But we diverted those funds for
9 bin delivery, outreach, marketing, and communications
10 for the Queens program, and also to pre-order bins
11 for the next rounds of expansion. Of that, the total
12 outreach and communications, the cost for total
13 outreach and communications was \$1.5 million.

14 On the PS side, we-- it was a need-- it was--
15 came out to about \$2.75 million, of which we had
16 existing PS funds of \$747,000. So the net PS cost,
17 the net new PS cost was \$2 million dollars. And then
18 we also had a processing OTPS cost of \$721--
19 approximately \$721,000.

20 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: So can you tell me how many
21 new hires or personnel were added or any
22 additional...?

23 COMMISSIONER TISCH: 76.
24
25

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2 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: I see. And that was
3 primarily for the outreach or for the actual
4 collections?

5 COMMISSIONER TISCH: The collection. It was an
6 additional 76 on the uniform side for outreach and--
7 excuse me, for collection.

8 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Got it . So before the launch
9 of the pilot, DSNY stated the goal was to reach every
10 household in Queens in person to notify them of the
11 beginning of the pilot. Were you able to hit those
12 outreach goals? And, we did talk a little bit about
13 outreach material in the past, but just again for a
14 refresher, was the material available in multiple
15 languages? And how was the outreach tracked?

16 COMMISSIONER TISCH: We did a massive outreach
17 effort over the course of approximately two months
18 for the Queen's organics program. And just-- this--
19 I know this wasn't part of your question, but we
20 expect to do the same type of outreach before we turn
21 on each other borough in the full rollout. But I
22 will describe to you that outreach program now.
23 There are many different layers of it.

24 First, and you know, sort of most basically,
25 every Queen's resident got a simple, easy-to-

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2 understand mailer mailed to their house, informing
3 them that-- when the service was starting, to place
4 their bins out on their recycling day, and the basics
5 of what can go in the bins, the food waste, and the
6 yard waste. We also did door-to-door canvassing, and
7 the goal which we achieved was to knock on every door
8 in Queens for residences that had-- or buildings that
9 had between one and nine residences. And we did
10 that. The outreach material was available,
11 obviously, not only in English, but in all the local
12 law languages. For residents that were not home when
13 we came to knock, we would also leave the flyer on
14 the door. I would say this was the largest outreach
15 effort ever done for an organics program in the city,
16 and probably for the Department of Sanitation, if not
17 the largest one of the largest outreach efforts
18 focused on one borough ever for any program.

19 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: And how-- how were you
20 tracking that data? Were you using a particular
21 platform or system?

22 COMMISSIONER TISCH: [TO DEPUTY COMMISSIONER
23 ANDERSON: Greg, do you know how it was tracked?]
24 But I know we have -- because I would get briefings
25 on it -- excellent data of how many each-- each of

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2 the outreach teams would be given an assigned route,
3 and they would have to track in the-- in the system
4 which routes they had completed, but they got daily
5 assignments. [TO DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANDERSON: Do
6 you have anything to add to that? Greg?]

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANDERSON: Yeah, I'll just
8 add, we have a sort of field survey application that
9 we use for a number of different uses. One of them
10 is tracking outreach. So the individual outreach
11 associates would record how many doors they knocked,
12 how many successful contacts they had, any follow up
13 that was needed. So they were tracking that as they
14 were doing the outreach.

15 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Great. So we understand that
16 the Queen's pilot diverted 12.7 million pounds of
17 material, which is phenomenal and great. Beyond the
18 cost per Sanitation District and tons of organics
19 diverted, what other data does DSNY have on the
20 Queen's program? So how many households
21 participated? What was the diversion rate? How much
22 of the organics was yard waste versus food waste, if
23 you have a sense of that? Or if there's the ability
24 to track? Because I know, it probably-- in my mind,
25 I imagine it's all commingled in the-- in the truck.

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2 But yeah, so household participation rates, diversion
3 rates, and the separation between yard versus food
4 waste.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANDERSON: So you're correct
6 that it is not possible for us to know how much yard
7 versus food waste was in there.

8 I suspect, based on other data that we've looked
9 at, that I can walk you through, that it was a lot of
10 yard waste, certainly more yard waste and food waste.
11 And the reason that I'm pretty confident in that is,
12 if you look at the tonnage by month (October,
13 November, December), November, this year was the
14 month where we had the most leaves that fell. That's
15 where like the big numbers were. And in November,
16 the tonnage amounts shot up. So October, it was 20--
17 almost 2600-- is this pounds or tons? I'm sorry.
18 2600-- no 2.6 million pounds. In November, it was
19 almost 6 million pounds. And then in December, it
20 was approximately 4 million pounds. So I'm taking my
21 assessment that there was a lot of yard waste in
22 there based on the fact that we-- the November
23 numbers were so high.

24 In terms of household participation,
25 unfortunately, that's not something that DSNY is able

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2 to track because the black bags are left on the curb,
3 and our sanitation workers come and pick them up.

4 One thing I'm looking to do, as we roll out in
5 Brooklyn, is to get at the participation numbers by
6 doing a survey. That's not the most scientific way
7 to do it, but it is the best way that I can think of
8 to get at, um, participation data.

9 What I what I will say on the Queen's organics
10 program over those three months is that we were
11 running at the same time the service in seven legacy
12 opt-in districts. We had eight districts in the
13 borough of Queens that each individually outperformed
14 all seven of the legacy opt-in districts that had
15 basically had service for a decade prior. And those
16 seven were not chosen by accident (meaning the seven
17 that were outperformed), they were chosen, because
18 those were the places where there was the most
19 interest city wide in curbside collection of
20 organics. So I found it very meaningful and very
21 telling that eight districts in Queens that had never
22 had curbside collection service previously
23 outperformed the seven districts that had been
24 running for-- for ten years. And one district,
25 Queens East 12, which is Jamaica and St. Albans, that

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2 district outperformed all seven of the legacy opt in
3 districts combined.

4 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Is there any qualitative data
5 you want to talk about in terms of why that district
6 performed more, although having no access to it? Is
7 there something unique about that? Or is it just--
8 was there any particular outreach? Did you involve
9 the elected officials? Like is there anything done
10 that...?

11 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Well, as you know, there was
12 there was there was nothing different about the-- the
13 outreach in Queens East 12, meaning we did the same
14 type of outreach in every district. But one thing
15 that-- that changed in the outreach is, depending on
16 what part of Queens we were in, we had two different
17 messages, okay? So in parts of Queens that had a lot
18 of yards and leaves, we hit hard the leaf and yard
19 waste. In parts of Queens, parts of western queens,
20 were there are bigger rat problems, we hit hard the
21 messaging on rats. And what I think was different
22 about this program, and really contributed to the
23 success (and I mentioned this in my testimony) is the
24 whole thing is designed to be mass market, meaning I
25 don't need to convince the truest of the true

believers. And if you look at old programs for organics that didn't really pan out or work well, all the messaging was about methane. And I went to do some of the door-to-door knocking, and it was like really eye opening for me.

We need-- If we want universal curbside organics to work, we can't make this a problem for New Yorkers.

CHAIRPERSON NURSE: No one cares about methane.

COMMISSIONER TISCH: We can't make this an extra thing. We cannot talk to them about methane. We have to talk to them about rats, and we have to talk to them about-- pitch it as a service. "Hey, you have all this leaf and yard waste? Do the right thing. Just-- Instead of like putting it in the black bag, you keep it separately anyway. Just put it out on your recycling day we'll come collect it."

CHAIRPERSON NURSE: So just in terms of-- I know you're not able to-- so it sounds like you probably got a ton of yard and leaf waste from the-- the places that have yards and side yards and then in other areas, not. Do you know, how was the contamination rate by chance? Like were you getting pristine stuff? Were you-- Are you all able to...?

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2 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Certainly not as-- It's
3 certainly not as pristine as the material we get in
4 our smart composting bins, which is like a truly
5 pristine compostable material. But the way that we
6 handle that, is we have both machinery and people who
7 do the separation, so that by the time it gets to be
8 composted or turn-- turned into renewable energy, it
9 is-- it is in a good enough state to be successful.

10 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: But there's no-- there's no
11 ability to pull like a percentage of-- like, "based
12 on this pilot, we're going to see X percentage of
13 contamination rate."

14 COMMISSIONER TISCH: One thing that I am looking
15 for us to do is part of our deluxe waste
16 characterization study, which is ongoing now, as we
17 do it in like our future collections is to look at
18 just that question. And the reason I want to wait
19 for that waste characterization study to do that is
20 because that is a highly scientific study where you
21 have real methodology for how you go through the
22 bags. So I want the teams that are doing that study
23 -- we're looking at our waste anyway -- to also give
24 us an assessment of what is in the organics bins.
25 But I agree with you 100% that that is important

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2 information to have, and that will definitely be
3 included as part of the waste characterization study.

4 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Great. And just one more
5 question related to understanding the participation.
6 I know you're not tracking per household, but do you
7 have a sense of how many-- how many people ordered
8 bins, or how many bins did you give out for the
9 pilot? And/or stickers, right? Because it was like
10 you could get the bin, or you could put a sticker on
11 it.

12 COMMISSIONER TISCH: I apologize. I do not have
13 that data here. But I can-- we can very easily get
14 you that number likely within the next few minutes.
15 But if not before the hearing.

16 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: You can-- Yeah, whenever you
17 get it, you can just share it over.

18 Okay, so there is currently \$11.5 million
19 baseline for organics funding citywide for FY 24, not
20 counting the \$2.6 million added for the Queen's
21 pilot. This amounts to about \$6 million below what
22 is funded for fiscal 23. DSNY stated that the
23 estimated costs for the FY 24 program would be \$18.7
24 million. Can you confirm whether that is the full
25 cost to staff a full year organics program in Queens,

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2 nine months in Brooklyn and three months in Bronx and
3 Staten Island, including staff, bins, outreach,
4 collection, and disposal/processing?

5 COMMISSIONER TISCH: So the reason that the
6 number in the preliminary budget does not reflect the
7 cost of the full expansion is we announced the full
8 expansion, unfortunately, after the preliminary
9 budget. So what's been going on for the past few
10 weeks is we are working with the Office of Management
11 and Budget to make sure that those-- that the
12 necessary costs to fund the expansion of the organics
13 program, and obviously also the Queen's program are
14 accounted for in the executive budget. I believe
15 that the numbers that were sent to Council earlier
16 this week were sent in error, and do not actually
17 represent the final totals. And that is because we
18 are going through that right now, and I look forward
19 to having a full discussion about it at our executive
20 budget hearing when it will be reflected.

21 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. And then I think, if I
22 recall in-- in previous hearings, we had talked about
23 trucks as well.

24 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Yes.
25

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2 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: And I believe you had
3 mentioned there was some procurement happening or
4 some contracting starting. And that is-- if I
5 remember right, when we were in our conversations
6 about the budget, that maybe wasn't reflected in 23
7 or 24. Is that going to be reflected in 24?

8 COMMISSIONER TISCH: The-- The full costs of the
9 organics plan, both the sanitation workers, the
10 outreach, and the capital investments as well, the
11 trucks, that will all be included in the executive
12 budget. Again, because this-- We were still
13 hammering out the details of this during the
14 preliminary budget. But I am very pleased to tell
15 you that because of the lead times associated with
16 trucks, we have worked with the Office of Management
17 and Budget, and-- to be able to procure the 158
18 trucks that are necessary to run the full citywide
19 curbside Organics Collection Program. So we have
20 already placed orders for the 158 dual bins and rear
21 loaders that will be required for the citywide
22 expansion before the executive budget. Those orders
23 are in. And I'm also very pleased to tell you that
24 we have worked with the manufacturers to ensure that

25

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2 the 90 additional trucks of the 158 that we will need
3 for the Brooklyn expansion will be in on time.

4 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: That's great. Okay, just one
5 more question to tease it out. How much of those
6 costs are the one time-- I mean, the startup cost, I
7 imagine, was a little bit harder than what the yearly
8 costs are going to be. Do you have of running the
9 program?

10 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Well, I can give you the
11 comparisons. I can sort of get your question. I can
12 give you the comparisons for what we did in Queens.
13 In Queens, when you talk about the startup costs,
14 you're talking about, really outreach is the big one,
15 and then bins. The outreach costs in-- The outreach
16 and communications cost for Queens was approximately
17 \$1.5 million. And then, unfortunately, I don't have
18 the bin cost here, but we can get you the bin cost.

19 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. And then, yeah, the
20 information about who requested bins, how many
21 requested stickers?

22 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Oh, I'm sorry. It was a
23 total of \$1 million dollars to order bins.

24 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: For bins. Okay. And how
25 many bins was that?

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2 COMMISSIONER TISCH: [TO DEPUTY COMMISSIONER

3 ANDERSON: Did we get the bin number? DEPUTY

4 COMMISSIONER ANDERSON: Not yet.] We're working on
5 the bin number.

6 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Got it. Okay. One more-- I
7 want to ask a question that -- I'm trying to figure
8 out how it relates -- but with the smart bins, are
9 those included as your-- in your litter basket
10 service kind of collections or in this bucket of the
11 organics?

12 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Not-- Not in this bucket.

13 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay.

14 COMMISSIONER TISCH: That-- Those costs are
15 separate from what we just discussed. We tend to,
16 where we can, service those bins with our school
17 trucks.

18 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Okay.

19 COMMISSIONER TISCH: So for example, now that
20 we've run-- now that we've turned on organic
21 separation and collection for all the Bronx schools,
22 we use our Bronx school trucks to service those bins.
23 If we have to run additional trucks, particularly in
24 parts of Brooklyn, and-- parts of Brooklyn, where we
25 don't have yet full organics collection at the

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2 schools, we run additional trucks when needed. And
3 also-- I mean, the popularity of these bins is
4 incredible. So we-- the school trucks don't run on
5 the weekends. So we had to add some trucks in some
6 neighborhoods to service the bins on the weekends,
7 because they were getting full, which is a good
8 problem to have.

9 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: So with the school trucks
10 that you're using, and the additional bins that
11 you're planning to roll out, how-- do you know how
12 many more trucks you're going to need?

13 COMMISSIONER TISCH: By the end of the next
14 school year, all of the school-- all of the schools
15 citywide will be on five-day-a-week organic
16 collection. So--

17 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: So you don't anticipate
18 needing more?

19 COMMISSIONER TISCH: No. I got the number.
20 Nevermind. He's going--

21 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Just toss it out when you get
22 it.

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANDERSON: Sorry. I'm trying
24 to do math in my head.

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: No, I got it. What is it?
3 Millions, to tons, to pounds, and all that? It's
4 difficult?

5 COMMISSIONER TISCH: No. It's actually much more
6 simple than that. It's just the number of bins.

7 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. [crosstalk]

8 COMMISSIONER TISCH: It's 43,000-- It was 43,000
9 brown bins ordered in Queens. But I want to point
10 out that one of like-- the whole point of the Queens
11 curbside program was keep it simple, right?

12 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Right.

13 COMMISSIONER TISCH: No need to opt in, express
14 interest, or order a specific type of bin. We said,
15 "If you want to brown bin, we'll send one to you for
16 free." We got them there within like a week or two
17 of an order, like no problem. But like, if you
18 happen to have your own bin, like, by all means just
19 use it. So that was--

20 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: So it was \$1 million in bins
21 for 43,000. And all of those went out? Or those...

22 COMMISSIONER TISCH: All 43,000 were delivered.
23 But yes, we-- that was the cost of buying the bins,
24 and delivering the bins, and all of that.

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. So-- And just a
3 clarifying question for my brain: If a New Yorker
4 and Queens is participating, but they don't have a
5 bin and they didn't get a sticker, what are they
6 doing? They're just putting it-- their bag out on
7 the day, and the worker is...?

8 COMMISSIONER TISCH: They're putting-- The
9 organic material, if it is food waste, it has to be
10 in a bin. I mean that's the whole point. We want to
11 get it away from the-- the rats. If they put it in a
12 bin, it could be a brown bin, it could be a yellow
13 bin, I don't care what color it is, or if it has,
14 frankly a sticker or not. If it is in-- If it is in
15 a bin, and it is organic material, and it is out on
16 the recycling day, we collect it.

17 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: How does the worker know
18 that-- because you're doing dual right? So you're
19 doing more than the organics on the days that you're
20 picking up, so how does the worker know?

21 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Yeah, well, it's the same
22 way they know the difference between paper, and
23 metal, glass, and plastic.

24 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: But it's in a black bag,
25 right? You're not--

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2 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Oh, no. Not in a black bag.

3 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. Sorry, I just wanted
4 to get that. So it doesn't-- It cannot be in a black
5 bag.

6 COMMISSIONER TISCH: No. Because then we won't
7 know what it is.

8 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Great. Okay, I'm going to
9 move to a few more questions, and then I'll open it
10 up, because I see you giving me the looks.

11 COUNCILMEMBER OSSÉ: That's Okay.

12 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. I was like, "We got a
13 lot to talk about."

14 Okay, so last year-- so fiscal 23, in the-- in
15 our preliminary budget response, the Council called
16 on the city to build an organics processing facility.
17 Does DSNY have enough capacity to process the
18 expected volume of organics in the city?

19 COMMISSIONER TISCH: So the short answer is, yes,
20 but not in a way that pleases me or that I think
21 would please you. Between our composting contracts,
22 and our own compost facility, and our work with the
23 Department of Environmental Protection, we believe
24 that we have the processing power to handle the
25 amount of material that we would collect.

