

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

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June 16, 2011  
Start: 10:07 am  
Recess: 12:20 pm

HELD AT: Committee Room, 14th Floor  
City Hall

B E F O R E:

GALE BREWER  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Inez Dickens  
Erik Dilan  
Lewis Fidler  
Domenic Recchia

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

Kim Kessler  
Food Policy Coordinator  
Mayor's office in the City of New York

Randal Fong  
First Assistant Commissioner of Asset Management  
Department of Citywide Administrative Services, DCAS

Carolyn Grossman  
Director of Governmental Affairs for City Planning

James Subudhi  
Environmental Policy Coordinator  
WE ACT for Environmental Justice

Patricia Poses  
Parent

Maxine Orris  
Primary Care Physician  
Beth Israel Hospital

Petula Jarvis Henley  
Parent

Nadia Johnson  
Just Food

Joel Berg  
Executive Director  
New York City Coalition against Hunger

Ruth Katz  
Stone Barn Center for Food and Agriculture

Colby Ackerman  
Urban Design Lab  
Earth Institute, Columbia University

Shanti Persaud  
Food Policy Co-chair  
Food Systems Network NYC

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

Eric Belsford  
Farming Concrete

Mark Eiseman  
Senior Attorney and Director  
New York Urban Program for NRDC

Carolyn Zezima  
Chief Consultant  
NYC Foodscape

Fern Gale Estrow, RN  
Founder  
FEG Food and Nutrition Team

Sabrina Terry  
Up Rows

Paula Siegel  
Member  
Brooklyn Food Coalition

Anya Post Deva  
Founder  
Vertically Integrated Farms

Christopher Toole  
Farmer  
Vertically Integrated Farms

Daniel Bowman Simon  
Board Member  
New York City Community Garden Coalition

Shirley Chi  
WE ACT

Noah Goodman  
Community Gardener

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2 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Good morning  
3 and Gale Brewer, New York City Council Member for  
4 the West Side of Manhattan and Chair of  
5 Governmental Operations, and I'm honored to have  
6 with us today Council Member Inez Dickens, Council  
7 Member Lou Fidler, other members will stop in, but  
8 some of them have conflicting council meetings in  
9 terms of the busy committee schedule, so they will  
10 not be able to be here.

11 So, today we're talking about two  
12 pieces of legislation were dated to Speaker  
13 Quinn's Food Works Initiative proposed 248 A  
14 sponsored by Council Member Fidler would require  
15 the Department of Citywide Administrative  
16 Services, known as DCAS, to maintain a sortable  
17 and searchable database of all city owned and  
18 leased properties. This database will be free and  
19 open to the public.

20 The Food Metric Act sponsored by  
21 Council Member Inez Dickens would require the  
22 Mayor's Office of Long-Term Planning and  
23 Sustainability to publish an annual report on a  
24 comprehensive set of metrics related to New York  
25 City's food system.

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2                   You may know that in November 2010  
3 Speaker Quinn released Food Works a detailed  
4 assessment of New York City's food system. As  
5 detailed in the Food Works report our food system  
6 faces a number of critical challenges. And this  
7 is just a few, there are many. High energy usage  
8 in ways throughout all phases of the system, and  
9 aging farming population, although there are many  
10 younger one's also, loss of farmland to  
11 development and degradation, that's for sure, and  
12 obesity epidemic and households that suffer from  
13 hunger, that is certainly true.

14                   Here in New York City, these  
15 challenges are especially acute. Over two decades  
16 New York City's population is expected to expand  
17 by nearly one million new residents, putting  
18 additional strain on our food system. Food Works  
19 aims to address in these challenges. The plan  
20 includes 59 policy proposals spanning all five  
21 phases of the food system. The proposals focus on  
22 combating hunger and obesity, preserving regional  
23 farming and local food manufacturing, and  
24 decreasing wasted energy usage.

25                   You should know that some of us, I

1  
2 know many of you because you're in this community  
3 have joined CSAs but there is now one in City Hall  
4 and we're starting in June and we're all going to  
5 be part of the City Hall CSA. The poor farmer, I  
6 feel sorry for him.

7 [laughter]

8 Legislative proposals. In January,  
9 I introduced legislation that would require the  
10 city to develop new procurement guidelines to  
11 encourage city agencies to increase their food  
12 purchases from regional farmers, and to report on  
13 those efforts.

14 The bills being heard today are two  
15 other pieces of legislation that related and seek  
16 to promote the Food Works policy proposal and  
17 goals. I think some of you are here for Intro 452  
18 which is the bill that we introduced and I think  
19 you're aware of it. So, that is not on today's  
20 hearing, but it is still pending and hopefully  
21 we'll move at the same time these other two bills  
22 are moving.

23 Today we will hear from  
24 representatives of the administration about its  
25 stance on the bills, as well as what is already

1  
2 doing and plans to do to promote a Food System  
3 that improves health, economic, and environmental  
4 outcomes for all New Yorkers.

5 We will also hear from  
6 representatives of organizations and other members  
7 of the public who advocates for the betterment of  
8 our food system about how these two pieces of  
9 legislation will be helpful to their efforts. And  
10 I want to thank you all for joining us here today.  
11 It just shows the depths of interest in this  
12 topic.

13 We will now here from the sponsors  
14 of today's bill. We'll start with Council Member  
15 Inez Dickens because she was here first even  
16 before I was and then Council Member Fidler.  
17 Council Member Inez Dickens.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Thank you.  
19 Thank you so much Chair Brewer and good morning to  
20 all. And thank you for coming down here today to  
21 hear about the various Intros that are on. I am  
22 pleased to sponsor this piece of legislation which  
23 furthers the importance goals of Speaker Quinn's  
24 Food Works Initiative.

25 This bill establishes metrics at

1  
2 each phase of the food system and requires the  
3 Mayor's Office of Long-Term Planning and  
4 Sustainability to prepare and submit to the Mayor  
5 and the City Council and annual report containing  
6 information on each of these metrics.

7           The information contained in this  
8 report will fill in gaps in the basic available  
9 data about New York City's food system. The  
10 metrics will provide data on important questions  
11 such as where our city purchased food comes from,  
12 they extent to which local processors are  
13 benefiting from city programs, the reach and  
14 quality of the city's agency meal programs, the  
15 city's progress toward fighting obesity, and  
16 eliminating hunger, and the environmental  
17 sustainability of the Hunts Point Markets.

18           With this information in hand,  
19 policymakers advocates, and members of the public  
20 will be able to better assess the current state of  
21 affairs of New York City's food system, monitor  
22 all changes, or most of them, a measure the  
23 effectiveness of current efforts, and develop  
24 future initiatives. I look forward to this  
25 morning's hearings and the testimony that we will



1  
2 hear. A specially want to thank the members of  
3 the public who have joined us today, who care so  
4 deeply about improving New York City's food  
5 system. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you.  
7 Council Member Fidler.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Thank you,  
9 good morning to everybody thank you Chairwoman  
10 Brewer. [pause] Hello, okay.

11 Down here at City Hall right now,  
12 it's all about the budget, I mean morning noon and  
13 night were working on what is undoubtedly going to  
14 be a nightmarish budget. So, to have the  
15 opportunity to do something that has no  
16 significant fiscal impact and yet makes sense, can  
17 be in improvements something is critical as New  
18 York City's food system is real appealing thing to  
19 do in the middle of all that.

20 The legislation that I propose  
21 requires the city to create a single database for  
22 74 different factors about all property under the  
23 city's control. And while it's a key element a  
24 speaker's food policy, it does much more than that  
25 to suggest that it's only useful for that one

1  
2 purpose would be really, you know, a  
3 misunderstanding. The fact of the matter is that,  
4 you know, I've had the privilege here of reading  
5 that the payer testimony that you're about to  
6 hear. Five different agencies have jurisdiction  
7 over some of the different information you can  
8 find some of this on the PLUTO system, some of  
9 place else.

10                   You know, one of the problems with  
11 government was that in the right hand on the left  
12 and don't speak to each other and don't know what  
13 they're doing. And to have all of that  
14 information easily accessible, easily sortable in  
15 one location. I don't understand how they can  
16 ever be a bad thing. It doesn't cost us a dime,  
17 maybe a small initial investment, but it's a list  
18 that will maintain itself and the first time  
19 somebody accesses that list and finds a place to  
20 put a community garden, finds a place that maybe  
21 this city is got a parking garage on that can be  
22 used for something, you know, much more  
23 significant it will more than pay for itself.

24                   So, I am looking forward to the  
25 testimony and hopefully the passing of both of

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these pieces of legislation. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you very much. I just before we ask the administration to come up I think there are three of you whoever is coming here from the administration to testify, feel free to go to the witness stand. I believe, is it Carolyn Grossman, from City Planning, Randal Fong from a DCAS, and Kim Kessler from the Deputy Mayor's Office. So go ahead few all going to come separately are you all going to come together?

[off mic comment]

You going to ask a question? Why don't you join them though and ask your questions.

I want to thank Seth Grossman who is counsel to the committee. Tim Matusov of who is the policy analyst, Will Cargrove [phonetic] from our office and Reanna Colsec [phonetic] also from our office, for all the work that they put into this hearing. Thank you. You may precede whomever would like to begin.

The button is on the back, It is kind of, yup you got it.

KIM KESSLER: Good morning. Yes. Okay. Good morning Chair Brewer and members of

1  
2 the committee I'm Governmental Operations. Thank  
3 you for inviting me to testify today. I'm Kim  
4 Kessler the Food Policy Coordinator for the City  
5 of New York. I will be offering testimony on the  
6 pre-considered build in relation to establishing  
7 reporting requirements regarding the production,  
8 processing, distribution, and consumption of food  
9 in and for the city.

10 I would like to begin by thanking  
11 Speaker Quinn, Chair Brewer, and the City Council  
12 for their leadership on food and nutrition and the  
13 city. As you know much of the city successful  
14 food policy is the result of the collaboration  
15 between the council and the administration.  
16 Together we responded to the need for better  
17 retail access and underserved communities by  
18 creating Green Carts and the Fresh Program.

19 Last week, the Speaker and the  
20 administration together announced incentives for  
21 food manufacturing jobs and the city. The speaker  
22 has helped to kept farmers markets gets with food  
23 stamp terminals so that HRA administer food stamps  
24 can be used to purchase healthy food. And of  
25 course, the Council and the administration work

1  
2 together to create the position of Food Policy  
3 Coordinator that I now hold.

4           These are just a few of this  
5 success is that we have achieved are working  
6 together, and we are certain with the Speaker's  
7 leadership whom Food Works we will achieve much  
8 more in the next two and a half years.

9           All of these achievements have been  
10 possible due to rigorous analysis of city needs of  
11 the programs that we employed to meet those needs.  
12 We have worked hard to ensure that the programs do  
13 not just sound promising, but also achieve their  
14 desire end. We monitor our programs to makes the  
15 appropriate changes and course corrections as  
16 necessary. This is consistent with the  
17 administration's overall commitment to data driven  
18 policy and government accountability.

19           We therefore agree with the  
20 underlying principle of this pre-considered bill,  
21 that evaluation, information, and feedback are  
22 important gaging the success of our programs and  
23 assessing where the greatest needs are.

24           While the administration would like  
25 to work with the Council to develop a workable

1 reporting requirements we also cautioned members  
2 of the committee that some of the provisions of  
3 this bill are not at all feasible as currently  
4 drafted some of the proposed metrics involves  
5 working with complex information set or require  
6 information from third parties including small  
7 businesses who themselves do not track the  
8 information requested. Examples of these include,  
9 the provision relating to the country and state of  
10 origin of DOE's from products is, the provision  
11 relating to the amount of grocery store space per  
12 capita, and the date of request it from Hunts  
13 Point wholesale market vendors who would likely  
14 view the requested information as proprietary and  
15 confidential.  
16

17 Although we recognize the  
18 importance of data were also mindful of  
19 significant costs that will be associated with  
20 collecting certain types of information  
21 particularly information that must be requested of  
22 vendors and third parties as well as the  
23 administrative burdens for already strained  
24 agencies.

25 In some of the administration's

1  
2 current data collection and m-. In some cases the  
3 administration current data collection and  
4 monitoring already overlap with the data requested  
5 in the propose metrics legislation. For instance,  
6 the Department of Health is conducting an  
7 evaluation of both the Green Carts program and  
8 Healthy Bodegas program to ensure that they are  
9 helping to address issues of healthy food access  
10 and underserved communities. The information that  
11 result with these programs and the proposed  
12 legislation in large part corresponds to  
13 information the DOH and H already tracks and can  
14 be reported to the Council.