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2 But we saved Manhattan for last for a few
3 reasons. Among them: I don't want to have to send
4 all Manhattan organics to the northern part of
5 Brooklyn, it just unfairly puts too many trucks
6 there. So one of the things that we're working on
7 over the next 19 months, before Manhattan gets turned
8 on, is putting in place the appropriate contracts,
9 and frankly, the appropriate plan for what we're
10 going to do and how we are going to process Manhattan
11 organic material. [TO DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
12 Do you have anything to add to that, Greg?] Okay.

13 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: And does any of that involve
14 a commercial marine transfer station in Manhattan?

15 COMMISSIONER TISCH: I'm sorry?

16 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Will any of that involve the
17 marine transfer station in Manhattan?

18 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Does that involve a new
19 marine transfer station?

20 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Yeah, the use of your MTS
21 stations, your marine transfer stations.

22 COMMISSIONER TISCH: I cannot imagine that we are
23 going to end up using the marine transfer stations in
24 Manhattan, largely because they are not set up for
25 two different types of material, like refuse and

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2 organics. And I think that that would be

3 problematic. They weren't built for that. But we

4 are doing the work now to put in place a plan.

5 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. So you have enough--

6 Between what you have in terms of facilities and

7 contracts, you have enough up until Manhattan.

8 You're buying yourself more time--

9 COMMISSIONER TISCH: No. I have enough,

10 including Manhattan.

11 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Including, but you just don't

12 want to bring it to North Brooklyn?

13 COMMISSIONER TISCH: I don't think we should-- I

14 don't think that that would be an appropriate go-

15 forward strategy.

16 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: So what is the participation

17 rate of a citywide program that this "yes" answer is

18 tethered to? So if this is wildly successful, and

19 New Yorkers are participating in this program higher

20 than recycling, for example, is that a volume of

21 material that we have? At what point of

22 participation does it start to put stress on the

23 system?

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANDERSON: Yeah. So we

25 currently have capacity for as much as 50% capture

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2 rate on organics. Obviously, that's in a smaller
3 number of facilities than we'd like. So as the
4 Commissioner mentioned, we're going out on the street
5 with a procurement in the next few months to try to
6 get additional, not only capacity, but additional
7 locations to tip the material. And once we have
8 those contracts in place, we think we'll-- we'll have
9 capacity to go even above 50% capture. I will say
10 50% capture is a number that we've achieved on metal,
11 glass, plastic, and paper after 30-plus years of work
12 there. So it may take us some time to get there.
13 But that's obviously-- You know, we'd like to hit
14 that and go further.

15 COMMISSIONER TISCH: And I'll just add, like,
16 I've learned a few things in my 15 years working in
17 government. And one of the things is you cannot plan
18 for the -- I don't know if we'd call this the best or
19 worst case scenario -- meaning you can't plan for a
20 small participation rate. You've got to plan for
21 like what you realistically want or think. And
22 that's what we're doing

23 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Is a 50% rate what you're
24 hoping for as a--

25

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2 COMMISSIONER TISCH: That would be fantastic. I-
3 - I'm nearly certain we're not going to get that in
4 the program's infancy, because no city gets that in
5 the program's infancy. But I think, like, part of
6 this commitment to doing curbside organics citywide
7 is, like, this thing is here to stay. This is, like,
8 what the city is going to be doing now for
9 generations to come, which is why it's so exciting.
10 And when you're building something, there are initial
11 startup costs. You don't have as many quote/unquote
12 "customers" at the beginning as you do when you're
13 running for several years. So hopefully, it's just
14 going to grow and grow.

15 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Yeah, so given that, are
16 there any discussions about new processing facilities
17 that you all would be looking to develop within the
18 city?

19 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Not at this time. Because,
20 again, we have-- our plans are for a 50% capture rate
21 for organic material, which I think that's-- that's
22 ambitious. I mean, it's not-- that's ambitious.
23 It's not conservative at all. And I think it's--
24 it's appropriate. And that 50% rate should take us
25 out for many appropriate years in the future. So the

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2 real focus now on the-- on the processing side is on-
3 - on the Manhattan piece that we were just
4 discussing.

5 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: And just final point on the
6 this: How much of the organics is processed in city?
7 Or how much do you plan to process within city,
8 versus outside of the city?

9 COMMISSIONER TISCH: A lot, because of our work
10 with the Department of Environmental Protection. [TO

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANDERSON: Do you have a number?

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANDERSON: It's around 70%.]

13 Right now it's 70%.

14 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: 70%. And that's through the
15 digester?

16 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Well, we have the digester.
17 We have the Staten Island compost facility. So yeah.

18 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. I'm going to pause for
19 a second on the organics questioning, allow my
20 colleagues to ask some questions. I want to
21 acknowledge Councilmember Kalman Yeger. Welcome to
22 the Sanitation Committee, and Councilmember Julie
23 Menin as well. So I have Councilmember Ossé -- I
24 don't know why I said that; I'm sorry -- Ossé, and
25 then Bottcher.

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2 COUNCILMEMBER OSSÉ: Thank you, Chair Nurse. And
3 good afternoon, Commissioner. Oh, my God. Good
4 morning, Commissioner.

5 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Good Morning.

6 COUNCILMEMBER OSSÉ: It's been a long day
7 already. Thank you so much for some of the work that
8 you've been doing in terms of expanding composting
9 within my community. It's become very popular for
10 many folks, so popular that many of my constituents
11 now are reaching out to our office because they have
12 concerns with how fill-- or how filled the baskets
13 are. Are there any budget allocations for addressing
14 the filled baskets when it comes to composting?

15 COMMISSIONER TISCH: We-- we're looking at that
16 right now. We have two options. I don't want these
17 bins full, right? I want any New Yorker-- or
18 certainly New Yorkers where-- in the neighborhoods
19 where there is service, to show up to a bin or walk a
20 reasonable distance to a bin, and like be able to
21 deposit their material in the bin. It doesn't make
22 sense for us to turn customers away here. There's
23 two things we're looking at: In the parts of the
24 city where it is very popular and the bins get
25 filled, like, daily service-- daily, we're looking at

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2 adding additional bins nearby, and maybe putting two
3 bins together, or we could increase our collection
4 service. We're doing the work right now to figure
5 that out. I will say we are thrilled that we have
6 this problem, but I don't want this program to stay
7 around much longer. One thing we saw in Queens,
8 because we were piloting these bins in Astoria--

9 COUNCILMEMBER OSSÉ: Mm-hmm.

10 COMMISSIONER TISCH: --and when we started doing
11 the curbside collection in Queens, the bin usage went
12 down, the smart bin usage went down. So I don't want
13 to put-- Because Brooklyn is going online in the
14 fall, I don't want to put-- like, solve this program
15 by putting so many additional bins there if they're
16 just going to not be used in a few months.

17 COUNCILMEMBER OSSÉ: Absolutely. And just to
18 add, I mean composting is one of our greatest
19 strategies in tackling the rodent population in the
20 city. In addition to that, it's of course great for
21 our environment. I know that Chair Nurse was
22 speaking about some of the outreach that may or may
23 not have been done in Queens in terms of getting more
24 folks and New Yorkers aware of composting and how to
25 compost. I was just talking to Councilmember

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2 Bottcher in terms of our participation in composting,
3 and something that seems to be an obstacle for
4 myself, and I'm sure many New Yorkers that want to
5 participate in composting, are composting bags, in
6 terms of going to the curbside composting bins and
7 either having a plastic bag where you're throwing out
8 your organic waste. Is there any amount of money
9 within DSNY's budget? Or are you open to any
10 advocacy on our end, potentially sending out
11 composting bags for New Yorkers, maybe including some
12 information about how to compost as well?

13 COMMISSIONER TISCH: So we haven't sent out--
14 sending out bags was not something we did in Queens.
15 And I'll tell you why we didn't do it in Queens: I
16 don't want to confuse people, and send them bags, and
17 then on the message say, "And be sure to put it in a
18 bin." Because then there'll be like, "Wait, what am
19 I doing? Bag or bin?: The answer is: Most people
20 do either the organic material in the bin, or the
21 organic material in a clear plastic bag, also in the
22 bin. So we didn't do it for that reason. If you
23 think it would be helpful, I'm definitely open to
24 exploring it with you, and like pricing it out and
25 figuring out what it would be. But I will say that I

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2 do think that the-- the outreach and communication
3 strategy that we used in Queens, that we're intending
4 to use also in Brooklyn, was really effective. I
5 mean, the very simple messaging, positioning it as a
6 service rather than another thing you got to do,
7 talking about rats in the parts of Queens where there
8 are big rat problems, and talking about leafs and
9 yard waste in other parts of Queens like. I think we
10 nailed the messaging.

11 And one thing I would love to take you up on is
12 to work with you on coming up with the right
13 messaging by neighborhood in Brooklyn so that when we
14 do our outreach it can be as effective as possible.

15 COUNCILMEMBER OSSÉ: Beautiful. And I also want
16 to ask some questions around the clean curbs program
17 and containerizing trash. I know that the Bed Stuy
18 Business Improvement District does have, or does
19 participate in the clean curbs program -- [BELL
20 RINGS] May I have some more time, Chair? -- in terms
21 of containerizing trash in our business corridor. I
22 would love to hear about some of the efficacy of the
23 Clean Curbs Program in terms of just any statistics
24 that you may have on creating cleaner streets in the
25 areas where they have been introduced.

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2 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Sure. So as part of the
3 Clean Curbs Program, you know, we gave out grants, as
4 you mentioned, Business Improvement Districts, we
5 gave out grants to 19 BIDs totaling 300-- well, BIDs
6 and community organizations totaling \$375,000. This
7 was in my opinion, this was sort of like dipping our
8 toe into containerization. It's not containerization
9 as you know you see in Barcelona, et cetera, where
10 there's shared containers on the street, but it's--
11 it's a start, it's a place to start. I think it's--
12 it's focusing first on the right types of-- of
13 organizations, because we were able to do it, give
14 grants in every borough, so try it out there. And
15 these Business Improvement Districts they are so
16 focused, bless them, on cleanliness, and creating
17 order, that we had very willing, active partners and
18 participants in them.

19 The model is not that-- that is a very important
20 thing, but that is not an expandable containerization
21 model for the rest of the city.

22 COUNCILMEMBER OSSÉ: Mm-hmm.

23 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Because, there with the
24 BIDs, you have dedicated staff, et cetera, who bring
25 the bags to the-- to the bins. And so where we are

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2 focusing our energy and effort now is moving beyond
3 clean curbs to figure out a strategy for how are you
4 going to tackle containerization in-- with
5 residential trash, which is harder, and obviously
6 much bigger.

7 COUNCILMEMBER OSSÉ: One final thing, and I know
8 the Chair is going to pull my ear after this, but our
9 district was approved for several sanitation cameras
10 to address illegal dumping. And I would love to get
11 a timeline on some of these locations. I'll give
12 them to you now and you could obviously send me an
13 update back, but they're on Atlantic-- Atlantic and
14 Franklin, Bainbridge and Lewis Avenue, Broadway and
15 Dodworth, DeKalb and Walworth, Myrtle and Broadway,
16 Ocean Avenue and Hart Street, Park Avenue and
17 Broadway, and Pulaski and Throop, and Vernon Avenue
18 and Tompkins Avenue.

19 COMMISSIONER TISCH: I'm very happy to tell you
20 that the-- many of the cameras are in. We have
21 agreements in place with the Department of
22 Transportation, who runs the metal poles, and Verizon
23 that has some of the wooden poles, and Con Ed that
24 also has some wooden poles, and plans for
25 installation of an additional, I think it's, 250

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2 cameras are underway, and cameras are going up now,
3 every week.

4 COUNCILMEMBER OSSÉ: Okay.

5 COMMISSIONER TISCH: And I will get you the
6 specific dates for when your cameras will be added.

7 COUNCILMEMBER OSSÉ: That would be amazing.

8 COMMISSIONER TISCH: My pleasure.

9 COUNCILMEMBER OSSÉ: Thank you so much.

10 COMMISSIONER TISCH: They really work. I'm so
11 excited.

12 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: That came out of your
13 discretionary funding? Those cameras? Oh. That's a
14 lot of money. I'm going to follow up on that. We
15 all love the, you know, #busted videos -- well, I
16 really enjoy them -- of the illegal dumping. I think
17 you mentioned that you were budgeting for some more
18 expansion of cameras in your testimony?

19 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Yes.

20 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Can you remind us of those
21 numbers?

22 COMMISSIONER TISCH: I think it was-- the Mayor
23 gave us \$2 million dollars, I think? \$2.9 million?
24 Sorry. For new cameras.

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Yeah, for 250 -- I see it --
3 for the summer.

4 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Yeah.

5 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: So-- So that's coming out of
6 your budget. And then how are these going to be
7 distributed? Is this based on data?

8 COMMISSIONER TISCH: We are distributing-- We
9 are-- First we have an initial tranche of cameras
10 that are up. We have about 50 cameras that are up.
11 We have some councilmember funds for cameras, and
12 then we are allocating the other funds to supplement
13 where the need is greatest. But there is going to be
14 a distribution among boroughs and council districts,
15 et cetera. It's not going to be like the smart bins
16 where we clump them all together.

17 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Do you know how much the
18 Council gave for sanitation cameras in the in FY 23?

19 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Approximately \$1 million.

20 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: A million? Okay. Okay.
21 Yeah, because the reason why I ask that question is
22 because I know-- when you're listing that many, I was
23 like, "Wow, that's-- that's a lot of money."

24 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Wait. I just want to clear.
25 I'm not sure that we can do every single one on his

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2 list, but when he's going to get-- as you're all
3 going to get--

4 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: I was like, "Wow. I didn't
5 know."

6 COMMISSIONER TISCH: But we are going to be
7 putting-- I'm very confident, because we're going to
8 be putting these cameras all over the place. So
9 certainly the districts that really need it will get
10 a nice investment.

11 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. I'm going to pass it
12 to-- Councilmember Menin requested to be bumped up.
13 I know you're in the Education Hearing. I'm going to
14 pass it to you.

15 COUNCILMEMBER MENIN: Oh, thank you so much.
16 That's okay. I think Councilmember Bottcher can go,
17 and then I'll go after. Yeah?

18 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: Do you have time?

19 COUNCILMEMBER MENIN: Yeah, you go. And then and
20 then I'll go right after. Thank you.

21 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: Hi, Commissioner, how
22 are you?

23 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Hi, good. How are you?

24 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: Good, thanks. In last
25 year's budget we fought for and won a \$22 million

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2 allocation for corner basket service. You know--

3 You're smiling because you knew I was going to ask

4 about this.

5 COMMISSIONER TISCH: No, I'm smiling because I am

6 so happy with these extra litter baskets. So this

7 really, truly delights me.

8 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHE: We-- as you said in your

9 testimony, we've seen a 50% decrease in 311 calls

10 about overflowing wastebaskets statewide. In my

11 district, it's much more than that. It's not in this

12 year's budget, the \$22 million are not in this year's

13 budget. Why?

14 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Well, we look forward to

15 working with you as part of the adopted budget to

16 make sure that we have appropriate robust litter

17 basket service. And the thing for me that's very

18 important is that I hope you all see that the money

19 that comes to us for litter basket service, we really

20 try to maximize and put to great use. And in

21 sanitation world it's oftentimes, like, frustrating

22 because it's hard -- Councilmember Restler always

23 discusses with me -- it's hard to find metrics,

24 sometimes to show where we're at. Like, I don't have

25 a good litter-- I don't have a good metric for how

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2 clean the curb lines are or not clean the curb lines

3 are. But we have great metrics around litter

4 baskets. And it's great to see the-- that the we had

5 the largest year-over-year decrease in complaints

6 about litter baskets service ever.

7 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHEr: So why wouldn't that be

8 included in this year's budget if it was a big

9 success?

10 COMMISSIONER TISCH: I think it's just a thing,

11 as you know, that's generally worked out in the

12 adopted budget. But I'll tell you, I really want to

13 continue to run record levels of litter basket

14 service next year, just as we do this year. This

15 mayor is fully committed to cleaning up the city. So

16 I'm sure that the Office of Management and Budget is

17 going to work with the Council to make sure that that

18 is something that is appropriately funded.

19 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHEr: Okay. Well, it sounds

20 like, as commissioner, you're saying, "This is

21 something we really should do. We've got to do it."

22 COMMISSIONER TISCH: I think all New Yorkers

23 don't want to see overflowing litter baskets in their

24 community. And I mean, I was among the New Yorkers

25 that lost my mind for those two years when all of

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2 litter baskets were overflowing. My interest is in
3 seeing the litter baskets cleaned appropriately and
4 regularly, and more litter baskets in New York City
5 where they're needed.

6 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHE: Got it. Is \$22 million
7 the right number? Was that the right number for this
8 past fiscal year, this current fiscal year? How much
9 do you need to really address these litter baskets?

10 COMMISSIONER TISCH: So I just want to point out,
11 I have, like, even better news on litter baskets. It
12 wasn't just the \$22 million. So the \$22 million was
13 the service that we run to cover the 23,000 litter
14 baskets that the Department of Sanitation puts on the
15 streets, generally, like, largely on like commercial
16 corridors.