15 In other cases, however, the  
16 proposed legislation requests information that is  
17 not currently captured by agencies and will be  
18 difficult or impossible to obtain. For example,  
19 the draft legislation request the number and value  
20 of city contracts awarded to food processors  
21 located in the city. However, the Financial  
22 Management System, FMS, which is the city's  
23 database of record for contracts does not  
24 categorize businesses by industry and therefore  
25 does not specified whether a processor, per say,

1  
2 sells food to the city. The city buys food  
3 products both processed and on processed from  
4 whoever bids for those contracts that there could  
5 be a process that but it can also be a  
6 distributor, a broker, or producer; thus, city  
7 agencies are not capable of identifying those  
8 contracts awarded to food processors.

9 We also urge the Council to  
10 consider a more extended time table in advance of  
11 the first reporting deadline. We are concerned  
12 that a diet line of December 1, 2011 does not  
13 allow sufficient time or preparation for a  
14 complete a lit initial report. Some agencies may  
15 be able to report on the requested metrics quite  
16 quickly, but other metrics will require additional  
17 analysis before we can determine whether or not  
18 the information is available and in what form it  
19 may be obtained. At allowing adequate time before  
20 implementation of any metrics legislation will  
21 ensure that the administration can report  
22 accurate, meaningful data to inform policy  
23 discussion and analysis.

24 These are just a few examples of  
25 why we must work together to ensure that the



1  
2 metric mandated by the bill achieve the goal of  
3 informing sound and responsible policy. By  
4 adhering to this objective we feel that there is a  
5 great deal of room for the administration and city  
6 council to work together. And we look forward to  
7 doing so.

8 I would like to thank you for the  
9 opportunity to discuss the city's ongoing efforts  
10 to improve the health of New Yorkers and I'm  
11 available to answer any questions that you may  
12 have.

13 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you. Go  
14 ahead, do you also want to testify sir? Go ahead  
15 and they last questions at the end. Thank you.

16 RANDAL FONG: Thank you, good  
17 morning Chair Brewer and members of the  
18 Governmental Operations Committee. I am Randal  
19 Fong the First Assistant Commissioner of Asset  
20 Management for the Department of Citywide  
21 Administrative Services. On behalf of  
22 Commissioner Edna Wells Handy, I would like to  
23 thank you for the opportunity to discuss proposed  
24 Intro 248 A in relation to establishing a  
25 reporting requirements for the Department of

1  
2 Citywide Administrative Services on the status of  
3 city owned real property. While the  
4 administration supports a spirit of the  
5 legislation as it relates to governmental  
6 transparency and information sharing, we do not  
7 support the bill as drafted.

8 DCAS maintains the Integrated  
9 Property Information System, IPIS, is that a  
10 collection of data points regarding 15,000  
11 properties owned or used by the city. Some of the  
12 data is collected and maintained by DCAS; however,  
13 the majority of the data that describe property  
14 characteristics is imported from other city  
15 agencies that collect the data and are responsible  
16 for maintaining the integrity of the data field.

17 The data and IPIS is already  
18 publicly available as part of the NYC DataMine,  
19 the Gazetteer of City Property, and other sources.  
20 Over 30 IPIS fields are transmitted to the NYC  
21 DataMine as one and DCAS's data sets that are  
22 updated annually. Moreover, the Gazetteer of City  
23 Property is produced in conjunction would the city  
24 planning every other year. The Gazetteer is an  
25 important data source that specific case any

1  
2 property and uses. Last year the Gazetteer was  
3 produced in an electronic format which was also  
4 linked to the DCAS's IPIS DataMine files to  
5 prevent duplication of the data.

6           The city owned real property  
7 portfolio is not increasing. In the early 1990s,  
8 the city ceased taking properties to tax  
9 foreclosure. Instead, the city now sells tax  
10 liens through the Department of Finance, so new  
11 properties are not entering the city's real estate  
12 portfolio. Properties in the portfolio have been  
13 primarily used by HPD for new affordable housing,  
14 EDC for new economic development projects, and  
15 city agencies for park land expansion or siting  
16 other city facilities.

17           The city's real estate portfolio  
18 has been mainly assigned a different agencies to  
19 need legal mandates an agency missions, such as  
20 improving parks, siting schools, and providing  
21 infrastructure needs. The remaining surplus city  
22 owned properties are generally very small, have an  
23 irregular shape or configuration, and are not to  
24 developable or useful for urban agriculture or  
25 economic development sites.

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2 Proposed Intro number 248 A would  
3 require DCAS to report on 74 data fields regarding  
4 all city owned and leased to reel property.

5 Private property leased by the city serve specific  
6 the agency needs. The city leases private sites  
7 generally for office uses and in many cases the  
8 number of the floors are least within a single an  
9 office building. There are non-office sites that  
10 the city leases as well, such as parking lots, and  
11 senior centers. Least terms cover the city's use  
12 of private properties which restricts the  
13 permitted use of the property to particular agency  
14 purposes. Any modification in relation to the  
15 city's use of private property requires landlord  
16 consent.

17 As properties leased by the city  
18 for agency uses are privately controlled, such  
19 properties are not suitable for conversions for  
20 use as community recreational space or food  
21 production sites. Accordingly, leased properties  
22 should not be considered as potential sites for  
23 purposes outside of serving specific city agency  
24 needs.

25 Of the 74 data fields included in

1  
2 the legislation DCAS is uniquely responsible for  
3 only four. The remaining fields require  
4 information that is collected and maintained by  
5 other city agencies. Most of these data fields  
6 are collected by the Department of Finance and are  
7 currently available on their website. These data  
8 fields are also available through BCP as part of  
9 the Primaries Land Use Tax Output, PLUTO, data  
10 copulation. Some additional fields required data  
11 produced by DCP, the Office of Environmental  
12 Remediation, and the Economic Development  
13 Corporation.

14 As DCAS collects only a small  
15 subset of the 74 required fields DCAS would only  
16 be responsible for compiling the rest in the data  
17 feels maintained by other city agencies pursuant  
18 to the legislation, but cannot be accountable for  
19 ensuring the integrity of data produced by other  
20 city agencies. Each agency is responsible for  
21 their own data management depending on its agency  
22 needs, staff resources, and technological  
23 capacity.

24 DCAS has no authority over other  
25 agencies to certify that their data produced is

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2 produced in transmitted. Should an agency decided  
3 to revise the type or scope of data it collects  
4 DCAS cannot be held liable if such a modification  
5 by an agency results in an inability to a report  
6 on one or more of the required data fields in the  
7 bill. Furthermore the data fields provided in the  
8 proposed Intro number 248 A are already largely  
9 accessible to the public on the NYC DataMine.  
10 Each agency insures the accuracy and transmission  
11 of the datasets on NYC DataMine and these are  
12 updated on a regular basis.

13 For the data required in the  
14 legislation to be useful to the public in an  
15 effort to identify potential sites for uses such  
16 as community gardens or food production, the  
17 fields provided in the bill are not all relevant  
18 or hopeful for such purpose. Data fields such  
19 assessed value or condominium number will not  
20 support the evaluation of property for community  
21 or food production uses. City property  
22 characteristics such a size and zoning are indeed  
23 relevant, but please note that such data is  
24 already available online.

25 Thank you again for this

1  
2 opportunity to testify about proposed Intro number  
3 248 A. I am pleased to answer any questions that  
4 you may have.

5 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: So, Council  
6 Members you all have questions? Council Member  
7 Dickens and then Council Member Fidler.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Thank you  
9 Madame Chair and good morning to all of you, and  
10 thank you for coming down and Ms. Kessler it's  
11 good to meet you. This is the first time I've had  
12 the opportunity. Good to meet you.

13 KIM KESSLER: Good to meet you as  
14 well.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Thank you  
16 for your testimony. Now, and I'm sure you do but  
17 do you agree that it's important for the public to  
18 have better information regarding where food is  
19 purchased and served particularly by the say the  
20 DOE?

21 KIM KESSLER: I, we are as I  
22 indicated in the testimony the administration is  
23 certainly supporting and recognized the need for  
24 information and accountability. I think, we have  
25 to recognize that detailed information comes at a

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cost and this is a cost-constrained environment.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Agreed  
there is a cost associated with most things that  
we have to do.

So in furtherance of that would you  
please define and reading directly from your  
testimony, "a proprietary and confidential to  
Hunts Point wholesale markets vendors." I quote  
from that as it relates to that country in state  
of origin of DOE's products particularly in light  
of the fact that in the past, often after a  
negative health incident food is recalled a tad  
late, so after the horse got out of the barn and  
ran somebody over, so, you know, I question  
because then we turn around and there's a cost  
associated with having to recall after someone has  
been injured due to that food. So, would you  
please define for that that second part of that  
first question?

KIM KESSLER: Sure, that's actually  
referring, that part of my testimony is actually  
responsive to multiple of the proposed metrics and  
the draft legislation so the reference to the  
requests for information there was a number of



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2 metrics that were directed at information from  
3 Hunts Point offenders and that's what I'm  
4 referring to in terms of you have to get, you have  
5 to actually obtain information from the vendor who  
6 may or may not be have that confirmation right now  
7 and may regard it as proprietary and important to  
8 their own competition, so that's that, you know, I  
9 can discuss that no little more detail, but that's  
10 the reference to Hunts Point.

11 In connection to your question  
12 about DOE, I think that the traceability is an  
13 issue for food safety but as I think we, as you  
14 reference, sometimes where there is a safety  
15 concern with food there does take some time to  
16 track down where the information came from, and  
17 what the legislation is proposing is having on  
18 hand are reporting on a regular basis where the  
19 components of all food served by school food come  
20 from and my understanding is that would be quite  
21 difficult for DOE to do. It were required  
22 dedication of resources and commitment from,  
23 finding out whether those vendors are available to  
24 provide that granular level of detail, and while  
25 data may be available all over the country level

1  
2 getting in on the state level on a regular basis  
3 would be much more challenging.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: All right.  
5 And my last question is does the administration  
6 track internally any information that relating to  
7 where food is purchased and served by DOE, where  
8 it comes from, and if so what types of food is  
9 this information collected for?

10 KIM KESSLER: DOE conducted and  
11 survey of its vendors, a one-time survey where it  
12 reached out to with vendors. to get that  
13 information about where food items were from, and  
14 that contributed to some basic knowledge of how  
15 much of their food is locally and regionally  
16 sourced, which I think is on the order of around  
17 \$20 million of food each year. That was a one-  
18 time thing, and it was self-reporting by vendors.  
19 So in terms of an ongoing reporting obligation,  
20 there would be concerns about the accuracy of that  
21 data in making sure their protections in place an  
22 additional resources committed to find out, you  
23 know, to make sure that we have the right data we  
24 were getting.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: All right.

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2 Well thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Council Member Fidler, and we have the Council Member Dominic Fidler--

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COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: That would be Recchia

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CHAIRPERSON BREWER: For a while here he's the Chair of Finance because he's kind of, Recchia.

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COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: You forgot to add the junior.

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CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Council Member Recchia junior and Fidler especially Recchia are involved in the budget. Fidler.

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COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Thank you Chairwoman Brewer. You know, I love DCAS. I really do we got out of the cemetery business together this week.

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RANDAL FONG: Yes thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: It is a wonderful thing. You know, maybe some of the time you with spending trying to maintain Canarsie Cemetery, maybe we can work on this a little bit.

25

I have to tell you that your

1  
2 testimony struck me as a little bit like, you  
3 know, "I don't wanna. Why? 'Cause I don't but  
4 wanna." You know, I still haven't heard why it's  
5 not a good thing to have all of this data in one  
6 place in one source so searchable for residents in  
7 the most transparent possible the most accessible  
8 manner are possible.

9                   So, let me just ask you this  
10 because you mentioned a number of different  
11 systems in your testimony. You mentioned PLUTO  
12 you mentioned Gazetteer, you mentioned DataMine  
13 any one of those three systems have all of this  
14 information on it right now?

15                   RANDAL FONG: [to another] Do you  
16 know the answer?

17                   CAROLYN GROSSMAN: Good morning.  
18 Carolyn Grossman Director of Governmental Affairs  
19 for City Planning. There is no one of the  
20 systems, PLUTO data, which is a city planning  
21 product is fairly extensive of all of the land use  
22 categories. It probably has the largest number of  
23 fields regarding all city, all properties within  
24 the city. The Gazetteer also has a number of  
25 these categories which is the number one document

1  
2 that city planning and DCAS produce jointly up  
3 covering city owned property.