17 This year, the Mayor funded the Department of
18 Sanitation to do supplemental service on thousands,
19 more litter baskets. Specifically those on the
20 perimeters of parks, which were overflowing all the
21 time, that are regularly serviced by the parks
22 department. And also those on the East River bridges
23 that were serviced by the Department of
24 Transportation. So we got millions of dollars this
25 year to-- for the-- really, like, for the first time

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2 to regularly empty, not just the 23,000 litter
3 baskets that we manage, but also litter baskets in
4 other highly trafficked areas that we-- we may not be
5 managing.

6 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: Is that money included
7 in this budget? Or was that also one off?

8 COMMISSIONER TISCH: No, I think-- That was
9 baselined. So that that funding is baselined.

10 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: So how much do you need
11 in this year's budget for litter basket service
12 that's not in this proposed budget?

13 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Well, in last year's budget,
14 in the adopted budget, there was \$22 million added--
15 there was \$22 million allocated to litter basket
16 service. I think we're seeing really good data
17 coming out of that level of investment. I'll never
18 turn-- turn down more.

19 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: Was that enough for
20 twice-a-day, six-day-a-week pickup?

21 COMMISSIONER TISCH: It-- I think based on the
22 data, it is enough for-- Some baskets require more
23 than twice a day pickup, and get more than twice a
24 day pickup. I think, and some baskets, frankly,
25 don't need twice a day pickup. So I think it was

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2 enough to make the baskets in New York City work.

3 And-- But-- it's-- Every basket is different.

4 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHE: It sounds like a must-do
5 in this year's budget. Thank you.

6 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Yes. For sure. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: I think just one other
8 question on that was if, you know, how much would it
9 cost to baseline that? So we're not asking-- the
10 Council isn't having to negotiate that every single
11 year.

12 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Yeah. So the difference
13 between baselining and not is when we don't baseline,
14 it's run on overtime.

15 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Yeah.

16 COMMISSIONER TISCH: And when we baseline it's
17 run on straight time.

18 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Yes.

19 COMMISSIONER TISCH: And so when we gave you--
20 When we were discussing the two-- twice-a-week
21 service-- sorry, twice-a-day service for every
22 basket, which I don't think is necessary, but that is
23 \$22 million baselined straight time. What we did was
24 \$22 million overtime.

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay, so I think just to get
3 like more clarity on what Councilmember Bottcher was
4 asking, we knew that that was going to be run on an
5 overtime project. How long-- How far did that
6 funding go in the fiscal year?

7 COMMISSIONER TISCH: It goes all year. That--
8 That will get us through the end of the year.

9 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay, because we were told a
10 little bit different.

11 COMMISSIONER TISCH: My understanding is--

12 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay, and so..

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANDERSON: Right. We scaled
14 it so it would last the full year.

15 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Yeah.

16 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. And when we had a
17 hearing last-- at the end of last year, we went into
18 detail about-- that it wasn't every single basket
19 twice per day, six days a week, it was based on the
20 discretion of the data, and what you all-- your
21 workers see is like the most important baskets. So
22 there's seem to be a lot of flexibility around that.

23 COMMISSIONER TISCH: There is.

24

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. So we don't have a
3 number for how much it would need to baseline it.
4 Unless I'm missing something.

5 COMMISSIONER TISCH: I don't have a number right
6 here. I mean, obviously, the \$22 million was a good
7 number. And that was the number that, when you asked
8 last year, what-- what would it cost (just because we
9 can't go basket by basket)-- what would it cost just
10 to ballpark twice a day service all 23,000 litter
11 baskets baseline, that's \$22 million.

12 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. Okay. And then one
13 other litter basket question, since we're on there,
14 and then I'll pass it over to you just to continue
15 the-- the track of questioning. So DSNY committed to
16 a \$25 million contract to procure new litter baskets,
17 which we're excited about, as part of the better bin
18 NYC competition. Can you share a little bit more why
19 the Quebec-based vendor was selected?

20 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Why the vendor was selected?

21 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Yes.

22 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Sure. [TO DSNY WITNESSES:
23 Which one of you want to talk about that
24 procurement?]
25

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2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANDERSON: Yeah, so we-- we
3 put out a bid last summer in August, and they were
4 the lowest, responsive, responsible bidder for that
5 contract.

6 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: They were the cheapest. And
7 then what is--

8 COMMISSIONER TISCH: They were the the lowest--
9 They were the lowest responsive, responsible bidder.
10 If I remember correctly, we got other-- right? Yeah.
11 We knocked out four that came in at lower prices,
12 because they were not able to deliver what was
13 needed.

14 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. And then what are
15 your-- what is the kind of rollout plan for-- or any
16 plan to replace older baskets across the city?

17 COMMISSIONER TISCH: The first of the new litter
18 baskets are coming in in June, which is great. The
19 contract was registered like a month ago, ish. And
20 we ordered the bins as soon as the contract was
21 registered. But that's-- that's not going to be--
22 it's not going to make a meaningful chunk out of the
23 litter baskets.

24 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: How many bins is that first,
25 kind of, batch?

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2 COMMISSIONER TISCH: We-- The initial order was
3 for 330 that are supposed to arrive before June 30.
4 And then the idea is to buy more of these in fiscal
5 year 24. And I would like to see a meaningful number
6 in fiscal year 24 of our mesh litter baskets
7 replaced.

8 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: And is that-- is that
9 budgeted for?

10 COMMISSIONER TISCH: That's something hat we're
11 working are working on.

12 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: You're working on. Okay.
13 Okay. I'm going to pass it to Councilmember Menin.

14 COUNCILMEMBER MENIN: Great. Thank you so much
15 Chair. So a couple questions, Commissioner, that I
16 have. I know you provided an update on the smart
17 composting bins across the city. In my district, we
18 don't have any yet. Can you provide an update on--

19 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Yes.

20 COUNCILMEMBER MENIN: because there's a lot of
21 clamoring in the district for them.

22 COMMISSIONER TISCH: You're going to get them
23 this summer. We ordered 150 additional smart
24 composting bins for Manhattan, because Manhattan is
25 the last borough to get curbside service. And so

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2 those 150 are coming in before June 30. We speak to
3 the vendor every day to make sure. And they'll be
4 installed this summer.

5 COUNCILMEMBER MENIN: This summer. Okay, thank
6 you. I know you testified earlier about the-- the
7 new way of set-out times. What is a fiscal impact on
8 the department's budget?

9 COMMISSIONER TISCH: None really, although we--
10 Not based on like the new set-out times. Although--
11 No, we did outreach campaign that was \$3? \$2? \$2.7
12 million? [BACKGROUND VOICES] \$3.5 million. Oops,
13 sorry, \$3.5 million dollar outreach campaign.

14 COUNCILMEMBER MENIN: And speaking of outreach, I
15 understand that the department's public information
16 division budget remains constant for fiscal year 2024
17 at \$2.4 million. Given the fact that there are a lot
18 of programs that need outreach, can you talk a little
19 bit about why it's constant?

20 COMMISSIONER TISCH: I think before you got here,
21 we were discussing that for the, like, for the
22 organics program: That was that was announced,
23 unfortunately, after the preliminary budget. So
24 you'll see in the executive budget the costs-- all
25

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2 the costs of the organics program, but among them,
3 funding for outreach for the organics program.

4 In-- For other programs, like, for example, the
5 rollout of the commercial waste zones, there is money
6 budgeted and allocated for outreach, and we're
7 working-- Oh, that's where I got my \$2.7 million
8 number from. I was thinking that. -- we have \$2.7
9 million dollars budgeted for outreach associated with
10 the rollout of commercial waste zones. But that's
11 not reflected in the budget for our public
12 information unit. It's reflected in the budget for
13 our commercial waste zones bureau.

14 COUNCILMEMBER MENIN: Okay, got it. So you've--
15 you've bifurcated that. So the commercial waste zone
16 has its own-- as we talked about, the Chair and I in
17 our hearing, you've got your own public outreach for
18 that, that is not-- obviously not in the \$2.4
19 million.

20 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Yes.

21 COUNCILMEMBER MENIN: Okay. In terms of
22 sanitation's enforcement division, can you give a
23 breakdown of enforcement personnel by borough?

24 COMMISSIONER TISCH: I unfortunately don't have
25 the numbers by borough. I have the enforcement

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2 activity by borough, but not the staffing by borough.
3 Would the activity be helpful?

4 COUNCILMEMBER MENIN: Yes. The activity would be
5 helpful.

6 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Okay. Please hold. Okay.
7 Okay. So if we're looking at the-- would year-to-
8 date numbers, or do you want to see last year?

9 COUNCILMEMBER MENIN: Sure, year to date.

10 COMMISSIONER TISCH: So let's just do year-to-
11 date. So this is like January 1 until March-- March
12 5. Manhattan-- Oh, for 23. Manhattan had about,
13 almost 23,000 summonses. Do you want me go through
14 the other boroughs?

15 COUNCILMEMBER MENIN: Yeah. How does that
16 compare to the other boroughs?

17 COMMISSIONER TISCH: It is below Bronx, Brooklyn
18 North, Brooklyn South. It is slightly above Queens
19 West. It is above Queens East. And it is certainly
20 above Staten Island.

21 COUNCILMEMBER MENIN: Okay. Could you give those
22 to the committee? And can we also get it for last
23 year by borough?

24 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Yeah. Yeah. I have that.
25 Yeah, I can get that to you today for sure.

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2 COUNCILMEMBER MENIN: So we can see the breakdown
3 by activity? Okay. Thank you. That is helpful.

4 The department's waste export funding with
5 private vendors had increased for fiscal year 2024 to
6 \$478 million. Can you explain what accounts for the
7 increase?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANDERSON: Yeah. So those
9 increases are largely driven by contractual increases
10 that are set by various indicators related-- I think,
11 mostly related to the inflation that we're seeing.
12 So that drives the increase in cost.

13 COUNCILMEMBER MENIN: And is it expected that
14 that's going to continue over the coming years?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANDERSON: We expect that.
16 We look at it on an annual basis, and project out
17 based on inflationary projections.

18 COUNCILMEMBER MENIN: Okay. Okay. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: We're going to go to
20 Councilmember Farías and then Yeger.

21 COUNCILMEMBER FARÍAS: Thank you, Chair. I just
22 have a couple of quick follow up questions from the
23 engagement we had that sparked in my brain. So when
24 speaking about the baseline, the potentiality of
25 baseline funding for the services for litter basket

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2 pickup, do we-- it sounded like to me that we're--

3 the work is getting done with overtime personnel and

4 resources. Is that directly related to-- that we

5 just don't have the resources to actually baseline

6 and make it a part of regular time? That we don't

7 have enough personnel and/or enough routs?

8 COMMISSIONER TISCH: No. The way it works is,

9 when it's baselined we hire additional sanitation

10 workers for it.

11 COUNCILMEMBER FARÍAS: Okay. So it's not

12 mandatory.

13 COMMISSIONER TISCH: And when it's not baselined,

14 we just run it on overtime.

15 COUNCILMEMBER FARÍAS: Okay, so there's-- the

16 only difference is like when and if something is

17 baselined, we're mandated to hire the additional

18 personnel to carry out that work.

19 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Right. The baselining comes

20 with more people to do the thing.

21 COUNCILMEMBER FARÍAS: Okay, perfect. And then

22 just a follow up to the Quebec-based-- sorry for the

23 mispronunciation-- based vendor. Is there a

24 percentage of DSNY contracts that need to be New-

25 York-City-based vendors, and/or US based vendors, or

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2 do we not have that rule at all, and it's just when
3 we put out the RFP, its the lowest responsible bid?

4 COMMISSIONER TISCH: We foll- We don't have our
5 own procurement rules. We follow the city's
6 procurement.

7 COUNCILMEMBER FARÍAS: Okay. So city procurement
8 rules, just open. Got it. Great. And then I'd like
9 to ask some vacancy questions. So between the
10 November plan and the fiscal 2024 preliminary plan,
11 96 budgeted civilian positions were cut. Although
12 DSNY does not have the high vacancy rates agency
13 wide, having a fully-staffed agency is necessary to
14 ensure the performance of DSNY's important services.
15 So does DSNY have a breakdown of the specific
16 positions that are being cut from the 2024
17 preliminary budget?

18 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Yes. I'm just trying to
19 open to it. You asked for the specific positions--

20 COUNCILMEMBER FARÍAS: The specific positions and
21 titles.

22 COMMISSIONER TISCH: --that were cut?

23 COUNCILMEMBER FARÍAS: Yes.

24 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Yes. Yeah. Where's that on
25 here? Hold on one second. Hold on. I'm so sorry.

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2 COUNCILMEMBER FARÍAS: Take your time.

3 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Here it is. Okay. So in
4 the November-- in the November plan, we lost 68
5 positions, 34 sanitation enforcement agents, 10
6 associate enforcement agents, and then 24 other
7 various civilian positions, largely some clerical and
8 three legal positions.

9 COUNCILMEMBER MENIN: Okay.

10 COMMISSIONER TISCH: In the January-- was it the
11 January plan? Yeah. In the January plan, we lost 28
12 positions. And we are working with OMB now to
13 identify the specific positions to be eliminated.

14 COUNCILMEMBER MENIN: Okay, great. It sounds
15 like we've lost a lot more from enforcement. And so
16 my question was going to be-- I mean, there are some
17 divisions that have higher vacancies like
18 enforcement. Would-- When do we plan to be fully
19 staffed up for enforcement?

20 COMMISSIONER TISCH: When do we plan to be fully
21 staffed up for enforcement? We-- I think we are
22 fully staffed for enforcement.

23 COUNCILMEMBER FARÍAS: Okay.

24 COMMISSIONER TISCH: But if there are questions,
25 or concerns, or you feel like there's not enough

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2 enforcement in your district, I'm happy to discuss
3 that with you and make allocations as necessary.

4 COUNCILMEMBER FARÍAS: Sure, I can definitely
5 follow up, and I'll follow up with the Chair to once
6 we see that enforcement activity by borough data that
7 we-- you folks will send over, and-- and really look
8 at the specific positions and the breakdown of
9 vacancies. And then just the last thing I do want to
10 ask: Are there any areas of concern around the
11 vacancies that we have or-- or the potentiality of
12 losing some of those positions, specifically around
13 enforcement?

14 COMMISSIONER TISCH: I feel good about where this
15 agency is. I mean, overall, we are 4% above our
16 budgeted headcount, which I understand is unusual
17 today. And I just want to mention, we're generally
18 above our budgeted headcount, because we do our
19 hiring at the beginning of the fiscal year, and then
20 we attrit out by the by the end of the fiscal year,
21 but I feel very good about-- certainly our uniform
22 staffing, which is the highest it's been in two
23 decades. But I also feel pretty good about where we
24 are with our civilian staffing levels. We're doing a
25 bunch of hiring now to fill some vacancies, not an

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2 overwhelming number of vacancies. But we're doing
3 some hiring now that the two-for-one hiring process
4 was done away with, and I think this agency is in a
5 good place.

6 COUNCILMEMBER FARÍAS: Great. Thank you so much,
7 Chair. [BELL RINGS]

8 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: On the mark. Skilled.
9 Skilled. I invite Councilmember Yeger to ask
10 questions.

11 COUNCILMEMBER YEGER: I don't think I could do as
12 well on the clock. It never works for me. Good
13 morning, Commissioner. And thank you very much for
14 being here. Like I said, I'm on the clock. So I
15 don't really have a lot of time to go through some of
16 the things that I love about what you've been doing
17 with the agency. We did meet a couple of days ago.
18 You came to our neighborhood. I'm very grateful for
19 that. And I think that's part of what you've been
20 doing is going around the city yourself and seeing it
21 with your own eyes. And that's incredibly important
22 for this kind of agency, particularly more-- almost
23 more than any other agency for a Commissioner to
24 actually see it. The texture of an approach, the--
25 cutting the red tape and going and picking up

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2 everybody else's schmutz even if another agency is
3 responsible for it. That's stuff that-- it's been
4 bugging me forever. You're all on it. I really am
5 grateful. The dumping. The cameras. Grabbing
6 people's cars, the offenders. That is huge-- huge
7 accolades from me on that, because that is something
8 that's really been the bane of our existence in our
9 neighborhoods. And I know your eyes are on it. So
10 that was the praise.

11 It's not criticism, but-- but I want to follow up
12 on something that Councilwoman Menin asked about the
13 change of time and as it reflects the-- as it
14 reflects on the budget of the agency. And this is
15 something that's-- really seems to me to be revenue
16 neutral, changing the clock, and when trash is put
17 out.

18 So I'm not going to talk about residences. I do
19 want to focus something on businesses. One of the
20 problems I think we have a lot of times when we do,
21 both us with statutes, and agencies when they do
22 rules is this one-size-fits-all rule that we try to
23 impose on an entire city, and we are so many tiny
24 little cities, and towns, and villages that not
25 everything we do works everywhere.

2 So particularly with regard to small businesses,
3 and as an example, it's a nine to five operation, in
4 a storefront, a lawyer's office, an accountant's
5 office, a clothing store: They close at five
6 o'clock. They don't have food refuse in their trash.
7 They don't have place to store bins with covers. So
8 what's been going on is obviously they put the trash
9 out, they have private carting, it doesn't cost the
10 city anything to go get it. The 8 p.m. rule, the 6
11 p.m., if you have a bin, it really doesn't fit that
12 segment of business in New York. Is there any
13 thought to perhaps making a kind of a separate
14 category? Where even if you maybe certify that you
15 don't have food refuse, or that your refuse is, you
16 know, just paper trash, et cetera, that you can get
17 out of that 8 p.m. rule? Because I just-- Honestly,
18 the problem that I see is it's-- it's beyond
19 compliance, because people are just not going to be
20 able to do it, not because they don't want to, but
21 literally they're gone from the businesses at 5 p.m.
22 They can't put their trash out.

23 Yeah, so I-- Thank you. And this gives me an
24 opportunity to clear up, I think, a misconception
25 that hopefully the outreach we're doing this month

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2 will-- will address. There are different rules for
3 businesses and residences. Residences has like the 8
4 p.m./6 p.m. 6 p.m. in a BID, 8 p.m. on the-- on the
5 curb.

6 For businesses, it's slightly different. For
7 businesses, it's, again, no black bags on the curb
8 before 8 p.m.. But if you want to set your trash out
9 before 8 p.m., you can continue to do so an hour
10 before closing, as you do today. But if that time
11 that you close-- an hour before that time, is before
12 8 p.m., it's got to be in a bin with a lid.

13 From my perspective, this change in set out times
14 is at least a decade overdue. I know that change is
15 difficult, and this is a change that affects every
16 resident and every business in our city. But it is a
17 change that absolutely has to happen. I mean, we New
18 Yorkers, businesses and residences, put out about 45
19 million pounds of trash and recycling every day. And
20 it sits on our curbs on every block in every
21 neighborhood for 14 hours a day. And that is why New
22 York City is known as Trash City. Like,
23 unfortunately we don't have alleyways we--
24 underground is more complicated than above ground.
25 And so we need to make a change we need to limit the

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2 amount of time that the bags spend on the curb and
3 where possible we need containers.

4 COUNCILMEMBER YEGER: So I'm going to agree with
5 you on everything, you know, except for the part that
6 I don't know that we're called Trash City. I hope
7 we're not. I don't call it that, but if other's are.

8 COMMISSIONER TISCH: I don't either but people
9 do.

10 COUNCILMEMBER YEGER: Okay, let's make that not
11 happen. But I want to focus specifically on this
12 type of industry. [BELL RINGS] Can I-- can I, Madam
13 Chair, just another minute? Because it's-- it's not
14 meeting the-- the complaint-driven issue that you're
15 focused on, the smelly trash, the disgusting trash.
16 We're talking about small businesses, 2, 3, 4, 5
17 bags. Whatever it is, maybe there can be some kind
18 of smaller business exception, particularly when it's
19 not rat food. What-- Then the follow up question,
20 because I see you nodding your head no, so I'll take
21 that as the-- What do they do with the bins during
22 the day? What's the answer to that?

23 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Okay. So the answer is--
24 Everyone-- We get this question from-- This change
25 affects every business and every residence. And it

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2 is not particularly onerous. It was written in a way
3 to like try to go out of our way not to be
4 particularly onerous, but nonetheless, to get the
5 change that is absolutely required. And frankly, the
6 change that has been made in almost every other major
7 city in the world. I mean, 4 p.m. is the earliest
8 set out time of any city in the world. So like
9 something had to change.

10 What we've said is: if people are going to get
11 their trash out before 8 p.m., they can do so in a
12 bin, they can store the bin indoors, they can store
13 the bin outdoors if it's lined up against the
14 property and kept neat and orderly. We cannot go out
15 and do site visits and tell each business owner or
16 property owner how-- where to put their bin. It's
17 just something that New Yorkers are going to have to
18 do. It's-- The bins aren't very large. They are 55
19 gallons or less. It's done in almost every other
20 city in the world. It's just something New York has
21 to take the leap now.

22 COUNCILMEMBER YEGER: So last question on that.
23 And this is the last question. On the-- So typically
24 you can't store things outside your business.
25 That's-- That's a sanitation violation, and maybe

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2 other agencies. Are you saying that-- that with this
3 rule change, that would be okay, for businesses to
4 store these-- let's say they have five or six bins,
5 figure out a way, if you can't stack them, line them
6 up outside the store orderly, that's okay to leave
7 them there for 24 hours a day, except for the time
8 that they're putting out in the front?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANDERSON: That's correct.
10 The guidance we're giving to businesses is that they
11 can leave them abutting the storefront within the
12 sort of three foot area, as long as they're orderly
13 and not creating an obstruction.

14 COUNCILMEMBER YEGER: So we could make it work
15 then. Okay. Thank you very much, Commissioner.
16 Thank you, Madam Chair.

17 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you, Councilmember.
18 Just following up on that, with the rule change. A
19 lot of our -- not all. There's been a lot of changes
20 in the litter baskets, but we still have a lot of the
21 open wire baskets. So we're asking commercial
22 businesses to put their stuff out with a lid. And we
23 still have a lot of corner baskets that are just wide
24 open. And I know that it's easier for the worker to
25 like come in and swoop it up, but--

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2 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Oh. We're getting rid of
3 those. That's what--

4 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: So I'm just saying-- But the
5 implementation timeline of this rule change is faster
6 than necessarily all of the other ones that are old
7 are still there. And I know you mentioned what you
8 mentioned earlier. But I just wanted to point that
9 out.

10 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Yeah, I think what-- what
11 you're seeing in the Adams Administration, not
12 everything is happening on the same day. But a lot
13 is happening both on sustainability and cleanliness.
14 And these rules for set-out times are going into
15 effect in April. We already have the contract to
16 replace the litter baskets. We're planning to
17 replace the litter baskets. It's just you can't have
18 everything happen on the same day. Just the world
19 is-- doesn't work that way, unfortunately, I wish it
20 did.

21 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Great. I'm going to finish
22 our line of questioning on organics. It's about five
23 questions, then I'll give the floor back to
24 Salamanca. But I want to finish this line. Okay, so
25 back to organics. Sanitation has said the full \$38.1

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2 million costs for the program would not be realized
3 until fiscal year 2027. Given the announcement of
4 the program, has the program rolling out citywide by
5 the end of calendar year 24. Can you explain the
6 delay in realizing the full cost of the program.

7 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Yes. And I think this is
8 going to be easy to understand. Sanitation workers
9 get paid more as they go up in number of years
10 served. So the change in cost doesn't represent a
11 different number of new sanitation workers. It just
12 represents their pay, the pay scale, or the annual
13 pay increase.

14 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. In terms of the smart
15 bin costs, you mentioned that the school trucks are
16 taking care of the collections. How much-- how much--

17 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Mostly the school-- mostly
18 the school trucks.

19 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Right. How much does that
20 program cost, including collections and tech
21 platform?

22 COMMISSIONER TISCH: So we don't-- Because it's
23 mostly this school trucks, we don't assign a cost
24 just to the smart bins. Like they'll do their
25 schools and then their-- they'll do the bins. The

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2 smart bins are \$3,000 per bin just to buy them. And

3 then there's an annual maintenance and tech costs.

4 [SPEAKING TO DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANTONELLI: Do you

5 know what those are for the smart bins? If not, we

6 can get right back to them. DEPUTY COMMISSIONER

7 ANTONELLI: We'll get back. It's nominal compared to

8 the \$3,000.]

9 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. And the app

10 development, and all of that?

11 COMMISSIONER TISCH: That was--

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANTONELLI: That was that was

13 included in the cost.

14 COMMISSIONER TISCH: --included in the cost.

15 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. I had a question

16 about-- how is DSNY promoting the use of the smart

17 bins? We got a lot of feedback, both from members

18 and community that they kind of just were there. And

19 that some of it, you know, mostly in English, the app

20 is primarily in English.

21 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Well, the app is actually

22 not primarily in English. The app is in all of the

23 local law languages.

24

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. Yeah. I had it up
3 here. So I was trying to figure out how to get
4 Spanish.

5 COMMISSIONER TISCH: I think if you-- if you set
6 your phone to a different language, then that's how
7 the app reads it. But we can make that clearer.

8 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Yeah.

9 COMMISSIONER TISCH: But we did translate all of
10 the content in the app into all of-- it was like,
11 over 10. It's like-- I think it's like 13 different
12 languages. And that actually took a few weeks to do.

13 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: So if your phone is set to a
14 certain language, the app will be in that language.

15 COMMISSIONER TISCH: That is my understanding.
16 That is what I was told. Although my phone is set to
17 English, so I'm going to go and change the-- and
18 actually make sure that it works.

19 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Yeah. I pulled it down, and
20 I was like, I don't understand how to get to another
21 language. But...

22 And then in terms of on the bins, we have a bunch
23 of--

24 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Greg did it yesterday. It
25 works.

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2 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. Okay, great.

3 And on the bins itself, is-- are there multiple
4 languages, or is there language to indicate in other
5 languages that there's other languages available?

6 COMMISSIONER TISCH: The bins, I believe, have
7 the website on them and I believe on the website, it
8 says that, but I will take the feedback. And I think
9 it's good feedback about the exterior of the bins.

10 You know, we redesigned the exterior of the bins
11 to make it so simple and clean, so there wasn't a
12 tremendous amount of information. And we use a lot
13 of like visual images, like the pictures of the
14 different foods and the pictures of yard waste, but I
15 will take the feedback that the bins should account
16 for language accessibility, or at least explain how
17 it gets there.

18 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Yeah, and perhaps you know,
19 community and district specific.

20 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Absolutely.

21 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: We have them in Bushwick, but
22 Bushwick is primarily Spanish-speaking. And in other
23 areas, I imagine that would be a lot different. So.

24 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Okay, that's a that's
25 helpful to know.

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2 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Two more questions on this
3 line of questioning. Community composters like Big
4 Reuse and LES Ecology have faced challenges with
5 space and capacity recently. How is DSNY supporting
6 and factoring in community compost processing sites
7 to the larger organics composting plan?

8 COMMISSIONER TISCH: As we discussed yesterday,
9 our community composters are-- we stand on their
10 shoulders today, certainly rolling out a curbside--
11 citywide curbside organics program. Their roles are
12 going to change but they're going to-- and their role
13 has changed, I think, as-- as curbside organics has
14 rolled out in fits and starts in New York City.

15 But one of the things that we're doing is working
16 with that community to carve out the right role for
17 them as-- Once the city moves to universal curbside
18 collection, my initial thought is that they should
19 continue to play a very important if not more
20 important role in the education around composting.

21 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: And just to confirm there's
22 \$7 million in funding for food scrap drop off--

23 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Baselined.

24 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: --and its baselined, and it's
25 included in FY 24.

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2 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Yup.

3 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. And do you anticipate
4 including funding for food scrap food scrap drop off
5 sites in future years?

6 COMMISSIONER TISCH: I think we need to talk
7 about that, because, frankly, the smart bins
8 accomplish the same goal. And so I think we need to
9 find the right balance between food scrap drop off
10 sites, and smart bins, and curbside composting.

11 I don't have that answer right now. But we have
12 limited resources, and we have to make the most out
13 of the limited resources that we have. Certainly
14 there is a place and a role for food scrap drop offs.
15 But it's a balance that we're going to have to all
16 work together to strike.

17 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Right. I mean, these groups
18 can-- or have primarily, I would say, have relied on
19 DSNY funding for a long time. So removing of that, I
20 think with-- if that is going to be the case, which I
21 don't necessarily think it should be the case,
22 although I understand your argument. I think we just
23 need a longer period of dialogue, that's like very
24 consistent and structured around that.

25 COMMISSIONER TISCH: We agree.

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2 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay, last question around
3 organics, I believe. So we understand DSNY, DEP, and
4 DCAS initiated a new study on organic resource
5 recovery for decarbonization. Can you share more
6 information about the goals of the study and the
7 progress made to date?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANDERSON: Yes. So that
9 study, I believe, just moved over to DEP. It was
10 originally led by DCAS. And that's, I think, looking
11 at some of the longer term questions that you were
12 speaking to earlier, Chair. So looking at things
13 like, you know, how can we maximize the use of the
14 DEP digesters? How can we maximize the beneficial
15 use of all of the products, the renewable, natural
16 gas, the biosolids that are coming out of those? So
17 it's certainly looking to balance all of those things
18 and come up with a long term plan for what we do with
19 the millions and millions of pounds of organics that
20 we are planning to collect.

21 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Right. And just-- I mean--
22 I'm, like, really looking forward to going to look at
23 the biosolids with DEP. Do you all play a role in--
24 in the output at all of the-- that material coming
25 from the digesters? Or is that strictly DEP?

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2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANDERSON: Yeah. That's--
3 that's strictly DEP. We do have regular
4 conversations with them. And we are trying to hold
5 them accountable to their commitments for beneficial
6 biosolids for use. I think their commitment is 100%
7 beneficial use by the end of the decade. And I think
8 they're about 50% of the way there today.

9 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: My understanding is some of
10 that material gets limed and landfilled. And so that
11 is a cost that will be associated with DEP not with
12 sanitation; correct?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANDERSON: Correct.

14 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. Just wanted to
15 clarify. Okay, I'm going to pass-- One, I wanted to
16 recognize Councilmember Gennaro who was here for a
17 second. I'm going to pass it to Councilmember
18 Salamanca for some questions, and then we'll resume.

19 COUNCILMEMBER SALAMANCA: Thank you, Madam Chair.
20 Good afternoon, Commissioner. First, I want to give
21 you a shout out again. These surveillance cameras
22 are a hit in my community. I'm getting calls from
23 different community board members and businesses
24 alike. I'm just happy to know that we are catching
25 individuals that are illegally dumping.

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2 I have two very basic questions. One is a very
3 popular conversation in my district: Dog poop. Dog
4 poop continues to be an issue in my community. I
5 don't know if it is your community, Madam Chair.

6 And so my-- my question is: How do we enforce
7 that? And before I get to it-- so, my-- prior to
8 being a councilmember, I was a district manager,
9 something that I work with then-Bronx-borough-
10 President Ruben Diaz Jr. on tackling.

11 Back then when we spoke with sanitation, they
12 said that they had maybe seven inspectors citywide.
13 And many times they will have to do stakeouts to
14 catch the individuals who are not picking up after
15 their dog. And many times, they did not-- they did
16 not carry ID on them. And so issuing violations was
17 difficult, because the options were to take them to a
18 precinct and they did not want to do that. So how do
19 we enforce dog poop violators?

20 COMMISSIONER TISCH: So this is a topic I've
21 actually spent a lot of time thinking about, and
22 it's-- it's one where I don't-- we don't have an
23 effective strategy today.

24 You are 100% right that the enforcement is not as
25 productive as it could be because oftentimes when our

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2 enforcement agents stop people for not cleaning up

3 after their dogs, they say that they don't have their

4 ID, and we don't want to lock people up for it,

5 because I feel like that would be inappropriate. But

6 it is a conundrum, because it's a big problem. And

7 it's a big problem and a lot of different parts of

8 the city. I've started to look at what other cities

9 do that have a similar problem. One city has a dog

10 DNA database. And they take these samples, and they

11 check it against the dog DNA database. That seems

12 like overkill. I'm not saying we're doing this in

13 New York City. I really don't want a headline

14 tomorrow that this is what we're doing in New York

15 City. [LAUGHTER]

16 So one city does that. There are-- there are

17 various different approaches. But it's a problem

18 here. And I don't have a great answer, unfortunately,

19 today.

20 COUNCILMEMBER SALAMANCA: I have more-- I have

21 another question. I don't want to take up all my

22 time. But something that I am willing to work with

23 you, whether it is-- I see many gardens. In some of

24 my NYCHA developments they have these, I don't want

25 to call them containers, but these dog poop bags

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2 where individuals can take them, and they can pick up
3 after their dogs. I don't know if that's an option
4 or a program that sanitation can try to pilot in
5 areas where not picking up after your dog is
6 extremely common. But that's just an idea.

7 My other question because I-- this is actually a
8 very serious one for my community. I have two BIDs.
9 I have to Southern Boulevard BID and the Third Avenue
10 BID, extremely busy avenues. And then-- and then I
11 have my homeowners. What are the hours that a
12 sidewalk has to be cleaned for a business and a
13 homeowner to get a violation?

14 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Well, I'll start by saying I
15 don't think the hours are long enough. And I think
16 our sidewalks-- We talk about the city not looking
17 clean. Our sidewalks are the responsibility of the
18 property owners. And even-- even inside of the
19 hours, we just see that not enough property owners
20 are doing what they need to do to help keep the city
21 clean. But to answer your very specific question.

22 COUNCILMEMBER SALAMANCA: Yeah. And as you
23 answer that, my-- the reason-- my concept is, I think
24 hours should be different for business owners than
25 property owners, than homeowners, right? Someone who

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2 is a homeowner normally works their-- you know, the
3 hours of whatever, eight hours a day, let's say, and
4 they're not home physically to clean. But they
5 should before they leave, and they should when they
6 get home from work. Business owners are there all
7 day. And so I-- standards should be higher for them,
8 but go ahead please.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANDERSON: Yeah, so the
10 current hours, it's two hours a day for each type of
11 property. They are different for residential and
12 commercial for residential. It's 8:00 to 8:59 a.m.,
13 and 6:00 to 6:59 p.m. So before and after.

14 COUNCILMEMBER SALAMANCA: Those are the hours
15 that the inspectors are allowed to give violations?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANDERSON: For dirty
17 sidewalks specifically.

18 COMMISSIONER TISCH: For residential.

19 COUNCILMEMBER SALAMANCA: For residential.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANDERSON: And for
21 commercial, it's-- it's two one-hour periods during
22 the day. They vary by district and you can find
23 those on our website or by calling 311.