4           The reason that I would say that is  
5 not one document that covers all of these is the  
6 number of the fields have administrative  
7 categories that refer only to that document. For  
8 instance, some of the fields are refer to indexing  
9 with and the Gazetteer, so those categories would  
10 not be within PLUTO because there are self-  
11 reverential administrative data. Also, there a  
12 couple of data points that are not DCP, DCAS Data  
13 such as the ODR data and the DEC data which are  
14 produced as single entities. They are not  
15 included in either data set the City Planning or  
16 DCAS currently maintain.

17           COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: So the  
18 short answer would be-

19           CAROLYN GROSSMAN: [interposing]  
20 The short answer is no.

21           COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: So now let  
22 me ask the opposite of that is all the data in the  
23 74 categories available on one of the systems or  
24 another?

25           CAROLYN GROSSMAN: The only one

1  
2 that I can't, I believe that almost extensively  
3 all of them are currently publicly available. The  
4 EDC data I'm not entirely certain.

5 RANDAL FONG: I'm not sure that the  
6 EDC data or OER data or the DEP data there's some  
7 fields there.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: But most of  
9 it is accessible to the public somewhere, somehow,  
10 right?

11 CAROLYN GROSSMAN: Almost entirely  
12 it is currently publicly searchable on the NYC  
13 DataMine.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: And  
15 there's, forgetting that there's a limiting the  
16 topics to food, there is no public policy a reason  
17 not to make the categories that aren't available  
18 someplace available to the public, right? There  
19 is no national security issue here are anything,  
20 right? For no reason why any of the 74 categories  
21 the public shouldn't be aware of any reason,  
22 right?

23 CAROLYN GROSSMAN: I am reluctant  
24 to speak for other agencies and the production of  
25 their data.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Speak for  
3 yourself.

4 CAROLYN GROSSMAN: Certainly for  
5 City Planning in the data that we maintain, which,  
6 we uniquely generate we think it's important to  
7 put that up on the DataMine. I think the policy  
8 of the administration has been for each department  
9 whatever data it produces to make a determination  
10 whether it's publicly appropriate of which follows  
11 is this certainly has been determined to be  
12 publicly appropriate and for each department to  
13 continue to maintain that and a public way.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: And so,  
15 and, obviously we shared this bill with the  
16 administration and I think if the EDC they would  
17 have come forward and said, "No you can't do that.  
18 It's horrible thing is going to hurt the city," so  
19 we haven't heard that either.

20 So I'm just kind of wondering how  
21 difficult this would be, how expensive it would be  
22 for somebody at DCAS to accumulate all of this  
23 data and put it in one place. And I just, you  
24 know, on a time when we are struggling, I mean  
25 really, really struggling to find ways to run

1  
2 government more efficiently, why anyone would  
3 object to that. That's all I got. I guess I'm  
4 done.

5 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: A couple of  
6 questions. One is, I just want to know how VENDEX  
7 can be helpful. Obviously working with a lot of  
8 different contractors is there any way that VENDEX  
9 could help in terms of Council Member Inez  
10 Dickens' bill. In other words, all of these city  
11 vendors, where there are city vendors that are  
12 food processors they have contract with the city,  
13 is that something that is included and counting in  
14 terms of what she's looking for is there some way  
15 that VENDEX can be helpful? Maybe you looked at  
16 that.

17 KIM KESSLER: I actually do not  
18 know specifically. I can't speak to that  
19 specifically and we're happy to follow up with  
20 more detailed information, but I did find out, you  
21 know, from reaching out to agencies that there  
22 were just concerns about the abilities of FMS to  
23 be responsive to that metric.

24 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Okay. The  
25 other question I have is, I know you mentioned and



1  
2 will we talked to the Council Member, but in terms  
3 of what soon and metrics, I'm familiar mostly to  
4 be honest with you with the Department of  
5 Education, because we spend a lot of time in my  
6 office with Reanna looking at, but what other  
7 metrics in the other agencies specifically do you  
8 track? You've got Aging. You've got the Economic  
9 Development. You've got homeless agencies.  
10 You've got Corrections, et cetera. So, how you go  
11 about tracking that and obviously what we're  
12 looking for is, you know, some kind of  
13 comprehensive opportunity for people to understand  
14 where the food is coming from. We know what we're  
15 trying to get to, but had you do that tracking  
16 now?

17 KIM KESSLER: So, this is all in  
18 regard to sourcing of food sourcing and  
19 purchasing. So that is not something that is  
20 currently tracked which is one of the challenges  
21 of the proposed metric and it's certainly not in a  
22 centralized way. And while some of these agencies  
23 like the DOE have made an effort to track that  
24 information, it is not something that's happened  
25 at an administration wide level.

1  
2                   And, there's a number of challenges  
3 associated with it. I think fact it came up when  
4 the other legislation that you referenced around -  
5 - created in the system were illuminated during  
6 that testimony and some of the issues are in the  
7 way that products are batched and out contracts  
8 don't necessarily correspond to the way that we  
9 are asking that information to be tracked now or  
10 requires a lot of coordination with vendors. I  
11 mean, we don't know how accessible all the  
12 information is.

13                   CHAIRPERSON BREWER: So, how do you  
14 even know if the meals and the food are actually  
15 nutritious and has the components that would make  
16 sense for anybody thinking about all they do I and  
17 owns that we are listed as part of the  
18 administration's goals and the speakers goals,  
19 nutrition, et cetera.

20                   KIM KESSLER: So—

21                   CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [interposing]  
22 If you don't track it but how would you know all  
23 of that?

24                   KIM KESSLER: What certainly is  
25 purchased and what is served is tracked but in

1  
2 terms of the geographical sourcing information  
3 around it that is not necessarily attract and a  
4 systematic way that I'm aware of.

5 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Okay.

6 KIM KESSLER: But, you know, the  
7 agency food standards are in place and we do no  
8 one is served at city agencies generally.

9 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: The question I  
10 have up to, again, trying to encourage were part  
11 of our Food Works is the issue and part of what I  
12 think Council Member Fidler is also getting at is  
13 more gardens, more farmers markets, and so on.  
14 How do you collect data about those efforts,  
15 obviously, that's also part of local sourcing,  
16 local agriculture?

17 KIM KESSLER: I am sorry, was it  
18 more famer's markets and com-

19 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [interposing]  
20 Yes, farmers markets and gardens.

21 KIM KESSLER: Right. So, community  
22 gardens the proposed metric regarding community  
23 gardens we're asking for really the Department of  
24 Parks, Green Thumb in particular information  
25 regarding community gardens on city owned property

1  
2 is something that Green Thumb does monitor and  
3 that is currently tracked and can be publicized, I  
4 think Green Thumb issued quite and comprehensive  
5 report on their community garden program, and the  
6 amount of gardens that we're doing engaged in  
7 vegetable production maybe with in the last 18  
8 months are so, and so that information is  
9 available.

10 In terms of famer's markets, that  
11 is something also where we have a number of  
12 farmers markets operators in the city, so Grow NYC  
13 runs the majority or at least about half of the  
14 farmers markets in the city, and the Department of  
15 Health because of its Health Box and Stella  
16 farmers markets programs that operate in farmers  
17 markets particularly in underserved communities,  
18 and the DPHO specifically, they make a very  
19 concerted effort to gather the information about  
20 where farmers markets are and when they change  
21 from year to year trying to find out where they  
22 are but that's a--. That is an informal  
23 information gathering process that there is not a  
24 centralized place were all in the different  
25 operators in this city are being tracked for

1  
2 monitor and I think that AG New York State, New  
3 York State department of agriculture markets also  
4 does an informal, and I don't want to speak for  
5 them, it is my understanding that they may do an  
6 informal, kind of, assessment of the number of  
7 farmers markets in the city, but.

8 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: But that gets  
9 to both bills, I've really we're trying to do the  
10 database and we are trying to have a metric so,  
11 I'm just saying that to accomplish this. How  
12 would you be-. I assume you are trying to  
13 accomplish both goals of this bill even though  
14 there is lots of issues from your perspective, but  
15 generally how do you think you're going to  
16 increase local food source saying across these  
17 agencies even without the bills because I assume  
18 that is what we want to do and how do you think  
19 about collecting these efforts even if these bills  
20 weren't to pass. What are you visions and goals  
21 for doing that, because without that information  
22 is hard to accomplish some of the agendas  
23 everybody and this room has been working so hard  
24 on. And you too.

25 KIM KESSLER: And I do think that

1  
2 the administration is collecting a lot of  
3 information that is relevant to these goals, it is  
4 not always in the ways that is being articulated  
5 in the legislation and the example. I think with  
6 the Department of Health and the farmers markets  
7 is an example of that of course we want to Foster,  
8 you know increase the number of farmers markets in  
9 this city and work with the ones particularly in  
10 underserved communities as a whole, you know one of  
11 the major goals that the Health Box program is to  
12 both demonstrate the viability of farmers markets  
13 in underserved communities and attract farmers to  
14 those neighborhoods and help to build those urban/  
15 rural linkages, and because we have looked over  
16 time and a number of farmers markets and the city,  
17 and we do know that there has been and in  
18 tremendous increase in them, particularly in those  
19 neighborhoods.

20 So, I do think that the  
21 administration has captured a lot of that  
22 information, but there is concern about an ongoing  
23 rigid reporting requirement that doesn't  
24 necessarily overlap with the information in the  
25 way that is being collected now and that may have

1  
2 significant costs and burdens for the agencies  
3 associated with it, but as the overall feel our  
4 testimony I hope and is clear that we want to work  
5 with the Council, you know, reasonable ways to  
6 make that information available and overall  
7 tracking is a goal of ours.

8 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Okay.

9 Obviously, the nutritional guidelines that makes  
10 sense are what we are also looking for. So, how  
11 do you track now that if those agencies are  
12 meeting those guidelines, and you mentioned that  
13 is something that is being done, but how do you  
14 get that data and how do you track that?

15 KIM KESSLER: With regard to the  
16 agency food standards for city meals and snacks.

17 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Yup.

18 KIM KESSLER: So, our office works  
19 very closely with the Department of Health on  
20 tracking and helping agencies to move towards  
21 compliance with the agency food standards. And  
22 the way with that is done is through progress  
23 report system that we ask, the agencies are each  
24 charged with implementing the guidelines with in  
25 their own agency and we're there to offer

1  
2 assistance in any way that we can and also  
3 technical assistance from the Department of Health  
4 nutritionists, who work on this project. So, we  
5 reach out, we work with agencies, they have a  
6 progress report that they fell out and submit to  
7 our office and the department of health every-

8 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [interposing]

9 How often do they do a proper support?

10 KIM KESSLER: Every six months.

11 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Okay.

12 KIM KESSLER: That report is  
13 designed in a way to try and balance the interests  
14 of collecting information with concerned about not  
15 unduly burdening the agencies which are working  
16 very hard to provide the service that these  
17 agencies standards are really focused on which is  
18 providing healthy meals to their customers. And  
19 so with that in mind the report asks for the  
20 programs that are in compliance with the  
21 difference nutritional requirements of the  
22 agencies.

23 So it goes requirement by  
24 requirement and ask the number of programs that  
25 are in compliance so it's not meal by me all our



1 overall, for an overall report for each program.  
2 And part of that thinking behind that is because  
3 they can then see where there are areas of  
4 difficulty. If it's a particular issue with  
5 sodium or a particular issue of sourcing, you  
6 know, fruit without syrup, then our Department of  
7 Health sometimes is where our vendors of products  
8 that could be suitable and they can specify kind  
9 of technical assistance.  
10

11 Because of the recognition of the  
12 concern about agency of resources a lot of that  
13 data is self-reported and many cases the agencies  
14 gives that survey to their programs that they  
15 contract with or the programs give it to caterers  
16 are other vendors that who are providing meals who  
17 self-report to data. So, we also recognize that  
18 it may not be 100 percent comprehensive and may  
19 not always be 100 percent accurate, that we want  
20 to balance the interests of moving towards  
21 complete compliance with agency to standards  
22 without unduly burdening these already constrained  
23 agencies.

24 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: I know I  
25 should know this, but I spent hours and hours and

1  
2 hours with DOE of the issue of food. Do they  
3 report to us part of this every six months also?

4 KIM KESSLER: They do.

5 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: And they  
6 report, they really do report to you? Yes?

7 KIM KESSLER: Yes, they really do.  
8 They do they work very closely with us on the  
9 agency's standards, and we get a lot of feedback  
10 from them, and the agency standards are also an  
11 ongoing process they need to be revised every  
12 three years if not sooner, and we are in the  
13 process of getting feedback from agencies.