24 COUNCILMEMBER SALAMANCA: Okay. Thank you, Madam
25 Chair.

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2 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Yeah. And just to follow up
3 on the dog poop drama. I know that DEP also gives
4 away stuff like that. Has-- Has DSNY just considered
5 running like a public awareness campaign?

6 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Yes.

7 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: One of the things we talk
8 about is-- or that we've used that really grosses
9 people out that they teach in the Rat Academy is
10 like, rats love to eat dog poop. And that really
11 freaks people out. I mean, whatever. This is what
12 we're talking about. But-- I'm looking at the faces
13 of the crowd, and I'm like, "It's disgusting." You
14 know, it's like the rats feast on dog poop, and like
15 hammering that message home and people are really
16 like, blown away. I know Councilmember Bottcher had
17 an ad campaign about--

18 COMMISSIONER TISCH: We have a really good one--

19 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Yeah. Okay.

20 COMMISSIONER TISCH: --that's coming, that I
21 think is like worthy of like, the DSNY brand these
22 days doing things that are sort of out there. So I
23 don't want to-- I don't want to get out ahead of it.
24 But we do have a great outreach campaign in the works
25 for that issue.

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2 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Awesome. Did you have a
3 question?

4 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: I apologize if-- if
5 Councilmember Salamanca asked this, but in your
6 testimony you talked about an 80% increase in
7 summonses over the past year, what--

8 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Not generally. Just
9 summonses for cleanliness-related violations.

10 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: Okay. Great. What is
11 the-- has the increase been, if any on the pooper
12 scooper violations? What are the numbers year-over-
13 year?

14 COMMISSIONER TISCH: They are-- I don't have
15 those because I just have the top ones, but they are
16 higher than they were a year ago, but nowhere near
17 where they-- where we would like them to be given the
18 problem, and what I was discussing with Councilmember
19 Salamanca is, it's certainly not for a lack of
20 trying. When we stop-- when our enforcement agent
21 stop someone for that violation, they-- oftentimes
22 the person will say they're not carrying their ID.
23 And then do you really want to bring them into the--
24 to the precinct for it? I mean, our policy has been
25 no. But that has led to some of the issues with it.

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2 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: Do you have numbers on
3 how many violations were issued?

4 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Yeah. I can get those to
5 you.

6 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: Okay. Do they-- Is it
7 like 100 citywide for the entire year? Or is it
8 1000?

9 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Oh, I don't-- We can
10 definitely get them to your office.

11 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: Okay.

12 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Again, it's higher than it
13 was, but it's not going to be meaningful to me or
14 you.

15 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: Have those challenges
16 always been the same with enforcing pooper scooper
17 laws? Because I was under the impression that they
18 were effective historically. Are they no longer
19 effective?

20 COMMISSIONER TISCH: You know, we're going to
21 have to look at the history of it. But what I can
22 tell you is that our enforcement agents report that
23 when they go to write these violations, if someone--
24 people tell them they don't-- they're not carrying
25 ID, and then it's a problem.

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2 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: The number of
3 enforcement agents, are those enforcement agents that
4 are dedicated to-- is it the same enforcement agents
5 who write for the storefronts, in front of the
6 sidewalks, and for residential and commercial litter?
7 Or is this a special unit?

8 COMMISSIONER TISCH: The enforcement agents work
9 in borough-based teams. And they can do residential,
10 or they can write residential and commercial
11 violations.

12 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: I think one of the
13 issues now is that folks just don't feel the-- that
14 they're going to be in danger of getting a ticket.
15 That's-- that's my impression. Our outreach campaign
16 last year, and all the press we got around it, I
17 think actually was effective. And I actually had a
18 dog owner complain to me that she was getting yelled
19 at to pick up after her dog even before she had a
20 chance to pick it up.

21 COMMISSIONER TISCH: I agree.

22 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: We created a kind of a
23 frenzy around the issue.

24

25

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2 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Which is why we have an
3 outreach campaign on this issue in the works for this
4 spring.

5 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCER: Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay, great. We're going to-
7 - we have a few questions on the preliminary Mayor's
8 Management Report. For years, DSNY has undershot
9 their diversion rate goals. You've said that the
10 citywide curbside organics and the commercial waste
11 zone projects are the two biggest things DSNY could
12 do to improve that rate. Does DSNY have a target
13 diversion rate in mind, or phasing up of a diversion
14 rate?

15 COMMISSIONER TISCH: I don't have a target
16 diversion rate in mind, as we've discussed
17 previously, but I know I want to go-- I want to put
18 our resources to the biggest opportunities. And in
19 my mind, as you mentioned, the biggest opportunity--
20 opportunity is around organics, which is why we've
21 not just announced a universal curbside organics
22 program. Like for me, like, that would just that
23 would be a lot. But we've also invested in the smart
24 bins and we've invested in teaching our children the
25 habits and giving them the muscle memory they need so

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2 that as they grow up, they will be composters and
3 hopefully they will also bring it home to their
4 parents.

5 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. DSNY did not release
6 any data on the amount of organics diverted so far in
7 FY 23 in the PMMR. Do you have any of those numbers
8 yet?

9 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Yeah. Do you have that
10 list? Oh here it is. Oh, I'm sorry. I do not have
11 the FY 23 numbers yet, but we will get you the FY 23
12 numbers when they come out.

13 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: And so you don't have a
14 diversion rate in mind. So you won't have a target
15 number for the curbside program once fully
16 implemented yet?

17 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Correct.

18 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. Is there-- Is there a
19 work-- Are you in discussions around figuring out
20 what that target is? Or you just don't want to put a
21 target on it?

22 COMMISSIONER TISCH: You know, I think we're
23 going to-- I think we learned a lot from the first
24 three months in Queens. We overperformed our
25 expectations. And I think that we need to-- we need

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2 some more time to see what the participation level is
3 going to be.

4 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. And then in terms of--
5 We've talked a lot about litter baskets and service
6 data. Will that also-- DO you have any of that data
7 around smart bins?

8 COMMISSIONER TISCH: In terms of the service
9 level?

10 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Yeah.

11 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Yeah. We empty the smart
12 bins once a day with the school trucks, usually with
13 the school trucks.

14 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: And do you empty it-- I know
15 that there-- if I'm correct, I haven't used them yet,
16 because I still use a different community composter
17 service, but--

18 COMMISSIONER TISCH: But they're in your
19 district.

20 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: They're right in front of my
21 house. But I'm still supporting something else.
22 What-- They're-- they're based on phasing, right?
23 It's automatic, right? If it's full, it's like,
24 let's-- it's a smart bin that the thing know, right?

25

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2 Or, so I'm guessing my question is: if it's not full
3 at all, do you serve it? You still service it daily?

4 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Yes. They all get serviced.

5 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay.

6 COMMISSIONER TISCH: And the reason why is:
7 Like, they're still-- in the app, there's three
8 colors, it's really easy to use. I hope you like it.
9 I designed it.

10 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: I have it now on my phone.

11 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Okay. So in the app,
12 there's three colors. One color is like, green, like
13 there's avail-- like plenty of space available,
14 please use. Red is full. So you can't open the full
15 ones. And then there's like a grayish color, which
16 is like "almost full."

17 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: So give it a shot.

18 COMMISSIONER TISCH: So we-- we service them
19 whether they're green, gray, or red. And the reason
20 why is green may still have material in it. It's
21 just not full. And we don't want to keep it sitting
22 there for a long time. So we just service them every
23 day with our school trucks.

24

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. Although our office
3 does use the bin. I don't use the bin, but our
4 office does. So...

5 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Do they like it?

6 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: I think so.

7 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Oops.

8 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: It's a new-- it's a new
9 program in the district office. So okay, I just
10 wanted to touch on rat mitigation. So, the Council
11 passed a slate of bills last year, we really excited
12 about it. A lot of that was-- had to deal with the
13 Department of Health. But I know last year, we gave
14 almost \$5 million for rat mitigation. Can you talk a
15 little bit about how that money was used? Or if
16 there was-- if any of that was within DSNY, how was
17 that used? And how are you coordinating with other
18 agencies around rat mitigation strategies?

19 COMMISSIONER TISCH: So of that money, we got \$4
20 million for our containerization study, which is well
21 underway, and we plan to release a public report in
22 the coming weeks, I hope, about everything that we
23 learned about containerization.

24

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Alright, just to clarify.

3 The-- So out of the \$4.8, you used \$4 million for the
4 study?

5 COMMISSIONER TISCH: We actually had budgeted \$4
6 million for the study. The study ended up being much
7 less expensive than what was budgeted for. So we're
8 looking-- or what is needed now. So we're looking to
9 move some of that money to next year.

10 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. So that was what--
11 with the Council funding added, that came-- that
12 study was funded by that?

13 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Mm-hmm.

14 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay, so then what other rat
15 mitigation strategies has DSNY employed with any of
16 that money?

17 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Um, I'm not sure--

18 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: What is your-- What is the
19 rat mitigation--

20 COMMISSIONER TISCH: So let's just go over the
21 rat mitigation strategy. I don't want to do it by--
22 by budget source. But we can-- can get all of that
23 to you. There are a huge number of rent mitigation
24 strategies citywide and I'll speak today to the ones
25 at DSNY.

2 First obvious Lay is the change of the set-out
3 times. Shrinking the amount of time that the black
4 bags spend on the streets, shutting down the all-
5 night, all-you-can eat rat buffet. That in my mind
6 is one of the biggest things we can do in New York
7 City to take the fight to the rats, because we know
8 that 1/3 of the material in the bags is food, which
9 is rat food.

10 Second massive thing that we can do in the fight
11 against rats is rollout universal curbside organic
12 collection, and get the food out of the black bags
13 once and for all. So those two things in my mind are
14 massive. And both programs are not just announced,
15 but like in-- in implementation, or like on the verge
16 of implementation.

17 Third thing that we need to do is make big pushes
18 in the area of containerization. There too, it's
19 something that's been talked about for a decade in
20 New York City, and no progress was made. This year
21 alone, we did curbs-- we did the clean curbs pilot
22 working with 19 different BIDs and gave almost
23 \$400,000 worth of grants. We have a residential
24 pilot underway. But we've also done a study of much
25

2 broader containerization use in New York City, the
3 details of which will be released shortly.

4 In my opinion, based on everything we've seen, we
5 roll out containerization in New York City, shared
6 containers, it will represent one of the most
7 complicated infrastructure projects that the city
8 takes on over the next decade. It is not as easy as
9 putting a dumpster on a street, it is doable, but
10 it's hard.

11 And I think when that report is released it-- it
12 will communicate where the complexities are, but
13 among them, given the mountains of trash we have
14 today in New York City, you could make a gigantic
15 container. It won't be big enough for the mountains,
16 unless we increase our service levels. In most
17 cities that have true containerization, they don't
18 collect two or three times a week as we do in New
19 York City. They collect seven times a week.
20 Sometimes even 14 times a week, they do it twice a
21 day in some big cities. The trucks that are needed
22 here to do this at scale and safely in New York City,
23 they don't exist in North America. They exist in
24 Europe. And so we're working with the truck
25 manufacturers to address trucks.

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2 What are the implications for parking? Is there
3 even enough curb space in New York City to be able to
4 accommodate the number of bins that are required?

5 These are among the things--

6 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: So these are primarily
7 future-oriented strategies.

8 COMMISSIONER TISCH: That we've been studying.

9 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Yeah, this is like setting up
10 the groundwork for more robust rat mitigation.

11 In the past, we've had things like an extra
12 pickup service or things like that. So for this
13 fiscal year, beyond the more future-oriented work,
14 which is important and great, what were any rat
15 mitigation strategies--

16 COMMISSIONER TISCH: In this fiscal year, you've
17 got-- you've got the highest level of litter basket
18 service ever performed in New York City. You've got
19 the design and investment in a new litter basket of
20 the future, which is rolling out next fiscal year,
21 basically like this summer, late spring, early
22 summer. You've got the universal curbside organics
23 with a massive pilot in the entire borough of Queens.
24 You have the change of set out times, which takes
25 effect on April 1st, and unprecedented levels of

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2 midnight collection from the Department of
3 Sanitation, and--

4 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: What was the midnight
5 collection levels?

6 COMMISSIONER TISCH: It was about 25%.

7 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: 25%. Okay. Is there any
8 capital funding for rat mitigation in the newest
9 capital commitment plan?

10 COMMISSIONER TISCH: I don't believe so, right
11 now.

12 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: And then just in terms of
13 what you all were able to do in the in the pilot with
14 the Queens organic, were you all coordinating at all
15 with DOH to start to track, you know, the-- I don't
16 know what I'm saying, like, the rodent population?
17 Or how are you talking-- how are you talking with
18 them as you're rolling out these more robust...?

19 COMMISSIONER TISCH: So the Mayor's office
20 convenes regular rat meetings with a huge number of
21 agencies that have parts to play. And yes, DOH is at
22 those meetings. And I don't think in three months
23 there is enough data to draw meaningful conclusions,
24 but we will certainly be looking as that data becomes
25 available and we roll this out more broadly, to

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2 closely track the data associated-- associated with
3 those programs.

4 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. Okay, moving on to
5 capital projects. The largest capital project in
6 DSNY's capital commitment plan is the replacement of
7 garages 9, 10, and 11. What is the timeline for this
8 project?

9 COMMISSIONER TISCH: [TO DEPUTY COMMISSIONER
10 ANDERSON:] Do you have a timeline for it?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANDERSON: So this this
12 project is incredibly complicated. It's incredibly
13 complicated because there are three garages on one
14 parcel right now. One of those three garages is a
15 former incinerator built sometime in the 30s. So
16 there's-- not only do we have to build a new garage,
17 but we have to demolish the existing buildings, and
18 keep servicing those three community boards with
19 essential sanitation services. So the first step
20 starting in 2024, is to build out temporary swing
21 space. Once that's completed, we can begin the
22 demolition of the existing facilities. And then
23 after that, sometime around 2027 begin the
24 construction of the new facility.

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: For-- Which one is that? 9,
3 10, or 11? Are you talking about that's all three?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANDERSON: All three.

5 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: All three. Okay. And did
6 Brooklyn 16 -- I'm asking for my district -- did 16--
7 was that renovated?

8 COMMISSIONER TISCH: I don't have anything on
9 that.

10 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay.

11 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Are you sure you have the
12 right number?

13 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: It was a question of, has it
14 been renovated, Brooklyn 16.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANDERSON: We can get back to
16 you with any recent work.

17 COMMISSIONER TISCH: It's Brooklyn-- sorry, 16.
18 The rehabilitation is funded for a total of \$19
19 million in 23, 25, and 26. Sorry about that.

20 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. And then, I know last
21 year in our hearing, we talked about facilities
22 without women's restrooms. What is the-- What is the
23 number of garages left without women's restrooms?

24

25

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2 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Blessedly, a month from now
3 it's going to be zero. Like, it took entirely too
4 long to have women's restrooms in all the garages.
5 But the final garage, the work is underway and is
6 going to be complete next month. Yeah. Next month.

7 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. We've had some
8 concerns raised that the fleet of collection trucks
9 are aging and downtime for repairs are up. While we
10 discuss truck needs for the organics program. We
11 wanted to know broadly about the state of the fleet.
12 I know we had a hearing about this. Can you provide
13 by borough the number of trucks beyond the seven-year
14 useful life, and does DSNY have a plan to purchase
15 new collection trucks?

16 COMMISSIONER TISCH: So I can tell you that we
17 are in a much better place on fleet right now than we
18 were just a few months ago, and that is because of
19 what I believe are unprecedented investments in our
20 fleet.

21 In the January plan, the mayor put \$100 million
22 dollars into DSNY's budget to buy new trucks. On top
23 of that, as you know, we ordered \$75 million of new
24 trucks for the organics program, which means we won't
25 have to save old trucks that don't work longer than

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2 their useful life. And that is on top of the money
3 that had previously, you know, naturally been
4 budgeted for truck purposes.

5 As these new trucks have started to roll in,
6 we're also seeing a corresponding decrease in our
7 outage rates. Our dual bins are down to about 19%.
8 Our collections are about 23%. So we're doing much
9 better on our trucks than I think my last report.

10 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay.

11 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Again, not perfect, but we
12 have so many trucks that are coming in that I only
13 expect those numbers to come down.

14 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Right. And then I know we
15 had talked about this in the fleet hearing. The
16 mayor had announced \$6.2 million for electric
17 vehicles. And you've probably covered this in the
18 last hearing. But just for the purposes of today,
19 what is the timeline for the procurement of the
20 hybrid street sweepers and the all-electric refuse
21 trucks?

22 COMMISSIONER TISCH: So the street sweepers,
23 there are seven of them, the electric ones, they are
24 expected by the end of the year. And there, we're
25 looking to add additional electric cleaning vehicles

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2 going forward. The seven electric collection trucks

3 that we procured are expected in June of this year.

4 But there, as we discussed at length at the at the

5 last hearing, I'm not anticipating making significant

6 additional investments on the-- on the rear loaders,

7 on the on the collection trucks, because they can't

8 plow snow yet.

9 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Right. Yes. And then for

10 those seven that are coming in, are those primarily

11 going to be based in-- together in in one district?

12 Or are they being spread throughout?

13 COMMISSIONER TISCH: I'd like to see them spread

14 throughout and some of the work that we're doing now,

15 because, as you know, we're electrifying our light-

16 duty fleet, is putting in place some, an appropriate

17 level of charging capacity for these vehicles.