14 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: I  
15 understanding you had a Meeting with Wellness in  
16 the Schools soon.

17 KIM KESSLER: Yes.

18 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: And I listened  
19 very carefully to every saying that Mr. Telepan  
20 and tells you.

21 KIM KESSLER: I look forward to it.

22 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: He's my hero.

23 KIM KESSLER: I look forward to  
24 meeting him, myself.

25 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Is this

1  
2 information public? All these reports that you  
3 mentioned every six months?

4 KIM KESSLER: We currently use them  
5 as an internal reporting system, and they are not  
6 currently public.

7 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: That is  
8 something you might think about making public in  
9 some form?

10 KIM KESSLER: I think it's  
11 something that, I think that's something that we  
12 certainly can consider and talk about and there  
13 may be some reasons, we may have concerns about  
14 that for some reason, but we want to consider that  
15 it discuss further.

16 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: I would like  
17 if you put that on your internal agenda. Council  
18 Member Inez Dickens.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Thank you  
20 Madame Chair. And again thank you Miss Kessler  
21 for your testimony, and I am glad to hear that you  
22 are getting, you know, some of the information  
23 that we are talking about, because for DOE as a  
24 quasi-city agency, it's awful that our children in  
25 this great city consume we need to have an

1  
2 accounting for added inventories for, so I agree  
3 with my Chair about making some of these reports,  
4 and this is something that should be discussed,  
5 made public, so I thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you very  
7 much. I like to think and I know something about  
8 technology, but I don't really. I know what the  
9 Gazetteer is I know. I use DataMine, and city  
10 map. I don't know PLUTO at all because it costs  
11 \$250, so I don't know it.

12 My question is can you explain to  
13 us what PLUTO has in it because even though it may  
14 include everything a cost money, so it's not  
15 really available to the general public.

16 So, just to pick up on Council  
17 Member Fidler's question is the information PLUTO  
18 also available elsewhere so that it is, kind of,  
19 public as I would call it because \$250 is not in  
20 my opinion public.

21 CAROLYN GROSSMAN: I would like to  
22 believe that PLUTO is available to city agencies  
23 including the City Council at no charge.

24 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Okay.

25 CAROLYN GROSSMAN: However—

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: I am looking  
3 online in I don't see it for free, but go ahead.

4 CAROLYN GROSSMAN: That is correct  
5 because what PLUTO is, is a data compilation, so  
6 all of the sources of data within, PLUTO takes the  
7 data from other agencies most, I would say, from  
8 vast majority of which is the Department of  
9 Finance data that is available and other forms and  
10 publicly available on the DataMine and on the  
11 Department of Finance web site.

12 What it does it takes that data and  
13 it merges it wears DCP Data so land use and zoning  
14 information and disseminates it to, for a fee, to  
15 mostly planners and developers and the zoning  
16 community to be used for planning purposes. So,  
17 it allows them to geo code that data, you know, to  
18 map it more easily than they would otherwise do  
19 from a spreadsheet, and to you have that  
20 compilation of zoning and financial and property  
21 data merged together.

22 That is something that city  
23 planning started doing at a time when the  
24 Department of Finance was last technologically  
25 adept and at this point they are a lot more

1  
2 different types of, and in fact a city planning  
3 started disseminating that at a time where Finance  
4 was not making its records public, so Finance has  
5 come a long way in terms of releasing that data  
6 such that most PLUTO data is available in other  
7 forms but not as and merge document.

8 That's something that we do it as  
9 revenue producing for the Department and that is  
10 how we support its creation is through the  
11 revenues that we charge for it. It is fairly time  
12 intensive to do this type of data refinement and  
13 merging for us. I think that that answers--.

14 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Okay. Council  
15 Member Fidler.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Just to be  
17 clear PLUTO has a lot more of in city owned  
18 properties in it, right?

19 CAROLYN GROSSMAN: Yes. PLUTO data  
20 is the entire city's property data and land use  
21 data merged.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: And the, if  
23 I say, I wanted to define all the city control  
24 property in Community Board 18. I couldn't press  
25 a button and PLUTO would be able to tell you that?

1  
2 Right? I'd have to look at every parcel to find  
3 that the, right?

4 CAROLYN GROSSMAN: That's correct I  
5 think the way that that would work is to take the  
6 Gazetteer sort of universe and-

7 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER:  
8 [interposing] And then manually go through it and  
9 look up each property, and just I'm thankful I  
10 didn't hear you suggests this but just to be clear  
11 is well the planning community would still use  
12 PLUTO if we created this separate database of city  
13 owned property. We would lose money because, you  
14 know planners could get it from my bills system  
15 instead of PLUTO, right?

16 CAROLYN GROSSMAN: No, we think  
17 that this city owned property is a small enough  
18 universe that it's not likely to peel away a  
19 significant amount of our business. Again most of  
20 this information is publicly available in various  
21 forms or another, so I will mention that it's a  
22 licensed products, so for this currently the way  
23 this bill is written to use PLUTO for its purposes  
24 would be in violation of that license, but we also  
25 think that something that could be easily

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addressed.

COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: I'm glad.

I agree with that. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: The other question I have and is when I look at the Gazetteer it's got the listing of all the properties and then how does one, if one wanted to accomplish with Council Member Fidler was trying to accomplish, which is in Community Board 18 in Brooklyn this it is parking lot could be converted to a garden or they say is a building that is leased, et cetera. The Gazetteer doesn't have that.

How does one take—, what he is trying to accomplish is these buildings, these plots can be used for, in cases of here today thinking about sustainable food, could be a used for something that is possible to accomplish the goals that we're all trying to accomplish here which is something other than a parking lot or other than a blank space that could be for a community garden as an example. Could you answer some of those questions because when I look at the DataMine I mean, I do spend a little time on it



1  
2 not as much time as you do ,so I'm not as familiar  
3 with it, but certainly the Gazetteer does not have  
4 that information.

5 So, how do we accomplish what he is  
6 trying to accomplish which is a very laudable goal  
7 with what is available here? Or maybe we can't.

8 RANDAL FONG: Let me see explain  
9 part of the, at least the Gazetteer in the  
10 DataMine from the DCAS perspective. Because the  
11 Gazetteer is sorted by Community Board and list  
12 different kinds of properties, different uses for  
13 properties it does categorize the types of  
14 properties, so if you're looking for a specific,  
15 say vacant lot for a garden there are sections in  
16 the Gazetteer that you wouldn't look at the  
17 residential properties or the firehouses, so the  
18 properties without any specific use our already  
19 separated out so that anyone who wanted to look at  
20 this specific Community Board, the properties and  
21 that board can look at the Gazetteer.

22 It is already is sorted in a fairly  
23 useful way and we use this all the time whenever  
24 community groups or elected officials ask us a  
25 about the portfolio, so it's already in a sense

1  
2 sorted, easy to use, and available, and when we  
3 turn to the DataMine, the IPIS database and the  
4 DataMine, it is essentially a large spreadsheet,  
5 so if anyone wanted to sort it by various  
6 characteristics, property attributes, location,  
7 size, use of the property, it is all there. It  
8 can easily be sorted and used and printed out and  
9 mapped if you have the various map programs.

10 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: I know that  
11 people here I'm sure from Plan NYC and they're  
12 doing a great job do they work with few and with  
13 this data base accomplish that kind of urban  
14 gardening or urban opportunities that would in  
15 fact give some sustainable production to the  
16 community. In other words, is there a constant  
17 review of the property so that it can be used for  
18 some of the sourcing that people here are trying  
19 to accomplish?

20 RANDAL FONG: We'll certainly the  
21 IPIS data is available constantly, so whether it's  
22 used to look for certain type of uses are  
23 different sites development opportunities is  
24 already available, so however agencies or public  
25 sector schools want to use that data is available

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so they could just start manipulating and sorting that data, so it's already in one location.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Okay, I think all we're saying is that if we had a bill such as Council Member Fidler's it would just make it easier for the public but I understand. Any other comments.

KIM KESSLER: I would just note that on one of the milestones in Plan NYC is to undertake an assessment of municipal land that is available and suitable for urban agriculture, and I think that is one of the planned initiatives that will be undertaken by the administration.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: All right. Thank you very much we can send many more questions but if could see their many people who would like to testify it otherwise it would be here all day. Thank you all very much.

KIM KESSLER: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: We're going to come up from WE ACT that would be the first group there are several people here from WE ACT that would like to join us. WE ACT ask please join us because, we had time constraints could you join in

1  
2 a sink it started whoever would like to start. Go  
3 right ahead.

4 JAMES SUBUDHI: Good morning  
5 Council of my name is James Subudhi. I am the  
6 Environmental Policy Coordinator and WE ACT for  
7 Environmental Justice. We focus on getting good  
8 fit in schools. I want to thank you for giving me  
9 the opportunity to deliver testimony on the Food  
10 Metrics Act.

11 I'm here to speak in support of it  
12 and specifically the reporting section as it  
13 relates to the Department of Education and other  
14 city agencies on whether food comes from, the  
15 manufacturers are, and who the distributors are.

16 During the last year, I've  
17 conducted research on a New York city's school  
18 food system and supply chain and this research has  
19 led to the discovery that the DOE has approved  
20 vendors that obtain foods that are grown and  
21 manufactured in countries outside of the United  
22 States.

23 While this makes sense for products  
24 that are not grown in the U.S. like pineapples and  
25 platanos, it absolutely no sense from products

1  
2 like peaches, pears, collard greens, in corn which  
3 are grown in New York State and in the U.S. but  
4 are sourced from China.

5           According to the DOE from 2009 to  
6 2012, they will spend roughly an estimated \$95  
7 million on direct food manufacturers and  
8 distributor contracts. I estimate that  
9 approximately 70% of this money that the DOE  
10 spends on food contracts directly with  
11 manufacturers and distributors are contracts are  
12 companies that they have put companies they have  
13 outside in New York City and New York State.

14           Clearly New York State and NYC  
15 manufacturers are losing out on our own tax  
16 dollars spent on school food. Why not use the  
17 city's food dollars chain supports local  
18 manufacturing economy and to support the New York  
19 State agricultural economy to create jobs and  
20 increased the amount of fresh foods that are  
21 coming into our schools. Why participate with  
22 China will we can buy it from our own backyard.

23           To reduce the potential burden that  
24 can come with aggregating this information,  
25 collecting information about where the food comes

1  
2 from and who the manufacturers are I suggest that  
3 the DOE annually release on their website and all  
4 cafeterias and to the City Council Speaker to  
5 release their food product labels which I have  
6 here.

7                   These food product labels are  
8 something that the Department of Education already  
9 collects that you can see on their website and  
10 that's how I obtain these, and on them many of  
11 them indicate when they're coming from out of  
12 state, I'm sorry from out of the country that the  
13 country of origin itself. So you can see that the  
14 diced pears and slice peaches and the collard  
15 greens are coming from China. So, this is  
16 something that they already collect.

17                   In addition to about the product  
18 label also gets to the point of releasing the  
19 ingredients that are in their foods, and the  
20 fullest of nutrients that come along with that  
21 including shown that, including sugar, calories  
22 from fat, and trans fat.

23                   So, I believe that the product  
24 labels are really a great source for the DOE to  
25 release because it gets to the question from where

1  
2 the food is coming from outside the United States  
3 and often list the manufacturer and it also lists  
4 the ingredients and the full list of nutrients  
5 that are there and this is something that they  
6 already collect, so there's really not much of an  
7 administrative burden that is there. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you.

9 Next.

10 PATRICIA POSES: Good morning my  
11 name is Patricia Poses. I'm from Ecuador I have  
12 lived in New York City for 34 years. I'm going to  
13 talk in Spanish to represent all the concerns  
14 Hispanics and Latino parents.

15 [Spanish language]

16 If the Council Members have any  
17 questions I'm available to answer.

18 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Does anybody  
19 else want to speak? Does anybody else? On  
20 translate what you said in a few months it's  
21 because you, kind of, translated into English so  
22 go ahead to somebody else want to translate? Or  
23 to speak?

24 DR. MAXINE ORRIS: Yes. Good  
25 morning thank you very much Council first hearing

1  
2 us and thank you Gale Brewer. My name is Dr.  
3 Maxine Orris as I am a Beth Israel Hospital  
4 primary care physician working in Williamsburg and  
5 Bed-Stuy Brooklyn. And I'm a mother of all the  
6 wonderful eight year old second grader at Center  
7 Park East 2 here to support our right to know what  
8 is in our children's food.

9           It took only 10 minutes a drop-off  
10 to collect over 100 signatures of parents  
11 supporting you. Supporting you, demanding that  
12 the vendors disclose all of the ingredients and  
13 the breakfast and lunched that our money buys. We  
14 need to know.

15           The petition is now online for  
16 everyone to sign it at [change.org](http://change.org). As a  
17 physician, I know we need to stop any of our  
18 children getting hurt or tragic deaths because  
19 they eat something that they're allergic to  
20 because we don't know what's in a food. We need  
21 to know. We need to be respectful to all cultures  
22 and religions that have restrictions on food. We  
23 need to know. All labels of the foods in our  
24 lunches and breakfasts need to be public so that  
25 we can be sure that they contain the nutrients our



1  
2 children need and nothing that hurts them. We  
3 need to know. I am passionate about this. My  
4 child eats this food every day. It scares me that  
5 we don't know. What are they hiding? We really  
6 need to know.

7 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you  
8 Maxine. Next. Nice to see you.

9 PETULA JAVIS HENLEY: [off mic]  
10 Nice to see you.

11 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: I last saw her  
12 about 30 years ago just so you know.

13 [laughter]

14 PETULA JAVIS HENLEY: Hello good  
15 morning everyone thank you for giving me this  
16 opportunity to speak. My name is Petula Javis  
17 Henley. I'm a parent of a third grader who is  
18 nine years old and she is actually here today  
19 witnessing this event because I wanted to know how  
20 important this is that we know as parents want our  
21 children are eating.

22 I am also an educator, high school  
23 in East Harlem. It really concerns me as to the  
24 performance of our children and I think part of  
25 the reason and if not mostly so is because of

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their atrocious diet.

So, she started off with 171 in East Harlem in first grade I always part of logs to ensure that she was eating properly; however, the cafeteria food seemed more enticing. It was sweeter. It was saltier so eventually I gave in. Yes, I should not have and I allowed her to have schools with large and eventually she became gassy almost immediately she became very gassy very uncomfortable.

And I noticed on vacation during the summer, spring break, one to break that we had no digestive issues. So, what is said in the school food that was causing had to be uncomfortable. We have taught her recently to read labels to know what the salt content is what the vitamin A content is the sugar content in drinks and snacks. Looking for snacks that have nothing that she cannot pronounce in it and we've encouraged her to do that and I have resorted to repacking lunch once again for the reasons that I have seen her perform better when she's eating my food. I'm not that's the sole reason, but I think there's a strong correlation to what the children

1  
2 eating habits, how they are performing, and how  
3 healthy they are.

4 She has not been sick recently, had  
5 not had to go on antibiotics or anything like that  
6 same she's been eating home cooked meals. And I  
7 think that is truly important in that we know what  
8 our children are eating because if they're not  
9 eating then they cannot perform and then the next  
10 20 years who will be Miss Dickens' and Miss  
11 Brewer's replacement if we do not have healthy  
12 well educated happy children. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you very  
14 much. I just want to thank Patricia Poses. I  
15 just do a quick summary of what she said. She is  
16 from Ecuador. She's been here 34 years she has  
17 wonderful children in third grade and in sixth  
18 grade and higher concern started when she found  
19 out that her kids were eating foods made in other  
20 countries and as a parent was not able to find out  
21 the ingredients. She has diabetes and the  
22 pediatrician told her that her boys were a little  
23 overweight so she shopped differently by reading  
24 products labels to see what the children were  
25 eating at home but when she tried to find out what

1  
2 the foods at school for breakfast and lunch, she  
3 was not able to get the ingredients or where they  
4 were from.

5 She mentioned that 100% whole wheat  
6 sandwich bread served in school is not really  
7 wheat bread it is white wheat was caramel color  
8 and contains high fructose corn syrup. She wanted  
9 to know what they were eating in school because  
10 she doesn't want them to get diabetes or high  
11 blood pressure for anything else as a parent. And  
12 she believes that the Department of Education  
13 should disclose ingredients of the foods and when  
14 it comes from, so parents can see it and she's one  
15 of thousands that have same concern she talks a  
16 lot of parents in her school in the school of her  
17 children.

18 And she is concerned about the  
19 health of every child in New York City because  
20 they are the future of this country, and she  
21 thanks the City Council for all of their efforts.  
22 Thank you very much. Go ahead.

23 PATRICIA POSES: Could I just add  
24 one thing? The bad thing about this is that we  
25 wish all the parents are able to come, but a lot

1  
2 of them they have to work. I wish in the future  
3 we did have something like this in the evenings  
4 for all working parents if you can consider this.

5 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: It is hard  
6 that the City Council. We've had this request of  
7 on every topic imaginable and I think it's hard  
8 but we do, do sometimes do go into the field and  
9 have hearings and certainly on food that something  
10 to think about.

11 PATRICIA POSES: Okay, thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you all  
13 very much. They can Maxine, nice to see you.

14 The next panel is Nadia Johnson,  
15 Joel Berg, Ruth Katz, and Colby Ackerman  
16 [phonetic]. Are you all here?

17 We're letting people speak with 3  
18 minutes would be great, max. Whenever you would  
19 like to start feel free to go ahead.

20 NADIA JOHNSON: Thank you. Good  
21 morning Council. My name is Nadia Johnson with  
22 Just Food. I'm here to give testimony about the  
23 proposed Intro 248 A legislation.

24 Just Food supports the legislation  
25 calling for the establishment of a free of charge

1  
2 searchable database of city owned property on the  
3 city's web site and particularly supports the call  
4 for the database to include information regarding,  
5 quote "whether the property is suitable for urban  
6 agriculture" unquote.

7           Since 1995, Just Food has worked  
8 with communities to make fresh food locally grown  
9 food accessible throughout New York City. We've  
10 helped to connect farmers to over 100 CSAs in the  
11 city, 45 food pantries, and 18 community run  
12 markets in our network. Our city farms program in  
13 particular has worked to improve the amount of  
14 food grown sold and distributed by New York City  
15 community gardeners and urban farmers to their  
16 neighborhoods.

17           Time and again we hear from urban  
18 farmers and gardeners new and experienced young  
19 and old about the challenges of finding land to  
20 grow food in their communities. A free searchable  
21 database to help urban growers find in transform  
22 underutilized land into places where communities  
23 can grow food would help New Yorkers of every  
24 neighborhood secure affordable, delicious, and  
25 nutritious source of fresh produce for themselves,

1  
2 their families, and even their neighbors. It  
3 would provide more places where food is grown,  
4 marketed, and distributed to communities through  
5 farmers' markets, farm stands, and donations to  
6 food pantries and soup kitchens. And where  
7 cooking demonstrations and nutritional information  
8 can help transform food related health epidemics  
9 that many of our communities are facing. It would  
10 also help address the city's greening climate and  
11 an environmental challenges.

12 We applaud the City Council Speaker  
13 for including this proposal in the Food Works  
14 report which calls for the creation of a new  
15 searchable database of all city owned and leased  
16 properties that would provide useful information  
17 for stakeholders seeking urban agricultural land  
18 as well as seeking new space for other food uses.  
19 We are also encouraged by the Mayor's recently  
20 updated Plan NYC 2030 which commits to, quote "  
21 take a full inventory of municipal land and  
22 identify properties that could be suitable for  
23 urban agriculture" unquote.

24 Adoption of this legislation would  
25 help provide urban growers with an invaluable tool

1  
2 in our collective efforts for a green healthy in  
3 New York City. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you very  
5 much. Who's next.

6 JOEL BERG: I am.

7 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Mr. Berg

8 JOEL BERG: I am Joel Byrd  
9 Executive Director of the New York City Coalition  
10 against Hunger. Thank you as always, Chairwoman  
11 Brewer for your incredible leadership on this and  
12 many other issues. Thank you Council Members  
13 Brewer-, I'm sorry Dickens and Fidler for  
14 introducing this important legislation.

15 We strongly support both of them.  
16 In my written testimony I submitted, I have given  
17 a lot of technical suggestions for further  
18 improving the legislation, so I want to talk a few  
19 minutes more thematically about this bill.

20 I do one of thanks the Mayor's  
21 Office for incredible progress we've made together  
22 on Green Carts on increasing purchase a patient in  
23 summer meals and the number of important areas.

24 I just want to have one quote if  
25 "You can't measure, you can't management." Who



1  
2 said that 1,000 or 2,000 time only are Bloomberg.  
3 So I must say that I am truly astonished that the  
4 bill that would improve measurement to improve  
5 management is not something they are not embracing  
6 with open arms. I must say on this and so many  
7 other issues it is really is data on our terms by  
8 them for them.

9                   And this is a broader issue then  
10 just hunger and food related issues. This is  
11 really about what kind of city are we going to  
12 have. Are we going to have an open and  
13 transparent government where we as citizens can  
14 relate to the actual facts on the ground? They  
15 use data when they want to if they want to try to  
16 embarrass teachers through data out context about  
17 test scores who won classroom deadline to fight in  
18 courts to make that available but we've heard  
19 information that we already collect not only are  
20 they to hemming and hawing about releasing it to  
21 the public there hemming and hawing about  
22 releasing it to the City Council.

23                   You know state open records law are  
24 clear that in was there are specific proprietary  
25 or legal issues, something that is supposed to be

1  
2 secret, the presumption of the law is that it's  
3 supposed to be public and the fact that we don't  
4 have this in the city is incredible. And it is  
5 also be incredible to me that a man who made his  
6 reputation and livelihood by collecting thousands  
7 and thousands and thousands of micro bits of data  
8 available in real time decades ago on anyone who  
9 had enough money to pay for it says basic things  
10 like where we get our food from we can't report.  
11 It is like listen to Scotty testify, "Oh, we can't  
12 do with captain. The ship of state will crack  
13 up." It really is incredible it was pretty  
14 incredible to me. I know I'm using a lot of  
15 adjectives here, incredible.

16 Federal law requires, federal law  
17 requires that the city know whether it's food is  
18 being purchased in the United States, so this idea  
19 that we heard that they may not know I hope  
20 someone could ask a follow-up question, are they  
21 admitting they are violating federal law or was  
22 that just a misstatement.

23 Let me be very specific about how  
24 this information can be useful and let me say some  
25 of the status of data on the web site for New York

1  
2 City Coalition against Hunger for years. We have  
3 on our web site and we have mapped out every  
4 farmers' market in the city, every community  
5 garden that we know of in the city, every food  
6 stamps office. We had a lovely a lousy, until  
7 this year a budget before all these years about a  
8 million dollars with a handful of staff is we can  
9 do it may I respectfully suggest that the city  
10 that pays our tax dollars pay thousands of  
11 employees to collect data and thousands of  
12 employees to analyze data can use a handful of  
13 them to release the data that we have paid for to  
14 the federal public, to the public.

15 Let me be very specific, some of  
16 you know what I've worked for the Clinton  
17 administration eight years, and I moved here 10  
18 years ago the big a shock to me moving from  
19 federal to city was how untransparent the city  
20 government was even as bad as the federal  
21 government is you can usually find most general  
22 information.

23 Let me talk about how this impacts  
24 specific things before the City Council. Every  
25 year the Council pushes back on proposed cuts to

1  
2 the Emergency Food Assistance program. We are  
3 thrilled that this is the first time in the last  
4 10 years that there has not been a proposed cut,  
5 now, there is a always a debate on how much the  
6 city is actually spending, so I propose clarified  
7 language so we would have to actually know not  
8 just how much the Council is allocating but how  
9 much the city is spending and where that money is  
10 going to.

11 I've visited a great program is  
12 Bedford Stuyvesant the Bed-Stuy Campaign against  
13 Hunger. There was an empty lot next to them they  
14 already have an award winning community garden,  
15 and they want to turn that lot next to them into a  
16 food producing community garden, and they couldn't  
17 find out about it.

18 You know the first amendment to the  
19 United States Constitution is it just the first  
20 amendment by coincidence the founders understood  
21 that knowledge is power the information is power.  
22 Is getting this data overnight going to transform  
23 this democracy and the food related issues? No.  
24 But if we've got a debate for years that we  
25 shouldn't be wasting money on fingerprinting

1  
2 because it doesn't deter fraud and common sense  
3 provision in this bill to find out once and for  
4 all how much it is costing taxpayers on whether  
5 they'd ever found a single piece of fraud.

6 For a mayor dedicated to data,  
7 data, data, I would hope that we could find some  
8 consensus is that collecting this data in one  
9 place that the vast majority of which are tax  
10 dollars already paid and count and collect can the  
11 release it to the public that paid for it. Thank  
12 you.

13 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: As always  
14 think you Joel Berg. Who's next?