18 It's hard with the with the rear loaders, in

19 particular, because like we don't yet have a go-

20 forward strategy, because the state of that

21 technology isn't where it needs to be for us to make

22 this the go-forward strategy. But I would like to

23 see them spread out.

24 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. Last question around

25 trucks: As these trucks that are aging kind of come

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2 out of surface, where do they go? Because I know,
3 for example, there was an announcement a while ago
4 about donating some trucks to Puerto Rico, or a truck
5 or two to Puerto Rico. And in my mind, I was like,
6 "Well, these aren't..." I, you know, I question the
7 level of capacity in Puerto Rico, to make use of
8 these trucks long-term and overall maintenance of
9 them. So I'm just curious about the exit strategy of
10 these trucks and where they go, and what's kind of
11 your protocol for that.

12 COMMISSIONER TISCH: DCAS manages the
13 relinquishment process for trucks that are past their
14 end of their useful life.

15 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. We're going to talk
16 just quickly on state and federal funding. We've
17 talked about this before with the state DPR. Do you
18 have an estimate of what the budgetary implication
19 would be for the Department of Sanitation?

20 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Massive. Hold on.

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANDERSON: Yeah. So we, in
22 total, we spend about around \$166 million dollars
23 just on straight-time collection costs and recycling
24 processing. Potentially the-- the total revenue
25 could be higher than that. It's something that we

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2 are watching very closely in the state legislature.

3 And we're encouraged by the discussions between the
4 Assembly, the Senate, and the Governor at this point.

5 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. And just on a few more
6 federal-- one other question: The US EPA offered new
7 federal grant program opportunities for local
8 government entities to apply for funding for
9 recycling of organic programs and infrastructure, as
10 well as for education and outreach. Has DSNY pursued
11 these opportunities?

12 COMMISSIONER TISCH: We are pursuing them.

13 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Are there any other federal
14 funding opportunities that you're pursuing or
15 planning to pursue?

16 COMMISSIONER TISCH: The EPA ones. [TO DEPUTY
17 COMMISSIONER ANDERSON: What were the other ones?]

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANDERSON: Yeah. So we're--
19 we're keeping an eye on those opportunities. There's
20 some new funding that came out from the EPA on--
21 specifically on environmental justice that we're
22 looking at. But certainly the-- the two that were
23 due in February, which we applied for both, for the
24 full funding level, were the two that were most
25 appropriate for the work that we're doing.

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2 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. We're almost done. We
3 just have some questions on plan details for fiscal
4 24. Sanitation's fiscal 2024 budget contains \$35
5 million in new needs and personnel services,
6 adjustments for higher than expected costs. This
7 money will be across three programmatic areas:
8 general administration, collection and street
9 cleaning, and support operations. Can you detail
10 what this funding is being spent on specifically?

11 COMMISSIONER TISCH: For overtime.

12 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: For what?

13 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Overtime.

14 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Overtime. On all those three
15 areas? Or is there one in particular that's taking
16 the--

17 COMMISSIONER TISCH: \$35 million was for our
18 overtime?

19 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. Does DSNY plan to add
20 funding for Precision Cleaning Initiative, or the TNT
21 (which we all love, by the way) for FY 24?

22 COMMISSIONER TISCH: [TO DEPUTY COMMISSIONER
23 ANTONELLI: Is the precision cleaning baselined?

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANTONELLI: Additional funding
25 was not baselined. TO DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANTONELLI:

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2 Okay. So the-- but the TNT is baselined? DEPUTY

3 COMMISSIONER ANTONELLI: Baselined.] So the TNT is

4 baselinedIP the precision cleaning is not baselined,

5 and I'd like to work with you on that for the adopted

6 budget.

7 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. Will e-waste curbside

8 collection start again?

9 COMMISSIONER TISCH: No. Except in Staten

10 Island. The Council funded that in Staten Island.

11 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. And what is the

12 funding for e-waste collections for FY 24 preliminary

13 budget.

14 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Let me go to the e-waste

15 slide. [TO DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANDERSON: Do you

16 have the numbers on the top of your head, Greg?]

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANDERSON: So the-- the e-

18 waste collection program was only funded as a one

19 year program and FY 23. So there is no funding for

20 that in FY 24 at this time.

21 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Generally the costs

22 associated--

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANDERSON: Yeah. The

24 remaining programs that we run for e-waste are all

25 covered under the New York State electronic waste

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2 act. So those are all generally cost neutral. There
3 are some marketing and communications costs
4 associated, but the actual collection is cost
5 neutral.

6 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. I do have one question
7 about e-bike batteries. The Council has been trying
8 to tackle this. I know we have some more legislation
9 coming down the pipeline. But does DSNY require more
10 funding to properly and safely handle the disposal of
11 these batteries, these lithium ion-- ion batteries?
12 And does DSNY have plans to expand any disposal
13 sites?

14 COMMISSIONER TISCH: So we work very closely
15 with-- we're working very closely with the Fire
16 Department and the Department of Environmental
17 Protection on all manner of issues related to lithium
18 ion batteries. Our special-- You asked if we have
19 plans to expand our special waste sites?

20 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Just the-- just the-- Yeah,
21 the disposal sites for-- that would accept those.

22 COMMISSIONER TISCH: We do not have plans at this
23 time to expand the special waste sites or the SAFE
24 Disposal Events. As you know, the SAFE Disposal
25 Events we run twice a year in the different boroughs.

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2 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. We talked about legal
3 dumping. And then in terms of Local Law 9 of 23,
4 which we passed at the end of last year for tracking
5 the street sweepers, and having that available
6 online, were there any additional costs required for
7 that for FY 24?

8 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Not at this time. We've
9 made very nice progress on it. We've designed what
10 it's going to look like, and what the user experience
11 will be like, to make sure it's simple and easy to
12 use. And it's very much underway.

13 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay, great. I just have
14 some-- a few questions on vacancy. And I know a
15 bunch of questions were asked, but just some follow
16 up. How many approvals, requests to hire were sent
17 to OMB by DSNY?

18 COMMISSIONER TISCH: In what time period?

19 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: For FY 23.

20 COMMISSIONER TISCH: For FY 23? How many people
21 did we ask to hire? I don't have that number here.

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANTONELLI: [TO COMMISSIONER
23 TISCH:] We'd have to get that.

24 COMMISSIONER TISCH: [TO DEPUTY COMMISSIONER
25 ANTONELLI: You don't have that?] How many people

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2 have we asked to hire? No, I can tell you how many
3 other data that we have on vacancies if you want it.

4 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Just the question was: How
5 many requests to hire were sent to OMB by the agency?
6 But you can follow up if necessary.

7 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Sure. But it's going to be-
8 - ,like it's going to be hundreds if not thousands.
9 Probably thousands.

10 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. Do you know how many,
11 by chance, were not approved by OMB?

12 COMMISSIONER TISCH: No. We've hired a lot of
13 people at the Department of Sanitation this year. We
14 are 4% above our budgeted headcount. And the mayor
15 has funded a number of new programs that has taken us
16 to the highest uniform headcount that we've seen in
17 two decades.

18 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. And what is your
19 current attrition rate?

20 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Um, for uniform or civilian?

21 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Uh, if you have that broken
22 down, that would be great.

23 COMMISSIONER TISCH: [TO DEPUTY COMMISSIONER
24 ANTONELLI:] Do you have that there?

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: You could do just in general,
3 but then if you have it by civilian and uniform.

4 COMMISSIONER TISCH: So I don't have the
5 attrition rate for civilians but--

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANTONELLI: [TO COMMISSIONER
7 TISCH:] No. We have it.

8 COMMISSIONER TISCH: [TO DEPUTY COMMISSIONER
9 ANTONELLI: Oh, you do.] Never mind. We'll give Joe
10 a second.

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANTONELLI: Yeah, just give
12 me a second. I have all of it. For civilians, the
13 rolling 12 months of the past 12 months is 11.49%.
14 We've had 220 civilians leave the agency. And for
15 uniform the rolling 12 month is 6.04%. With--

16 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: 6.04?

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANTONELLI: Yes, 6.04, with
18 460 uniformed personnel having left the agency.

19 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. We saw that, and I
20 know a couple of people asked about this, we saw that
21 enforcement had some higher vacancies which had
22 headcount-- headcount cuts in FY 23 adoption. Just
23 one more time, because I wasn't fully tuned in with
24 different numbers, but when do you plan to be fully
25 staffed up for enforcement?

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2 COMMISSIONER TISCH: I think we are fully staffed
3 for enforcement.

4 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. So you don't have a
5 plan to fulfill any of the vacancies?

6 COMMISSIONER TISCH: There were, as part of the
7 PEGs, we lost a number of enforcement positions. My
8 understanding is that the number of positions or
9 vacancies remaining in enforcement is stuff that we
10 would just do pro forma. It's a normal number of
11 vacancies. So that's like a-- not a big-- it's
12 standard operating procedure.

13 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay.

14 COMMISSIONER TISCH: It's eight now in our entire
15 enforcement division.

16 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Does DSNY have a breakdown--
17 or can you give a breakdown of the specifics
18 positions that are being cut from the FY 24
19 preliminary budget?

20 COMMISSIONER TISCH: I gave a breakdown before of
21 the-- the positions that were cut as part of the
22 PEGs, but I'm happy to do that again.

23 In the November plan we lost 68 positions,
24 sanitation enforcement agents, associate sanitation
25

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2 enforcement agents, and then 24 other various
3 civilian positions.

4 In the January plan we lost 28 positions, and we
5 are still-- civilian positions, and we're still
6 working with the Office of Management and Budget to
7 identify the specific positions to be eliminated. I
8 think many of those are going to be-- end up having
9 been mechanics.

10 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: And the civilian positions.
11 What are those generally? What areas programmatic
12 areas of work are those?

13 COMMISSIONER TISCH: It ranges from
14 administrative, outreach, legal, like, across the
15 field, across the board.

16 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. A few final questions.
17 How much revenue is DSNY bringing in from charging
18 NYCHA for waste collections?

19 COMMISSIONER TISCH: [TO DEPUTY COMMISSIONER
20 ANTONELLI: Do you have that?] Joe is going to get
21 back to you on that.

22 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. While we're waiting,
23 if you want to talk a little bit about--

24 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Wait. He found it.

25 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Oh okay. Go ahead.

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2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANTONELLI: Yeah. We are
3 budgeted to bring in \$750,000 for the NYCHA special
4 collection.

5 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. And then for the-- We
6 haven't had as much snow. Have you-- you haven't had
7 to do the plows yet, right?

8 COMMISSIONER TISCH: No. We tried once in the
9 Bronx, but it wasn't enough.

10 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. So how are you all
11 planning on using some of that savings?

12 COMMISSIONER TISCH: The savings goes back into
13 the general fund, and I do expect this year
14 significant savings in the snow budget. But 100% of
15 the budget is not going to be saved.

16 What's important to keep in mind is there are
17 certain fixed costs spent at the beginning, or before
18 the season, when we don't know how much snow is going
19 to fall. So an obvious example is like the amount of
20 salt we bought. We don't know how much snow is going
21 to fall when we buy the salt, although we're going to
22 save money next year on salt because we definitely
23 have a lot of salt leftover. The cost to get our
24 fleet of salt spreaders and everything PM'd, and
25 maintained, and upgraded, and make sure the GPS

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2 works. So there are-- are those costs. There are
3 also the training costs on the uniform side? We do,
4 I think, a significant amount of training before the
5 season starts to make sure that our entire staff,
6 uniformed staff is refreshed and ready.

7 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Yeah. So just like
8 readiness, season readiness costs. Okay. Has DSNY
9 (we've asked this 1000 times)-- has DSNY explored
10 increasing the budget for DSNY's marine and rail
11 transfer stations, specifically to accept commercial
12 waste during overnight and other peak commercial
13 collection times?

14 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Not at this time.

15 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: What's that?

16 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Not at this time.

17 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: The waste characterization
18 study was primarily funded in fiscal year 23 with
19 only a small portion funded in FY 24. Can you tell
20 us about the progress made on this study and the
21 projected release date?

22 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Yes, I can. But I just want
23 to make sure I have all of the right numbers here.
24 So I just need one second.

25

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2 Okay. I can't easily find the numbers. But our
3 waste characterization study is coming along very
4 nicely. As we've mentioned before, we are doing more
5 sorting with this study in more seasons than we have
6 ever done before. My understanding is that that
7 study has been fully funded, and that no additional
8 funding is required.

9 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. Last question:
10 Building on that study, I wanted to ask about the
11 swamp, and does DSNY have the resources they need for
12 the Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan
13 process, including the required public engagement?

14 COMMISSIONER TISCH: There's going to-- we have
15 enough money for what is being done right now, which
16 is like a lay of the land: What are the current
17 conditions? And additional funding is going to be
18 required for additional work over the next, I think
19 it's three and a half years, to put the solid waste
20 management plan together.

21 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay. I think that's all of
22 our questions.

23 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Wonderful.

24 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you so much for being
25 here. Thank you for answering as candidly as you do.

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2 We appreciate that. And we will start to get ready
3 for public testimony.

4 Okay, so we're going to call up first folks that
5 are in person and then move to online. We're going
6 to call up Eric Goldstein, Sonia Chung, and Lacey
7 Tober-- Tauber -- I always mess it up -- Tauber, and
8 Christine Romero.

9 All right. Thank you to our frequent fliers.
10 Panelists, we love having you at our sanitation
11 hearings. We'll just go left to right. Well, my
12 left to right. So we'll start with you, Eric.

13 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Thank you. Thank you Chair Nurse
14 and good afternoon. My name is Eric Goldstein from
15 the Natural Resources Defense Council. Solid waste
16 policy in New York is in the midst of two historic
17 once-in-a generation transformations. The first
18 deals with commercial waste, as you know. Thanks to
19 Local Law 199 of 2019, the city is in the midst of
20 taking a system that was completely chaotic, Wild
21 West, a major source of environmental labor, traffic,
22 safety, and other problems and transforming it into a
23 system with 20 organized zones, reducing, among other
24 things, as much as 15 million miles a year of diesel

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2 truck traffic which will have widespread beneficial
3 environmental and public health ramifications.

4 The second transformation is the creation of
5 universal curbside organics collection, or the
6 movement to that. The Council has initiated that
7 move through the introduction of Intro 244. The
8 Mayor and the Commissioner have begun a voluntary
9 citywide program, which is a good start. The smart
10 bin program is nice. But let's make no mistake
11 without a local law to make this program mandatory,
12 we will never achieve the economic and environmental
13 efficiencies that are necessary.

14 We applaud the work that has been done so far.
15 But just for the sake of order of magnitude, the
16 three-month pilot program in Queens has collected
17 nearly 13 million pounds of yard waste and food
18 waste. That's about -- if my calculations are
19 correct -- 6500 tons over three months. And of
20 course, the city generates probably 4000 tons a day
21 of organics. So 6500 tons over three months versus
22 4000 tons a day. We've obviously got a long way to
23 go if we want to have the environmental and economic
24 efficiencies of that program, which is why Intro 244
25 is so important.

2 We're also concerned about a third post-COVID
3 priority, which has been to clean up the city, to
4 reduce street litter and overflowing litter baskets.
5 This is so important to the quality of life in every
6 city neighborhood. But we're concerned that on all
7 of these three fronts, the Mayor's preliminary budget
8 falls short of what's needed. And we bet that the
9 Sanitation Department agrees with us on most of these
10 concerns. This appears to be part of the annual
11 budget dance, but it is up to the Council to do its
12 role to make sure that funds for those three
13 initiatives, among others, are restored.

14 First on organics, while the Mayor has proposed
15 the citywide expansion, funding for the 23-24 rollout
16 does not appear there. We understand that's a work
17 in progress. We want to ensure that those funds, all
18 that are necessary or incorporated, and ensure that
19 the important community composting programs that have
20 played such a vital role during this interim period
21 are well funded.

22 Second, with respect to commercial waste zones,
23 implementation of this program is moving forward,
24 which we appreciate but behind schedule. The
25 preliminary budget appears to propose a decrease from

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2 \$6 million to \$5.7 million for that program, and this
3 should be a very high priority year with lots of
4 activity. So we're concerned about that.

5 And then finally on the litter front, funds added
6 by the Council, as has been discussed by
7 Councilmember Bottcher and others, \$22 million last
8 year has had a real positive impact, and the funding
9 for the targeted cleanup program and illegal dumping,
10 which was \$7.5 million in FY 23, also does not appear
11 to be included in the budget at this point. We hope
12 the council will fight for those.

13 Finally, if we've read the documents correctly,
14 there appears to be an \$18 million cut and OTPS for
15 waste prevention, reuse, and recycling, for recycling
16 and sustainability funding. The recycling rate
17 continues to be below expectations, and we hope that
18 that discrepancy is clarified and that these very
19 important programs are fully funded in the coming
20 year. This is a critical year for the department.
21 These big initiatives really can make a lasting
22 generational change difference. And this is the year
23 that we hope the mayor will come across with the
24 extra funds, thanks to the good work of your
25

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2 Committee and the rest of the Council. Thank you for
3 your attention.

4 MS. CHUNG: Thank you Chair Nurse for the
5 opportunity to testify and for your leadership in
6 improving New York City's waste systems and to make
7 it more equitable. My name is Sonya Chung and I'm an
8 Environmental Justice Staff Attorney at New York
9 Lawyers for the Public Interest. We have just a
10 couple of comments on the budget.