15 RUTH KATZ: I my name is Ruth Katz  
16 I'm with Stone Barn Center for Food and  
17 Agriculture, and I lived in Brooklyn for over 20  
18 years. Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

19 As a member of the Food Works  
20 Committee I helped push for this legislation as  
21 they hear the story of a young man in Bushwick  
22 with Brooklyn who was trying to access to city  
23 owned property to start a community garden. I  
24 meet Andrew Krasner [phonetic] in March 2010, he  
25 had been trying diligently for about a year to

1  
2 figure out who was responsible for leasing the  
3 NYPD blocked at 143 Stockholm Street in Bushwick,  
4 Brooklyn. He had been in contact with the  
5 Department of Citywide Administrative Services,  
6 the Legal Department of the NYPD, the Office of  
7 Paul Brown, and Green Thumb. They all ended up  
8 recommending that he write directly to  
9 Commissioner Kelly figuring that if he sent his  
10 inquiry to the top it would trickle down to where  
11 it belongs.

12 In his inquiries to lease the 5,000  
13 square foot lot and true cost to construct a  
14 sustainable urban garden. He wanted to work with  
15 the community located in the corridor between  
16 Myrtle and Knickerbocker Avenue to gain access to  
17 the friendly green space. They had plans for  
18 cleaning, soil remediation, creating garden space  
19 and performance space and propose to use the  
20 gardens to bring healthy nutritious food to the  
21 community, educate children, and provide  
22 beneficial physical and mental well-being to the  
23 residents surrounding the garden. Andrew also  
24 collected over 100 signatures from neighbors near  
25 the garden demonstrating enthusiastic support for

1  
2 the project. Signatures include the signature of  
3 City Council Member Diane Reyna who represents  
4 that district.

5 Finally after one and a half years  
6 of trying to find out who to contact and how to  
7 lease the land, Andrew heard back from the NYPD.  
8 His request was declined as the Department was  
9 anticipating a future need for the lot, note that  
10 had sat vacant for at least 20 years. Surely the  
11 city would like to supports the positive efforts  
12 of people like Andrew and his Bushwick Brooklyn  
13 neighbors.

14 It is too bad that the request was  
15 declined but it's also a shame that they had to go  
16 through a year and a half bureaucracy and in order  
17 to find that out. In Andrew's case found out it  
18 was NYPD property eventually via the Department of  
19 Buildings but NYPD didn't seem to have a record of  
20 it themselves. The issues are both which agency  
21 has authority over the property and who to contact  
22 regarding releasing it in a timely manner.

23 So I would like to propose that we  
24 include in this initiative 248 A, a provision for  
25 transparency regarding who to contact at each

1  
2 agency regarding leasing the property control by  
3 that agency and their contact information as well.

4 If this system is set in place in  
5 should make life easier for the NYPD and other  
6 agencies as well as for community members. Thank  
7 you.

8 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you very  
9 much. Who's next?

10 COLBY ACKERMAN: Hi, my name is  
11 Colby Ackerman I work at the Urban Design Lab at  
12 the Earth Institute which is part of Columbia  
13 University.

14 On behalf of the Urban Design Lab,  
15 I would like to thank the council for holding this  
16 hearing. We are a nonprofit research and design  
17 organization that works to find innovative  
18 solutions to sustainable development issues facing  
19 New York in other cities including issues related  
20 to climate change adaptation, greening  
21 infrastructure, and food systems, and almost all  
22 of our research involves data on land use, and a  
23 property in a city including all the resources  
24 that we talked about already.

25 There are several reasons that we



1  
2 support a proposal number 248 A. So first of all  
3 the department of city planning and DCAS. And I  
4 have to say here in my experience with other City  
5 New York City does a fairly good job of collecting  
6 information on land use not such a great job of  
7 publicizing it, even although a lot of it is  
8 public, the data can be inaccurate or out of date  
9 in our experience many lots are misclassified  
10 multiple uses of individual lots are not reflected  
11 in the data and it's very difficult to obtain  
12 comprehensive information on things like  
13 transportation and utility easements and of course  
14 it's not easy to search.

15                   So secondly, it is particularly  
16 important the detailed information on real  
17 property owned by city agencies be collected and  
18 regularly updated because many of the critical  
19 social and environmental issues that the city is  
20 facing will require forward thinking a land use  
21 policies and city agencies have a direct impact on  
22 of lands under their jurisdiction which represents  
23 the greatest opportunity for implementing such  
24 policies.

25                   That a more comprehensive database

1  
2 on the status of city owned property it will be  
3 increasingly difficult to accurately assess  
4 existing resources and the potential impacts of  
5 long-term land use planning decisions.

6 And finally and by far the most  
7 important provision in this bill is section three  
8 stipulating that the information be made available  
9 and easily accessible to the public in a  
10 searchable database. City own land is a public  
11 resource and access to information on its use  
12 shouldn't be limited to academics, governmental  
13 agencies, and private sector interests. At the  
14 UDL we use GIS Software in conjunction with map  
15 PLUTO and other tools to evaluate property uses  
16 and characteristics of the software is already  
17 mentioned is expensive and requires specialized  
18 skills to use.

19 Our license agreements prohibit us  
20 from sharing some of the results of our work with  
21 members of the public from whom we very often  
22 request, received requests for more information.  
23 Civic organizations, community groups, and  
24 individual members of affected communities often  
25 have important insight on local conditions and

1  
2 local needs, by ensuring they have better access  
3 to information about where city owned property is  
4 located and how does currently use this initiative  
5 consist of communities create strategy for  
6 underutilized land and encourage greater purchase  
7 public participation in the critical decisions  
8 effecting land use and development in our city.  
9 Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you very  
11 much Council Member Fidler?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: I actually  
13 don't have any questions I just want to apologize  
14 to those who haven't testified I have to jump out  
15 for a budget meeting, but I want to thank you all  
16 for coming and thank you for your support, and to  
17 Mr. Berg, just live long and prosper. And Council  
18 Member Dickens.

19 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Council Member  
20 do you have a question?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: I just ask  
22 Council Member Fidler to add to that because in  
23 leadership we have to have an emergency meeting  
24 and we're forced to leave.

25 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: All right.

1  
2 Thank you very much. I just had a quick question  
3 that it really for Colby Ackerman. When you do  
4 the research as you indicated in your, what would  
5 you suggest that would take into account some of  
6 the city's challenges in terms of what was  
7 discussed by the administration. In other words  
8 do you have some suggestions that might be even  
9 more specific than what you testified on to how  
10 the data could be made transparent for the public.  
11 I know you mentioned some budgets give us some  
12 overall ideas and how it could be more manageable.  
13 Obviously one of your colleagues here to testify  
14 about one individual in Brooklyn having not your  
15 resources to know how to do the searching, so I'm  
16 just wondering if you could talk about that  
17 briefly.

18 COLBY ACKERMAN: Sure.

19 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: You use a  
20 database all the time that's why I am asking.

21 COLBY ACKERMAN: Yeah, I mean as  
22 was already mentioned a lot of the information  
23 that is listed in this initiative is already  
24 available and various sources and with the GIS  
25 software you can actually run searchable queries

1  
2 like the ones, like for example you wanted to know  
3 how much vacant they can land, for example was in  
4 a particular area that was easy to do-

5 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [interposing]  
6 Talk into the microphone.

7 COLBY ACKERMAN: Sorry. That's  
8 easy to do using this software so is that type of-  
9 . If that were made more excessively without  
10 having access to GIS Software using very basic  
11 stein the spreadsheet technology and were made  
12 publicly accessible that can be as far as I'm  
13 concerned a very easy first step to make it least  
14 the data that is already there and already  
15 publicly available in different formats easily  
16 searchable.

17 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you all  
18 very much I really appreciate it. Next is Mark  
19 Eiseman [phonetic] from NYDC, Shanti Persaud from  
20 Food Systems Network, Fern Estrow, Eric Belsford,  
21 and Carolyn Zezima.

22 Is it Cathy Goldman okay with this  
23 discussion?

24 VOICE: [off mic] Absolutely.

25 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: If Cathy

1  
2 Goldman is happy I'm happy. If Cathy Goldman is  
3 not happy, I am not happy. I hope Kim heard that.  
4 And whomever would like to start.

5 SHANTI PERSAUD: Good morning, my  
6 name is Shanti Persaud. I'm the Food Policy  
7 Committee Co-chair Food Systems Network NYC. The  
8 network is a not for profit membership  
9 organization dedicated to insuring the health and  
10 well-being of New York City residences through  
11 universal access to a wholesome, nutritious, safe  
12 food, and to supporting the viability of our  
13 regional farm and through the economy.

14 The Food Systems Network NYC  
15 supports both the Food Metric Recording Bill and  
16 the City Land Inventorying Reporting Bill and  
17 commence the entire council and specifically  
18 Council Member Dickens is for continuing the  
19 conversation that began with Food Works. The Food  
20 Metrics Bill sets measures that will give the city  
21 and that food advocates a snapshot of the current  
22 state of our food system, to provide a foundation  
23 for all future initiatives, and monitor this  
24 city's progress is an effectiveness. It is also a  
25 key implementation step consistent with the goals

1  
2 and the offers of long range planning and  
3 sustainability's Plan NYC by taking a holistic  
4 approach to the city's food system from production  
5 through disposal. The bill does this by setting  
6 metrics for each important phase of the food  
7 system.

8                   New York has a great regional  
9 capacity as insignificant agricultural and food  
10 producer but to date to little formal study  
11 exhibit us regarding the actual and potential  
12 capacity of our regional and local production. By  
13 passing this legislation that the city will be  
14 better able to measure the effectiveness of its  
15 current efforts to support a regional food shed  
16 and to identify the potential strengths that  
17 enhance our local and regional food systems, as  
18 well as the gap that we can we begin them.

19                   This will make get then possible  
20 for the city to target future initiatives and  
21 opportunities that can improve an increase local  
22 and regional food production and processing thing  
23 and better connect New York City eaters and food  
24 entrepreneurs with local and regional producers.  
25 In short, we need to know where we are now in

1  
2 order to know where we want to go in the future  
3 and what route to take.

4           The mapping bill is similarly and  
5 vital to create a baseline measure of city owned  
6 land available and suitable for urban agriculture  
7 and I also think the Council Members introducing  
8 this bill.

9           New York City neighborhoods have  
10 enjoyed an increase in urban agricultural and  
11 recent years through the good work of  
12 organizations that seek to increase and promote  
13 local food source says and help connect this  
14 consumers to the producers of their food. East  
15 New York Farms, Added Value Farms, the Eagle  
16 Street Rooftop Farm, all in Brooklyn and the Urban  
17 Farm at the Battery and in Nourishing NYC in  
18 Manhattan are examples of successful urban  
19 initiatives that engage the community and provides  
20 education about farming and food production.

21           But like all urban areas is an  
22 America more community based and small commercial  
23 farming enterprises and more opportunities  
24 generally for growing food and the city. And like  
25 all farming land is essential for food production.



1  
2 The mapping bill supports development of  
3 additional innovative urban agriculture  
4 initiatives, food producing community gardens, and  
5 roof top farms by pinpointing where there's a  
6 vacant and appropriate city owned and leased land  
7 suitable for food production.

8           Every piece of land is unique and  
9 it is essential to know the specifics of a site in  
10 order to then determine whether it is suitable for  
11 urban agriculture and to what extent. For  
12 instance, how big is it, what is the service  
13 treatment will they'll be water access or the  
14 ability to gain it, does the sites building have a  
15 rooftop ideal for growing food, and what is the  
16 land drainage like. Many of these questions of  
17 suitability are quickly answered from the  
18 reporting requirements in this bill or can easily  
19 investigated based on this information, but none  
20 of these criteria can be initially assessed  
21 without knowing the full inventory and legal and  
22 physical details of the city own land so potential  
23 sites can be better pinpointed, mapped, and  
24 there's viability as urban agriculture sites  
25 explored further. Thank you for holding these

1  
2 hearings and giving the Food Systems Network NYC  
3 an opportunity to speak.

4 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you for  
5 excellent testimony. Who would like to go next?  
6 Who's going next? You going to go next, okay.

7 ERIC BELSFORD: Good morning I'm  
8 Eric Belsford. I'm testifying on behalf of  
9 Farming Concrete. We are in favor of both  
10 proposed bills as they will help the city move  
11 forward with the more democratic food system and  
12 more equitable access to information about public  
13 land.

14 Farming concrete is an object that  
15 is currently measuring food production in our  
16 city's community gardens and school gardens, as  
17 well a few urban farms. We believe that this is  
18 important because understanding how much food is  
19 grown by these urban farmers will give us better  
20 insight on to how these gardens fit into our food  
21 system. If amplifies the voice of those growing  
22 food for their families and neighbors and  
23 reconnects neighborhood residents of all ages to  
24 the soil, their heritage, and their health.

25 Understanding this is just one part

1  
2 of a picture, we know of another group that is  
3 monitoring storm water that urban agriculture is  
4 diverting from the waste water system and  
5 gardeners are beginning to track the food waste  
6 that they divert from landfills into their compost  
7 systems.

8                   Creating an accessible database of  
9 all public property would give urban farmers a  
10 fair chance of finding new land to cultivate.  
11 Last year for instance, we measured the yield and  
12 67 community gardens and we found that they grew  
13 at least 88,000 pounds of food on just 1.7 acres  
14 collectively. We estimate that was worth well  
15 over \$214,000. If we looked at the figure that we  
16 heard recently, that there a 596 acres of public  
17 vacant lots in Brooklyn alone we might multiply  
18 that out and find that we can grow 30 million  
19 pounds of fresh food on that land worth over \$75  
20 million. We should keep in mind that that is just  
21 food. Gardens also save a lot of money by  
22 diverting storm water and waste from landfills,  
23 and plenty of other benefits that gardens bring.

24                   The hope that community gardens  
25 would be labeled and this new database also as

1  
2 looking at PLUTO data, we've can see they've been  
3 marked as they get lots which can be misleading to  
4 say the least and they're adding enormous wealth  
5 to our ecology, our food security, and health.

6 Either way we look forward to  
7 information about vacant lots that we can all  
8 access not just developers, and we are also looks  
9 being forward to open data about our food system  
10 generally. Thanks.

11 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you very  
12 much. Your next sir. No Mark was next he rode  
13 his bicycle year just so you know I saw him with a  
14 bicycle and is helmet and has locked up outside.  
15 Go ahead sir.

16 MARK EISEMAN: Good morning  
17 Councilman Brewer the committee. My name is Mark  
18 Eiseman. I'm the Senior Attorney and Director of  
19 the New York Urban Program for NRDC and I am  
20 joined today by colleagues Ellie Tarlow [phonetic]  
21 and Jennifer Klein [phonetic] as you know in NRDC  
22 is in and national environmental group that has  
23 worked for four decades here and the city, and we  
24 have worked very closely with many of the  
25 stakeholders in the round including our friends at

1  
2 LCV and WE ACT and working closely with the City  
3 Council to pass path breaking environmental  
4 legislation over the last 20 years recycling,  
5 electronic recycling, energy efficiency, green  
6 buildings, green procurement, and many of those  
7 have become models for other cities around the  
8 nation.

9                   Now the City Council has the  
10 opportunity to do the same thing on food and so we  
11 come and the Council under the leadership of  
12 Speaker Quinn to have this hearing and the hearing  
13 you had in February on the bills that together  
14 represent an important first step in developing  
15 model legislation.

16                   My brief statement today will just  
17 focus on Council Member's Dickens pre-considered  
18 introduction on food metrics. Broadly, NRDC of  
19 supportive of the goals of the bill because we  
20 believe improved reporting can help us better  
21 understand the current state of the New York City  
22 food shed and food system, and also a way to  
23 measure the 12 goals that are set forth in Food  
24 Works.

25                   At the same time as the testified

1  
2 in front of the committee in February, we believe  
3 that any final package of food bills should  
4 include concrete government purchasing targets to  
5 measure really increased the amount of sustainable  
6 local food available to in the city. They are  
7 pressing environmental, health, and economic  
8 reasons to use the city's considerable purchasing  
9 power to boost the supply of local sustainable  
10 food in New York and there's no reason why this  
11 City Council should wait to take action on this  
12 front while at the same time putting in place  
13 mechanisms better track food metrics.

14 Further, by following this approach  
15 in a reporting requirements that are ultimately a  
16 adopted would help to implements they underlying  
17 food buying targets that the Council decides to  
18 establish a not be viewed as another tracking  
19 requirement for agencies that is not tied to a  
20 clear benchmark and indeed it addresses in part  
21 the issue that Ms. Kessler raised earlier that if  
22 you're tying the tracking their specific  
23 requirements this city is asking of its vendors  
24 then you can get that information it would be  
25 required under the contract, so it would make it

1  
2 easier to the information and it would be time to  
3 a substantive requirement.

4 So, what are these great benefits?

5 It is just worth always reminding ourselves why  
6 we're here and why this issue is important. For  
7 one thing from environmental standpoint, we are  
8 losing 70 acres a day of farmland in New York  
9 State that is an astonishing figure. So by  
10 supporting local farms and purchasing regional  
11 food we can preserve important undeveloped  
12 farmland and open space around in the city,  
13 protect the landscape, the natural resources and  
14 habitat. This is particularly important for the  
15 unfiltered drinking water supply in the Catskills  
16 where we are still think ill-considered sprawl  
17 development projects including casinos announced  
18 yesterday and even gas drilling continued to  
19 threaten the water supply.

20 And the risk of sounding overly  
21 dramatic promoting local sustainable food can help  
22 address many of the largest environmental issues  
23 facing the city and the nation, climate change,  
24 water pollution, and reliance on fossil fuels.

25 Also increasing food purchasing has

1  
2 public benefits, public health benefits of that  
3 is. Just as one example a 2005 report showed that  
4 fruit and vegetables lose nutrient each day after  
5 they've been harvested and after only three days  
6 they have lost 40 percent of the nutritional  
7 value. So, getting food and vegetables into the  
8 city quickly can make a difference then if it's  
9 shipped across the country.

10           The problem as other as testified  
11 today there's a real need to get local healthy  
12 food into the schools. Nearly half their 1700  
13 schools, 1.1 million children, according to the  
14 most recent data that, we got nearly half of the  
15 children and a kindergarten through eighth grade  
16 bound to be overweight or obese sell getting and  
17 boasting the amount of local sustainable said to  
18 the children who often this is their consisted  
19 access to food, to nutritional food can ensure an  
20 immediate health benefits for those children.

21           It also has an economic benefit a  
22 short term, medium, and long-term benefit if the  
23 city were to take advantage of its purchasing  
24 power.

25           I'll just quickly elaborate on a



1  
2 specific recommendations for enhancing the  
3 Council's food bills. First, again to operate  
4 concrete targets for the purchasing of local food  
5 as you know, Councilman Brewer and others up  
6 there, although all right now, I guess, you're the  
7 only one.

8           One of them us significant  
9 environmental pieces of legislation ever passed by  
10 the Council is a 1989 recycling law, local law of  
11 1989. That was the first bill the mandatory  
12 recycling lot in the country and in fact it was  
13 the first time the city had mandated specific  
14 targets to achieve. Now clearly we have not  
15 achieved are the targets that we hoped and it's  
16 great that the Council also renewed those mandates  
17 last here but without some numerical benchmarks,  
18 we would not be even close to where we are today.

19           So, the same concept applies to do  
20 and we need to have some measurable targets for  
21 increasing the amount of local sustainable food  
22 otherwise we're just going to be pedaling in  
23 places.

24           And then the second part is we  
25 don't want to just by local food, we don't want to

1  
2 have as I testified before, we don't want DDT  
3 sprayed apples from New Jersey although you  
4 couldn't even get those. You want to have local  
5 sustainably produced food, so any final  
6 legislation and we respectfully submit should have  
7 standards that carefully take into account the  
8 environmental and health implications of an  
9 unsustainable food system. For example  
10 antibiotics or pesticides could be avoided  
11 completely or minimized. You can take into  
12 account the treatment of animals in food  
13 production and perhaps some or all of the  
14 purchasing requirements could be tied to two the  
15 well regarded organic certification run by the  
16 U.S. Department of Agriculture.

17 We recognize that incorporating  
18 concrete purchasing targets and requiring the  
19 sustainable standards is just more than a tweaking  
20 off the bills but as this body has done so many  
21 times in the past you have a golden opportunity  
22 now to pass the nation's best food law. There's  
23 no city or state in the country that has a law  
24 like this and New York City should be the first to  
25 ask. Thank you again for allowing us to justified

1  
2 and we're happy to work with the Council to  
3 develop this model legislation and look forward to  
4 the signing ceremony and the several months down  
5 the line.

6 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you very  
7 much I think it might be sooner rather than later.  
8 We were joined jus for a minute by Council Member  
9 Delon, but he had to go to a budget hearing also  
10 so anybody's next. Go ahead.

11 CAROLYN ZEZIMA: Good morning I am  
12 Carolyn Zezima. I am the Chief Consultant for NYC  
13 Foodscape where I advocate and consult for new and  
14 emerging local food and farming enterprises.

15 By way of quick background I have  
16 been a lawyer, I've been a chef, and now I'm a  
17 food systems advocate period before I moved back  
18 to New York last year, where I intend now to  
19 remain for the rest of my life I worked for a  
20 farmers market in Chicago, I served on to Chicago  
21 area food policy councils, and I founded a  
22 nonprofit urban farm called The Talking Farm in  
23 Evanston, Illinois in 2006, so I understand in  
24 real life experience how difficult it is for food  
25 and farming enterprises to pinpoint suitable land

1  
2 for growing food, and how important and powerful a  
3 resource and partnered city governments can be in  
4 supporting local food economies and as a  
5 storehouse for information that food enterprises  
6 need to drive their missions forward and plan  
7 their businesses.

8 I want to thank the Council and  
9 Chair Brewer for holding these hearings and  
10 Members Dickens and Fidler in particular for  
11 introducing the land mapping and food metric  
12 bills. My statement is pretty short.

13 I first wholeheartedly endorse the  
14 positions of my fellow advocates at the table and  
15 here today that favor the bills and I urge the  
16 Council to pass both of these bills I think there  
17 is an essential for stepped into implementing the  
18 Speakers visionary Food Works plan.

19 Just by way of quick story, among  
20 the organizations I consult for I'm helping to  
21 implement a couple of urban farming agriculture  
22 projects in Manhattan and one of them is  
23 Nourishing NYC which is a community food project  
24 in East Harlem. Feeds low income citizens in the  
25 area, in the East Harlem area by providing them

1  
2 with healthy food. If educates by teaching the  
3 public and its junior chefs in particular about  
4 growing and cooking healthy food and the advocates  
5 for healthier and greener East Harlem and NYC as a  
6 whole. I was fortunate to help plan an install  
7 their 500 square foot urban agriculture program  
8 which is being used directly, to directly teach  
9 and feed the community.

10 As part of this enterprise we got a  
11 very generous donation of seeds from Seed Savers  
12 and a box that was way too vague in heavy for me  
13 to bring here I wanted to show the amount of food  
14 that we had the potential of growing the season.  
15 Now seed it certainly can last a couple of seasons  
16 but when I see the dozens and dozens and dozens of  
17 packets of heirloom tomatoes, peppers, rare  
18 squashes, delicious unusual sounding named beans,  
19 like lazy housewife, or tiger's eye bean, or Asian  
20 greens, colorful carrots, beets, turnips, as a  
21 chef and as a food advocates I dream about the  
22 number of delicious healthy meals that the junior  
23 chefs for Nourishing NYC and the families in and  
24 around East Harlem could prepare, or the whole  
25 city, could prepare with the fruit of these seeds.

1  
2 If we only knew where we could plant them, if we  
3 only had access to land and the knowledge of land,  
4 to plant the seeds.

5 We will work to ensure that the  
6 seas did not go to waste as much as we can buy  
7 land is still in the lucid assets and less you  
8 really get entrepreneurial about where we grow  
9 food. This organization and other similar food  
10 and the prizes vote for and not for profit could  
11 get so much more healthy local food to those who  
12 need it on those who want it and to teach many  
13 more young people at connect them directly to  
14 their food system and how to grow food to regain  
15 lost capabilities that our grandparents all new  
16 and kept them healthier than most, many of us are  
17 today.

18 The entrepreneurial and food access  
19 and public health potentials that these bills lay  
20 the groundwork for are vast. Given the critical  
21 mass and size of the city's food economy and its  
22 land possessions, so again I urge the Council to  
23 pass both of these bills. Thank you again for  
24 letting me speak.

25 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you I

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know there's one more testifier.

FERN GALE ESTROW: Thank you very much for this opportunity Council Member Brewer and as well I'm very grateful to have both of these pieces of legislation presented and all Council Members whether present or not. I'm looking forward to this moving forward. My name is Fern Gale Estrow. I'm a registered dietitian. I am the founder of the FGE Food and Nutrition Team. I had a computer crash and it failed this morning, so I do not have my testimony with me but I will be forwarding it to you shortly.