11 First, you know, echoing what Eric has spoken
12 about, the commercial waste zones law, we were
13 encouraged to see a couple of additional budgeted
14 staff positions, but concerned to see the \$350,000
15 cut to OTPS. We appreciated the oversight hearing
16 that this committee convened for Local Law 199, and
17 were encouraged then to hear the department state
18 that commercial waste zones was a priority, and just
19 hope and urge the Council and the Department to have
20 a budget that reflects the commitment to an
21 implementation of that law on a timeline that
22 prioritizes environmental justice.

23 And secondly, we were very encouraged to hear the
24 Department speak about full funding for the universal
25 composting in the executive budget, and we just urge

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2 the council to ensure that that full funding and
3 staffing happens to implement that service. We also
4 appreciated the Commissioner's comment about not
5 sending all of the Manhattan compost to North
6 Brooklyn. And, you know, we agree with that and hope
7 that as capacity is sorted out, that that is
8 something that is also prioritized.

9 And somewhat related to that we recommend
10 increases to the budget for the marine and rail
11 transfer stations, specifically to, you know, accept
12 commercial waste, as you mentioned in your questions.
13 And we're concerned to see the budget cuts of staff
14 positions for the marine transfer stations, should
15 that become a possibility, we hope, in this next
16 fiscal year.

17 The connection that I thought of those two is
18 perhaps if there is more capacity for commercial
19 waste in the marine transfer stations, maybe there
20 could be sorted out more capacity for compost that is
21 not trucked then out to environmental justice
22 communities.

23 And lastly, we, you know, on the point of
24 enforcement that came up a lot in the hearing today,
25 we really were encouraged to see the focus on illegal

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2 dumping in EJ communities. And there was a lot of
3 focus on cleanliness. We also asked that there be,
4 you know, and this is, you know, perhaps tangentially
5 budget, but increased enforcement and recycling rules
6 and organic source separation rules, rules that
7 really need to be properly enforced, especially as
8 we're waiting for the implementation of Local Law
9 199. And, yes, I guess in that sense, we were, you
10 know, I know that the positions about enforcement
11 personnel has been talked about, but we were
12 concerned to see the 78 positions being eliminated,
13 and the note about how many of the budgeted positions
14 are vacant.

15 So those, you know, I've submitted written--
16 written testimony as well, but especially with the
17 forecasts of revenue totaling \$5 billion more than
18 predicted, and the announcement of almost \$5 billion
19 surplus this year, we think that is not the time to
20 retreat from our sustainability equity goals. And
21 thank you for the opportunity to testify.

22 MS. DATZ-ROMERO: Yes, thank you and good
23 morning, or good afternoon by now Chair Nurse. And
24 thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is
25 Cristine Datz-Romero and I'm the Executive Director

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2 of the Lower East Side Ecology Center, a community
3 based organization that has offered sustainability
4 programs in New York City since 1987. The Ecology
5 Center has offered composting programs since 1990,
6 and currently runs 20 drop-off locations together
7 with educational programs about composting.

8 And I'd like to say right away here, our drop-off
9 locations are educational tools, because, for
10 example, we run Union Square, Queen Market drop-off,
11 and we interact with hundreds of people there every
12 time we collect food scraps. So I would just point
13 that out, because I think the commissioner is-- it's
14 encouraging to hear that she's ready to rethink the
15 role of what community based composters play vis-a-
16 vis curbside rollout. But at the same time, these
17 drop-off locations, I think, are very important and
18 are an educational tool.

19 We are also developing in partnership with DSNY
20 campus processing facilities in Canarsie. And we are
21 planning for the return of our compost yard to East
22 River Park. We are delighted, obviously to see that
23 the administration has made a commitment to offer
24 universal curbside organics collection by the fall of
25 2024. And we strongly encourage the passing of the

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2 Zero Waste Legislation Package, Intro 274, 75, 280,
3 and 81, which will really enshrine these efforts into
4 law, because I think it is important that we have
5 that as law on our books and not have to stop and go
6 that we otherwise might experience again.

7 We also see community-based composting programs
8 as a cornerstone for the success of the curbside
9 organics program. Community-based programs engage
10 New Yorkers in the compost process from start to
11 finish, allowing people to get their hands dirty, and
12 to see how waste is turned into the resource that
13 greens our city.

14 We urge the council to protect the \$7 million
15 budget that was baselined for the compost project.
16 And we'd also like to add a COLA increase to this
17 budget, because otherwise it is really a budget that
18 shrinks over time.

19 And let me see what my notes here say. Yeah.
20 All right. Yeah. And another comment that I have,
21 just listening to the testimony and to the
22 conversations that you had is the curbside
23 collection, and the tremendous amount of materials
24 that we will-- that we will collect. We are really
25 looking forward to working with the Council to really

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2 develop a plan to do compost infrastructure here in
3 the city, and quite frankly, making finished compost
4 that can green the city is a higher use of organics
5 than a wastewater treatment process.

6 I think they're both tools. But I think we
7 should really think hard and work hard to make as
8 much infrastructure that actually closes this loop
9 right here in the city. Because that, I think, is
10 very meaningful for us overall.

11 And then last, but not least, thank you for
12 asking about e-waste. So the Ecology Center also has
13 a 20 year track record of providing e-waste
14 collection and recycling programs in the city. Over
15 these 20 years, we have diverted over 10 million tons
16 of electronics out of the waste stream. Yes. And
17 while disposing of electronics is illegal in New York
18 state since 2015. Again, we don't really have the
19 adequate infrastructure to make it convenient for
20 people and we also need to educate more people about
21 it, about responsibly disposing of their unwanted
22 electronics. And I hope that the Council can find
23 ways to support more of that important work. Thank
24 you.

25

2 Hi Chair Nurse. Thank you for holding this
3 hearing. My name is Lacey Tauber. I'm representing
4 Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso. I want
5 to speak today on a few topics, commercial waste
6 zones, organics, containerization, and the Brooklyn
7 District 13-15 garage. I'm going to try to summarize
8 a little bit in the interest of time.

9 So the borough president was very disappointed to
10 learn that DSNY intends to postpone implementation of
11 the first commercial waste zone until the end of next
12 year with the full rollout expected to take at least
13 two years after that. So this means that full
14 implementation is not going to happen until at least
15 seven years after we passed this bill in 2019.

16 And so last term, the City Council had passed a
17 budget that provided DSNY with funding for 38 staff
18 specifically dedicated to the program. And yet at
19 the hearing last month, the Commissioner testified
20 that the program was fully funded based on need with
21 fewer staff than that, 20 civilians, three of whom
22 had yet to be hired, 10 uniformed staff and outreach
23 not beginning until Q3 of next year.

24 And we've also heard from multiple sources that
25 these staff are consistently being reassigned to

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2 other projects, such as the Queen's compost rollout.

3 And as much as the BP supports expanding compost
4 collection, it shouldn't come at the expense of
5 commercial waste zones.

6 He disagrees with the Commissioner's assessment
7 that it would be premature to start outreach now.
8 There's already a lot of misinformation out there.

9 And with full staffing dedicated solely to the
10 program, we could begin outreach earlier, potentially
11 speed up the RFP review process and begin
12 implementation sooner.

13 On organics, it is really great to see the
14 expansion, the smart bins curbside is going to make
15 it much easier for New Yorkers to participate.

16 However, the BP remains skeptical that the program is
17 going to be successful unless it is mandatory. And a
18 mandatory program requires deep investment in
19 operations and staffing, especially given that
20 there's a supermajority of the Council on the
21 mandatory bill. We encourage the Council to work
22 with the Admin to make sure that there's sufficient
23 funding for that to be implemented now once the bill
24 is passed, which we hope it will be soon.

25

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2 On containerization, you know, the pilot is
3 happening. That is a great step forward. However,
4 it's disappointing that the residential portion has
5 so far been limited to only one block in Manhattan we
6 have constituents from downtown Brooklyn to Coney
7 Island complaining about unsightly garbage piles and
8 rodents. You know, meanwhile, the city has paid for
9 a study to study something we already know works.
10 They've promised us an RFP, including commercial
11 terms, performance requirements, and specifications,
12 and we hope to see that very soon.

13 And then finally, we testified about this last
14 year but the Brooklyn District 13-15 garage remains
15 among the worst in Sanitation's inventory. And
16 there's no funding in the capital plan for a new
17 garage. There remains a-- a piece of land that had
18 previously been identified for this garage to be
19 developed. It's now for sale on the public market on
20 the Coney Island Creek, and we are once again asking
21 the admin to negotiate with national grid to acquire
22 the site and move forward with the garage
23 development. Thank you so much.

24 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you. I just have a
25 question for Lower East Side Ecology. Has the

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2 Department of Sanitation been in conversations with
3 you about this idea of -- I mean, they kind of
4 alluded at it today -- potentially drawing down or
5 rethink-- the term "rethinking" what the community
6 composter plays has me on alert. And I'm just
7 curious if they've started conversations with you
8 all?

9 MS. DATZ-ROMERO: Yeah. Not really. I think
10 Commissioner Tisch has alluded to it also yesterday
11 in your wonderful conversation at NYU, but we have
12 really not seen any. We have-- there are no talks
13 yet.

14 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Yeah, I think this is
15 something that we'll have to start proactively being
16 organized around.

17 MS. DATZ-ROMERO: Yeah.

18 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Because I do see-- It's very
19 easy to understand the logic without a clear set of
20 demands and a clear set of articulation of how the
21 community drop-off network, and the community
22 composter network has, and will still play a strong
23 roll with the saturation of options that we need to
24 capture everybody. So I just-- I'm flagging that,
25 that I'm worried about that.

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2 And then, yes, I think we're going to just--
3 we'll keep on the mandatory piece and the CWZ. You
4 know, I think there's a lot we can do to, maybe, push
5 harder for faster implementation. So thank you for
6 testifying.

7 ALL PANELISTS: Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you all for being here.
9 Next up in person, we have Alana Nydorf. And then
10 we'll move to online testimony.

11 Whenever you're ready

12 Oh, and just turn on the mic. The little red
13 light.

14 MS. WEISS NYDORF: Hi, my name is Alana Weiss
15 Nydorf, and I'm an employee of the Department of
16 Cultural Affairs. I work as a Donations Coordinator
17 for Materials For The Arts, New York's largest
18 creative reuse facility.

19 On average every year, MFTA diverts over 2
20 million tons of waste away from landfill and
21 redistributes it throughout the community. We are a
22 member-based organization and provide for city public
23 schools, government agencies, nonprofits with arts
24 programming, theaters, community organizations, and
25

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2 social services. The items that we accept would have
3 otherwise been sent to landfill.

4 I support these bills that we're discussing today
5 because I've seen firsthand the ripple effects of
6 prioritizing waste diversion within our community.

7 Last year, our agency started the film waste
8 initiative, diverting hundreds of thousands of square
9 feet of items of props and furniture away from
10 landfill and distributing them throughout our member
11 organizations. There's no words to describe the
12 impact these donations have had on our city. We
13 oversaw the largest in-kind goods donation that the
14 Administration of Children's Services has ever
15 received to date, approximately \$10 million dollars
16 worth of clothing, furniture, and supplies that
17 otherwise would have sat in landfill for hundreds of
18 years. Public schools all across the five boroughs
19 have completely transformed their classrooms and
20 extracurricular programming. Set pieces from
21 Saturday Night Live found a new home at M415 Wadley
22 Secondary School for the Visual and Performing Arts
23 in Harlem. Furniture and decor from the TV show City
24 On A Hill, and a red carpet from Verizon inspired MS
25 244 in the Bronx to throw a Hollywood dance event for

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2 their students. Think Chinatown received gorgeous
3 custom-made Mahjong tables, lacquer furniture, and
4 festive materials from the Marvelous Mrs Maisel Prop
5 Warehouse that transformed their Lunar New Year
6 events and their new office space. And last year, we
7 also coordinated the donation of new office furniture
8 and materials to innumerable city agencies including
9 DSNY, FDNY, DCAS, the Parks Department, and the
10 Comptroller's office.

11 Prioritizing waste diversion and circularity
12 significantly improves our city. Thank you for your
13 time and for the opportunity to testify.

14 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you. And I know our
15 office is coming to you all soon for some chairs and
16 things like that. So...

17 MS. WEISS NYDORF: Oh, yeah. Any-- anything you
18 need, we'll make it happen.

19 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you for testifying.
20 We're going to move to the online space. We're going
21 to start with Ryan Castelia. Then we're going to
22 hear from Matt Schwartz-- Schatz, and then Clare
23 Mifflin. So Ryan, you are up the-- they'll let you
24 know.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

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2 Thank you so much, Chair Nurse, for having us
3 today. My name is Ryan Castalia. I'm the Executive
4 Director of Sure We Can, New York's only nonprofit
5 dedicated to serving canners, who are the folks who
6 collect and redeem bottles and cans others discard.

7 I just want to thank Chair Nurse and the Council
8 for continuing to make a space to discuss the
9 critical issue of expanding New York State's Bottle
10 Bill. It's really heartening that the Council is
11 moving to support the efforts at the state level to
12 expand the bill. And it makes a lot of sense because
13 the Bottle Bill is totally essential to our recycling
14 outcomes and also to thousands of marginalized people
15 across the state.

16 The resolution being voted on tomorrow is a major
17 step. However, as we're gathered here today to
18 discuss the budget of the sanitation department, I
19 want to call on the city to follow through on this
20 important acknowledgement with tangible policy
21 change, and a new approach to supporting the
22 redemption system, which since its inception, and to
23 this day has been New York's most effective tool for
24 recycling.

25

2 Though the Bottle Bill is a state law, and the
3 City cannot act to change the value of the deposit or
4 what containers are included. It can act to make the
5 conditions of those who work within the system
6 better. Rising rents and the cost of operation mean
7 redemption centers are going out of business across
8 the five boroughs. Many individuals and businesses
9 lack an easy way to get their deposits back. This is
10 especially an issue in Manhattan where there are no
11 active redemption centers at all. Reverse vending
12 machines that are prone to malfunction or that have
13 severe limits on volume are not sufficient to address
14 this problem.

15 The City should make direct investments in
16 redemption infrastructure, like redemption centers,
17 that can work in concert with DSNY to ensure the
18 maximum amount of material is meaningfully recycled
19 across the city. And we're more than happy to work
20 with the department to ensure that containers being
21 diverted are being captured in data and recognized as
22 part of the city's overall recycling rate.

23 The Cannerymen, who like New York's strongest work
24 every day in arduous and potentially dangerous
25 conditions to clean up our streets, should be

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2 recognized and supported. Cannery workers face intense
3 stigma on the basis of race, class, backgrounds,
4 spoken language, age, housing situation, or
5 disability. They don't need additional stigma from
6 the institutions of the city they are cleaning.

7 Though it's been some time since candidates were
8 called scavengers or worse by city institutions, the
9 wounds of those attitudes remain. The city should
10 work to heal them by recognizing their work and
11 personal dignity through a Cannery Workers' Bill of Rights,
12 or at the least public statements supporting cannery workers
13 and encouraging New Yorkers to participate in the
14 system.

15 By introducing real systemic support for the
16 redemption system, by providing resources and
17 recognition to the marginalized workers that produce
18 the system's incomparable results, New York City can
19 do what it's always done best: blaze a trail for
20 others to follow, this time into a more sustainable
21 future for us all. Thanks so much for the
22 opportunity to speak today.

23 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you. Next we have Matt
24 Schatz.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

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2 MR. SCHATZ: Hello, everybody. Can everyone hear
3 me?

4 ZOOM COORDINATOR: We can hear you.

5 MR. SCHATZ: Oh, great. Okay, thank you. Thank
6 you for the opportunity to speak. I just wanted to
7 talk a little bit. I'm a constituent in the Lower
8 East Side of Manhattan, and I just wanted to make a
9 few points about what's being said today in general.

10 In essence, we need to push for what those who
11 were here before us, what they knew better than we
12 did: That existence is circular rather than linear
13 and there should be no garbage only regeneration and
14 reuse. In more capitalistic terms we need to push
15 for a circular economy, one in which all that we call
16 garbage is broken down into its component forms to be
17 regenerated into inputs to create new products,
18 instead of languishing in landfills and polluting
19 from incineration.

20 Make no mistake, all this regeneration should
21 occur through processes that use 100% renewable
22 energy sources, so we do the least harm.

23 The Chair was mentioning facility upgrades and
24 new facility construction. Assuming those new
25 buildings will comply with the electric building law,

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2 all other upgrades should be done in the most
3 environmentally friendly capacity to continue to
4 reduce our reliance on fossil fuels. Also, there was
5 a mention of approximately 190 dual-bin sanitation
6 trucks, which seems like a great idea. But are these
7 trucks going to be electric or run on diesel because
8 it is a-- it's a slam dunk to push for an electric
9 fleet and transition the old trucks into biodiesel, a
10 much cleaner option than new diesel or gasoline
11 powered vehicles.

12 I ask you to support two bills, the first which
13 is INT 0274-2022 which establishes a goal of zero
14 waste for New York City by 2030. This seems more
15 aspirational in scope, and details how to get there
16 should be worked, out of which some I will share in a
17 few. The second is INT 0244-2022 which mandates
18 residential curbside organics collection.

19 And I also love what the previous speaker was
20 talking about, about a bigger, better Bottle Bill to
21 give honor to those who are already doing the work of
22 most recyclers in our city.

23 Mayor Adams laid out details over the coming 20
24 months for weekly collection of compostable materials
25 that will become an automatic, guaranteed, free,

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2 year-round service for every single resident across
3 all five boroughs. It appears this is a foregone
4 conclusion. As this is a New York Knicks / Brooklyn
5 Net / New York Liberty layup, I commend the
6 Department of Sanitation and City Council on helping
7 to make this happen. We just need to guarantee that
8 adequate funding is allocated for this recently
9 announced citywide Curbside Composting Program.

10 A brilliant move by the Head of Sanitation to
11 position composting as a service rather than a chore.
12 It just makes sense as 30% of New York City's waste
13 are organics, and this allows us to reuse the food
14 scraps and turn them into fertilizer for our green
15 spaces. It's also imperative that the plastic bags
16 used through the Composting Program should all be
17 able to be processed by the digesters, which should
18 allow-- which should also be powered by green energy.
19 So in essence, the plastic bag should be compostable.

20 In a cost saving move, perhaps since you want to
21 transition to public bins and the outer boroughs
22 curbside composting--

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

24 MR. SCHATZ: --and Manhattan is the last to roll
25 out the curbside program, move the public bins that

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2 will be unused from the boroughs to Manhattan until
3 the curbside program in Manhattan is rolled out.

4 Now what about the other quote/unquote "garbage"?

5 The other 70%. We need to focus on creating zero
6 waste system. And the first bill mentioned crates
7 that idea. But how? Once we collect it, which I
8 totally agree to financially punish with-- with large
9 fines those who litter or dump, it is imperative that
10 we create a system where the other waste gets
11 repurposed and reused. The current electronic
12 recycling program in its overall scope is a great
13 place to look for insert inspiration as a means to
14 reuse and repurpose while keeping harmful chemicals
15 from leaching into the ground. Landfilling with the
16 associated methane gases and lack of bio degradation
17 is not a feasible or an environmentally-friendly
18 solution. And neither is the pollution, heavily
19 incineration option.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

21 MR. SCHATZ: Somebody ignorantly stated earlier,
22 nobody cares about methane.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

24 MR. SCHATZ: But aside from being a tone-deaf
25 comment, as methane is a more toxic--

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2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Hello? Time expired.

3 MR. SCHATZ: --and potent greenhouse gas than
4 CO2, there's also the major gas from factory farms
5 and landfills. And while the Assemblymember may not
6 think people care about it, we should. For the
7 remaining non-organic waste to get to a zero waste
8 solution, possibly we need to partner with a company
9 like TerraCycle and marry a business with a
10 municipality to break down this waste into its
11 component parts. So we can then repurpose it to
12 other useful.

13 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Please wrap up your statement
14 sir.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Sir, time expired.

16 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you.

17 MR. SCHATZ: oh.

18 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: We give space for folks who
19 are here in person to go a little bit longer. But
20 for virtual, we ask that folks stick to the time
21 allotted. Thank you. So please consider your
22 remarks before you come on. Try to get your
23 priority. You don't need to spend so much time
24 introducing yourself. We all know who you are. You
25 all come to our hearings all the time. So just go

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2 ahead and give your feedback and submit your written
3 testimony.

4 Next we're going to come-- we're going to hear
5 from Anna Sacks, then Clare Mifflin, then Justin
6 Green.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

8 MS. SACKS: Hi, my name is Anna Sacks. I'm
9 testifying today on behalf of the Manhattan Solid
10 Waste Advisory Board. So right now we have around an
11 18% recycling rate. 80% of our waste though, goes to
12 a landfill or incinerator, and 41% of what we're
13 exporting to landfills and incinerators consists of
14 organic material.

15 So over the-- since 2015, our disposal costs have
16 increased by 52% from \$315 million to \$478 million,
17 and again 41% of that is organics. We commend the
18 City on rolling out curbside composting but we
19 believe in must be mandatory to ensure that there is
20 a long-lived budgetary commitment to the program.
21 Therefore Intro 244 should be brought to the vote as
22 soon as possible. We also call for the remaining
23 package of-- the remaining Zero Waste package to be
24 passed, which will help move the city towards zero
25 waste.

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2 It's important also that we are redirecting any
3 extra dollars and unsaved back to New York City
4 organics recycling we use an education programs. We
5 also would like to see more funding of education and
6 outreach studies and pilots to be done. We should
7 annually fund optimize education and outreach
8 programs as determined, based off these pilots. We
9 recommend that the city fund enforcement. We noticed
10 that the amount of recycling participation has
11 decreased by half in the last eight years. Oh sorry.
12 The amount spent on the enforcement. So enforcement
13 is the main-- is the main tool we have to motivate
14 those reluctant to participate.

15 The city should prioritize and understand--
16 prioritize understanding and-- and reducing reusing
17 the other category as measured by DSNY, which is 30%
18 of all that is exported.

19 We also asked that we have an increase in funding
20 for the compost project commensurate with the
21 increased cost of living and inflation, to make sure
22 that those employed by it continue to be able to live
23 in the city. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you. Almost a whole
25 minute to spare. Thank you so much. Clare Mifflin.

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2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

3 Hi, I'm Clare Mifflin from the Center of Zero
4 Waste Design. I'm very happy that the administration
5 is working to clean up sidewalks, containerize waste,
6 and expand organics collection citywide. These are
7 the things we advocated for with our Put Waste To
8 Work, and for Vibrant Streetscapes, Green Jobs, and
9 Healthy Neighborhoods Vision Plan. And the last part
10 of that Vision Plan was really looking at how to
11 separate all food waste to regenerate soil citywide.
12 And we'd love to see all private and public green
13 spaces in the city, parks, housing developments, tree
14 pits, street tree pits, and private gardens have
15 those soils regenerated with compost made within the
16 city, because it brings just so many benefits.
17 Compost can hold more than five times its weight in
18 water, and it helps to not only protect the plants
19 from diseases to help them thrive, but then the soil
20 can filter pollutants, hold stormwater, reducing
21 flooding, and making our cities cooler in the summer.

22 And it also-- I wouldn't-- I think it's also
23 important to stress that community composting brings
24 people together -- at those drop off sites, and
25 compost sites, and education programs, community

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2 composting all offer -- and gives people a tangible
3 way to see how they can make a difference. And I
4 know there is limited funding. But I also know that
5 there's a lot of funding for cloudburst projects in
6 the city, projects that better manage stormwater
7 through green infrastructure. Yeah, New York City
8 green infrastructure guidelines don't mention the use
9 of compost, unlike those of some other cities, like
10 Seattle, where in some cases it's required.

11 So I'd love to see the Department of Sanitation
12 work with Parks, DEP, NYCHA, the Council, the Mayor's
13 office, all working to ensure that local compost is
14 used in all the stormwater and cloudburst projects in
15 the city where it can be, and included in green
16 infrastructure guidelines so that designers and
17 landscape architects know how to use it, and so that
18 public projects and agencies are required to procure
19 and use local compost. And I'm hoping that tying it
20 into stormwater management could provide additional
21 funding and support, and help ramp up small-scale
22 composting citywide.

23 And also we do need to work to change zoning for
24 the use of small composting, Parks Department
25 policies, and more, to provide the necessary--

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2 necessary space for small scale composting, and
3 consider it an integral part of sustainable green
4 space maintenance.

5 It'll improve soils reduce rats, litter, reduce
6 the amount of trucks, because we could all take our
7 compost just to the closest place.

8 So we're happy to help in any way we can. We
9 have case studies online on parks like Battery Park
10 City, which does maintain its soils through compost
11 made on site from yard and food waste managed by
12 their horticultural staff.

13 We've extrapolated these park studies to the
14 whole of the city, and we think if 20% of the 47,000
15 acres of landscaped acres-- areas in New York City
16 are regenerated with compost every year, it would
17 require about 500,000 tons of food scraps (about half
18 of the residential food waste in the city) and then
19 we could eliminate trucking of those food scraps, use
20 micro-haulers, taking them to local compost
21 facilities, which would be run by those maintaining
22 local green spaces, increasing in jobs, and greening
23 our city. Thank you so much.

24 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you. Next we have
25 Justin Green, followed by Nora and Darren.

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2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

3 MR. GREEN: Hi, my name is Justin Green. I'm the
4 Executive Director of Big Reuse, a nonprofit fighting
5 climate change through community based Zero Waste
6 initiatives, composting, and outreach. I want to
7 thank Chair Nurse and the City Council for these
8 hearings, and the attention to community composting.
9 I'm really heartened to hear that community
10 composting and FST of funding is still baselined this
11 year at \$7 million. I'm going to take the time to
12 thank and celebrate Commissioner Tisch and DSNY for
13 launching the citywide residential curbside
14 composting collection. It's amazing. It's something
15 we've been all fighting for and working towards,
16 including Chair Nurse, for over a decade.

17 Commissioner Tisch brought her transformative
18 ability from DoITT to DSNY, and has rolled out this
19 program with remarkable speed. So I wanted to
20 celebrate and really be thankful for that.

21 I want to support the comments of Anna Sacks,
22 Clare Mifflin, Christine Datz-Romero, Eric Goldstein,
23 and NYLPI before. I do feel like there's really a
24 place for community composting in even a larger
25 scale, citywide curbside composting collection model.

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2 We engage residents at their communities. We make
3 visible the benefit of composting. They can actively
4 participate in making the compost. Take it back home
5 with them and apply it in front of their houses to
6 their street trees and in their community gardens.
7 And it's one of the really key ways, I think, that
8 curbside composting has gotten so much support, that
9 the smart bins have been so successful is because of
10 the-- all the community composting efforts that have
11 been launched in the city and supported by DSNY in a
12 really visionary move to support community groups in
13 the city that can help, publicize, engage, provide
14 outreach to residents and community members.

15 We've also participated and been really excited
16 to participate in the outreach for curbside
17 composting collection. In Queens, we were part of
18 the door-to-door activity. We knocked on close to
19 30,000 doors, had about 224 events, and spoke to
20 almost 40,000 people in three months to get them
21 participate. We do that in five different languages.
22 And we take the time to tell people how to
23 participate, and how to-- at their doorsteps, how
24 they can participate, how they can use their bins,
25 and how to mitigate rats.

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2 And so in conclusion, just, yeah, I think there
3 is a real space and opportunity to make this sort of
4 most local and ecological--

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

6 MR. GREEN: --through community composting and
7 using the organic waste to green the city. Thanks
8 again for your time and all your efforts.

9 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you. Nora?

10 MS. TJOSSEM: Hi, thank you, first of all Chair
11 Nurse and City Council for holding this space. It's
12 really phenomenal to see compost on the agenda and
13 being rolled out citywide for New York City
14 residents.

15 This is a long time coming in a city whose waste
16 comprises 1/3 organics, which have traditionally
17 ended up in landfills and incinerators in the
18 backyards of frontline EJ communities.

19 My name is Nora Tjossem. I'm the current co-
20 director of BK ROT, a youth-driven, bike-powered
21 composting service in Bushwick dedicated not only to
22 diverting food waste from landfills, but to hiring
23 young people of color in a rapidly gentrifying area.

24 As you know, we've been operating in Brooklyn for
25 almost 10 years. Over the last three years of the

pandemic alone, we've diverted hundreds of tons of organics to create high quality compost that goes directly back to our neighbors in north and central Brooklyn. All of this was done in community gardens and on bikes, fossil-fuel-free, by young people who have fearlessly advocated for environmental justice solutions in the communities where they've grown up. They are not just the future but the here and now of environmental justice and waste equity.

My question today is how the City's forecasted plan and budget will include an uplift rather than eradicate these fierce community composters, who have held down composting in New York City. How will you value and uplift the workers who are out there on bikes and in gardens all year round, putting into practice the power of circularity, and demonstrating the many applications of compost in our city, many of which were mentioned just before this testimony, from growing fresh food, to flood mitigation, to street tree care and soil remediation in public green spaces? Initiatives like mandatory organics recycling will encourage new composters rather than simply shifting those who already compost with community orgs to a municipal system. As the CWZ,

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2 rolls out and more bike lanes appear with the
3 popularization of bike deliveries, so to do
4 opportunities for collaboration with bike-based
5 micro-haulers, who can mitigate traffic congestion
6 and diesel emissions while creating local green jobs.
7 We need to know that with this rollout, we're not
8 simply replacing the inequitable environmental harms
9 from landfilling waste with anaerobic digestion,
10 pollution from adding diesel trucks for collection,
11 and waste export to other frontline communities.

12 There are just so many opportunities to learn
13 from and work with micro-haulers, food scrap drop off
14 managers, and community composters like those we've
15 heard from today who have made compost their bread
16 and butter, not to mention veggies, coffee, and
17 fruits. I hope you will do so as you plan for this
18 new future of waste in New York City. Thank you so
19 much for your time.

20 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you we now have Darren,
21 followed by Vandra, followed by Juan.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

23 MR. KWONG: Hi, good afternoon everyone. My name
24 is Darren Kwong. I'm a resident of Harlem and a
25 member of WE ACT for Environmental Justice and

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2 Indivisible Harlem. I'm here today to support the
3 Zero Waste bill package including intros 274 and 244,
4 both of which thankfully Chair Nurse has championed.

5 Environmentally ensuring the goal of zero waste
6 by 2030 will mean we can stop sending our 14 million
7 tons of trash each year to incinerators or landfills
8 outside of the state. We will actually begin to take
9 ownership of the garbage that we produce and not
10 export our problems elsewhere to other cities, other
11 states, other frontline communities.

12 It'll commit us to composting, returning organic
13 food waste back to the land and not into the
14 atmosphere as methane gas, and it'll push our city to
15 make the responsible disposal of waste like
16 electronics and textiles more accessible.

17 Financially, zero waste can help us save money.
18 Our city currently spends about \$450 million a year
19 to export our trash. Some landfill sites or as far
20 as Ohio or South Carolina. We are paying to pollute.

21 The Independent Budget Office has said that the
22 only way to dramatically reduce New York City's waste
23 disposal volumes and costs would be to roll out a
24 mandatory organics composting program, all the while
25 investing zero waste will create good green union

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2 jobs from sanitation workers, to logistics
3 coordinators, et cetera, and more.

4 Finally, this bill package is simply the right
5 thing to do. Reimagining waste as something we can
6 eliminate, it's also reimagining how we can relate
7 with each other. We will be investing in our futures
8 and the futures of many generations down the line.
9 At the same time, it can mean investing in repairing
10 and reuse economies like mom and pop repair shops
11 that used to be much more available just around the
12 block. Those are the places that can resurrect the
13 15 page document we mistakenly didn't save.

14 So, jokes aside, zero waste can open us up to old
15 opportunities, rebuilding relationships with our
16 neighbors too.

17 Please pass the Zero Waste bill package as soon
18 as possible. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you. Next we'll hear
20 from Vandra.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

22 MS. THORBURN: Hello, do you hear me? Thank you
23 for allowing me to speak. Great to be here and
24 congratulations to all of us composters, the city's
25 electeds and authorities, for moving New York City

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2 closer toward universal compost collection. My name
3 is Vandra. I'm the founder and president of Vokashi,
4 New York's original compost collection service
5 founded in 2009. And since 2011, at my first
6 testimonies of various sanitation hearings, I have
7 advocated for the reallocation of waste export
8 dollars toward community-based composting and
9 recycling initiatives. Unfortunately, that budget
10 line has only increased despite the many composting
11 initiatives that have grown up in the past 10 years,
12 demonstrating the potential for an amazing assortment
13 of compost-based projects just waiting to be
14 expanded, developed, and duplicated, studied and
15 invested in.

16 Instead, the current solution is \$45 million in
17 trucks. Well, with the political support found in
18 the current elected representatives and the passage
19 of the Zero Waste package of bills, I want to
20 respectfully underscore the following issues.

21 Obviously, mandatory separation is really important,
22 and all recyclables should be exempt. But I want to
23 advocate for a two-tiered strategy for the
24 residential organics.

25

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2 First of all: Large buildings, and that's
3 Manhattan. All of the landlords, and the real estate
4 developers, and managers need to invest in educating
5 their tenants and janitorial staff to manage and
6 maintain source-separated waste streams within their
7 buildings. And developers and managers should be
8 educated on all of the varieties of managing compost.
9 They shouldn't have to just wait for-- for sanitation
10 to take off all of the wet compost within the
11 buildings. There are many wonderful machines out
12 there that buildings should be encouraged to invest
13 in. So that's-- and that could be tomorrow.
14 Sanitation should be knocking on the doors and
15 holding all of the meetings that they can with the
16 large building managers and owners.

17 And the second tier is actually for the low-
18 density neighborhoods all around the city, and to
19 really put an investment in a new green service that
20 all of the low density neighborhoods could be
21 serviced by--

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

23 MS. THORBURN: --by a green infrastructure of
24 community-based green team workers. That's where we
25 want to go. Thank you.

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2 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you. Next up, we have
3 Juan Calcutta followed by Alex Stein.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

5 CHAIRPERSON NURSE: They're not on? Okay. Okay.
6 Well, thank you all for participating. Thank you
7 everyone who gets stayed and gave testimony, everyone
8 who joined here, and thank you to the Administration.
9 And of course, all the staff here in the background
10 holding down the tech and the mic. And of course,
11 our committee task force team. Thank you all so
12 much. Please stay tuned for April's hearing, as well
13 as followup conversations in May about the executive
14 budget. Thank you all. This is the end of the
15 hearing.

16 [GAVEL]

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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 March 21, 2023