I think that, I want to highlight hear that the loss of someone who is very important to this conversation, and sadly yesterday a documentarian who very well known in our work, and I would encourage the Council Members to go to the website which I'll provide you with. Chris Bedford passed away unexpectedly.

Chris is produced a documentary that really highlights the implementation. Ways of taking action. And I'm not suggesting that the City Council would agree with all of his suggestions, but I think for what we're looking

1  
2 for and having been a member of the advisory  
3 committee for Food Works. I should also mention  
4 that I work with Head Start and the number  
5 advisory communities to their and have contacts  
6 directly with the Head Start as a nutritionist and  
7 I'm on the advisory committee of the West Side  
8 campaign against hunger. Co-founder in five year  
9 chair of the Food Systems Network NYC. I think  
10 you can hear. I will not go on.

11 But the point being, what is being  
12 requested here is not difficult. I've heard a lot  
13 of barriers put up and I have not heard of what.  
14 And that's, what is the barrier? When I have a  
15 patient who is having a hard time accomplishing  
16 something I say well, what is the problem? And  
17 that is what I would ask for the city to do-. All  
18 right to we have silos and that's the other piece  
19 I'm hearing a lot of silos a lot of information to  
20 stop being shared.

21 I'm very familiar I've worked with  
22 Head Start, with the assessment that was done  
23 previously and is currently continue on the  
24 regular basis with the programs, and I have  
25 concerns about it. I am a private consultant. I



1  
2 do not work for the city. I've offered services  
3 at times I realize there are different reasons why  
4 people get pulled into this. I think there needs  
5 to be more of an open forum for dialogue as  
6 presented by Joel and we really need to include  
7 public nonprofit opportunities not only to comment  
8 but to help develop. Because the experts are not  
9 necessarily in city government those of us have  
10 been working on this the 20 and 25 years know a  
11 lot and we would like to help that I have concerns  
12 with food stamp fingerprinting is happening in a  
13 city and we're saying we don't have money to redo  
14 a database. And to me, given that we have some  
15 people who are very financially prepared to  
16 support the city, I think, around database  
17 development it would be also a consideration  
18 seeking grants if the city itself does not have  
19 that funding.

20 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you very  
21 much I just have one question just generally how  
22 do you—. There's two bills obviously, and they're  
23 somewhat different but in general how do each one  
24 of you use any of the databases?

25 FERN GALE ESTROW: A tremendous

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amount. And in terms of—

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Specifically you've got Gazetteer, PLUTO and city map, or the DataMine

FERN GALE ESTROW: Head Start specifically required to do other community assessments on a regular basis.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Yeah, I'm aware of that.

FERN GALE ESTROW: I as a nutritionist as actually have my interns help develop the community assessments for my programs, because I feel it's an important part of the program.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: So, you use these data databases?

FERN GALE ESTROW: We use some of them, but the problem is they are not easily accessible as pointed out. I am not a government agency. My programs half of them don't even have computer access.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: I'm aware of that.

FERN GALE ESTROW: So, there are

1  
2 pieces to that. In terms of the land use  
3 component, again, what the definition of what is  
4 land use. I was at a farm this week on a roof in  
5 Brooklyn and is actually an organization in Queens  
6 and where is that being calculated as part of the  
7 city land use? So that, you know, we have a Head  
8 Start garden there out in another location. It is  
9 not part of Green Thumb is not part of Grow NYC  
10 and has a garden as for the children, and I do  
11 want to acknowledge that sensory redevelopment is  
12 critical for healthy development.

13 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: I want to ask  
14 Carolyn the same question. Do you have--, do you  
15 use any of those databases in order to find other  
16 pieces of land that might be will applicable.

17 ERIC BELSFORD: I have not  
18 personally but there is a number that I cited  
19 earlier came from PLUTO.

20 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Good, so the  
21 fact of the matter is, are you looking for other  
22 spaces or is that something that isn't done by  
23 your organization?

24 ERIC BELSFORD: Personally I'm not  
25 but I'm aware that they're planning this and that.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: But other  
3 people are. Does anybody else would add to that  
4 question about the databases? No okay. The other  
5 question I have is particularly for NRDC. You had  
6 some wonderful suggestions as to how things could  
7 be improved. Do you think that given your vast  
8 history between you and Eric between working on  
9 these incredible legislation most of it thanks to  
10 NRDC to be honest with you do you think that there  
11 are any aspects of this legislation that aren't  
12 possible to do because you have so much experience  
13 you actually know what is or is not possible in  
14 terms of the metric system specifically. Because  
15 it's got a lot of aspects to it and all of us I  
16 think I needed but I just don't know whether from  
17 your experience if you thought there was  
18 something-. You made some specific suggestions  
19 which are excellent.

20 MARK EISEMAN: Right. I mean there  
21 were a couple of legal issues that we're-. I  
22 mean, logistical things are difficult for us to  
23 analyze. There were a couple of the legal issues  
24 that were raised earlier today and I would like to  
25 look and those little bit more but that is why I

1  
2 pointed out that if the city time some of these  
3 reporting requirements to substantive it would  
4 resolve any potential legal issues. I don't know  
5 whether it exist or not, but I'm happy to take a  
6 closer look at the legal issues and we will get  
7 back to you quickly.

8 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Okay, all  
9 right. Thank you all very much it's really  
10 helpful legislation, testimony that would help us  
11 with our legislation. Thank you very much.

12 Okay. Is Anya Poll Deva; I can't  
13 quite read it I am sorry from VI Farms in the  
14 Bronx. Sabrina Terry, Paula Siegel [phonetic],  
15 Christopher Toole, Daniel Simon, and Shelley  
16 Bennett [phonetic].

17 [background noise]

18 Whoever would like to begin.

19 MALE VOICE: Do you want to begin  
20 because I want to put this up - -.

21 SABRINA TERRY: Good morning and  
22 thank you for the opportunity to present before  
23 you today. I am Sabrina Terry I'm here  
24 representing Up Rows, Brooklyn's oldest Latino  
25 community based organization based in Sunset Park,

1  
2 Brooklyn. We work to heighten community  
3 awareness, develop environmental strategies, and  
4 bridges it that are a community planning practice  
5 and promote sustainable development, governmental  
6 accountability, and environmental justice. New  
7 line Sunset Park is the working class highly  
8 diverse community with immigrants from the Spanish  
9 speaking Caribbean, Mexico, China, the Middle  
10 East, and beyond. The Latino and Asian residents  
11 constitute an affair roughly 50 and 25 percent of  
12 the total population respectively. Half the  
13 residents and Sunset Park are foreign born and  
14 over 40 percent of the individuals over the age of  
15 five are not proficient in English.

16 The poverty rate the Sunset Park is  
17 higher than the overall poverty rates of both  
18 Brooklyn and greater New York City. Sunset Park  
19 like other environmental justice communities  
20 suffers from the inadequate food resources and  
21 flaws within our food system.

22 There is an abundance of cheap and  
23 unhealthy food options coupled with a lack of  
24 access to culturally appropriate healthy foods.  
25 Limited open space makes urban farming and local

1  
2 food production challenging for residents. These  
3 conditions contribute markedly to obesity levels  
4 which in turn are associated with higher rates of  
5 heart disease, diabetes, asthma, and other  
6 abnormalities.

7           Childhood obesity is of great  
8 concern as there is an increasing rate of children  
9 experiencing these diseases at rates that were  
10 previously unheard of. Latino children have  
11 especially high rates of type two diabetes and  
12 disease lead to obesity. Since 50 percent of the  
13 population a Sunset Park is Latino, this is highly  
14 relevant concern for the community. Insufficient  
15 open space, multiple pollution sources, and the  
16 lack of health care coverage further exasperate  
17 diet and consumption related health of aliments  
18 for both children and adults alike.

19           Improving the food resources in  
20 environmental justice communities, like Sunset  
21 Park will be challenging, but is fundamental  
22 toward creating healthy as self-sufficient  
23 neighborhoods. It is our belief that gathering  
24 information that each stage of our food system  
25 will help identify and address the injustices

1  
2 within it.

3           Based on the preliminary draft of  
4 the bill food metrics can be further strengthened  
5 if the following key details are incorporated into  
6 a couple indicators so that they will account for  
7 food justice issues. One, there is a  
8 disproportionate amount of people of color  
9 predominately women in processing in food  
10 preparation and food services however, inspectors,  
11 administrators, and scientist position I'll really  
12 held by people of color or women. This trend  
13 adversely impacts EJ communities because there's  
14 no representation and higher level decision-making  
15 positions. Tracking the number and borough of job  
16 training programs administered by the Department  
17 of Small Business Services and the Workforce  
18 Investment Board that aid individuals seeking  
19 employment and so in related industries is a large  
20 first step, but it also needs to account for the  
21 background of the person assisted prior to  
22 securing employment and the type of unemployment  
23 secured. We hope that this will reveal a better  
24 understanding of the food sector in NYC and how to  
25 better represent its constituents it serves.



1  
2                   The lack of grocery stores that  
3 serve a full line of goods in low income  
4 communities of color are another prevalent three  
5 justice issue. Tracking the space of the food  
6 grocery stores per capita, sorted by neighborhood  
7 and the number of grocery stores opening during  
8 the past five years is important to insuring that  
9 a pedestrian oriented of neighborhoods live in a  
10 comfortable walking distance of a grocery store,  
11 yet access is only half the battle. We hope that  
12 the affordability of stores is also assessed as  
13 grocery shopping consumes a large portion of  
14 household budgets. A new end versus, I mean a new  
15 high end versus a new low end grocery store makes  
16 a significant difference in the eyes of low income  
17 residents located in food deserts. We hope that  
18 the measures taken to a access competitive and  
19 food options are not left to pure programs and  
20 marginal impacts on the underserved communities.

21                   Finally we recommend that the  
22 metrics be gathering effort is that story fashion  
23 a crucial component of creating a more equitable  
24 food system is incorporating all stakeholders into  
25 the process, especially those who have suffered

1  
2 from it the most. This will ensure that a more  
3 comprehensive assessment is performed while also  
4 empowering communities to be part of a process  
5 that is so vital to improving their quality of  
6 life. We urge you to adopt these subtle areas of  
7 improvement as they will begin to tackle the food  
8 justice issue that prevent underserved communities  
9 from exercising their right to the adequate food  
10 resources.

11 In conclusion, we support this  
12 establishment of the Food Metrics Report as  
13 information is vital to improving services in the  
14 most vulnerable areas of the city. Please count  
15 on us for further information and know that we are  
16 a resource willing to help achieve shared goals.  
17 Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you very  
19 much. That was really pertains to neighborhoods.  
20 I appreciate that. Who's next?

21 PAULA SIEGEL: Hi. That is very  
22 loud. My name is Paula Siegel I am a recent  
23 graduate of the CUNY Law School, and I'm a member  
24 of the Brooklyn Food Coalition and for about two  
25 and a half years. Now I'm a member of the Policy

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Committee.

And I'm here today to talk about a project that I, sort of, accidentally started. I gave you guy these maps. I have more, and I'll hand them out. This is the visualization of what we've been talking about we've been talking about them at PLUTO data database which is a proprietary land use planning tool that the city makes available to planners, to developers.

Through that database, we can see how the city classifies every piece of data, every piece of land and where of that land is. This map which it shows all they get publicly owned land. And what that means is everything that is in map PLUTO and doesn't have been assigned use right now and that everything that is tax exempt. So that means city owned land, agency owned land, and state owned land, and federally owned land, and some, you know, churches, yeshivas, other organizations that are tax exempt. When you do a composite of all of that land and squish it all together you get that number that Eric was referring to earlier 596 acres which is bigger than Prospect Park. Prospect Park clocks in at

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585. And that is just Brooklyn.

So, a couple of us have started a little public education project where we taken this map PLUTO data, we've made of thousands of these we've been handing them out and on the back what you find is actually a directory of who owns every piece of land. That is the data that is available through map PLUTO, if you can get it.

I came to making these because I was working with the Brooklyn Food Coalition and our neighborhood groups kept coming back to us saying where can we grow food? What can we do? What's available in our neighborhood?

If you look at the map and may be out open it up and you can actually see this from a distance too. You can really seem that way are vacant land is, is sort of an environmental justice shadow of Brooklyn. There is very little vacant public land in Brooklyn Heights. The map is pretty white over here, but when you get out to Bushwick, to East New York it's pretty dense with properties that are empty and owned by the city. So, a lot of our neighborhood groups from the Brooklyn Food Coalition that are in those

1  
2 neighborhoods and they're looking to solve there  
3 for the justice issues and they're looking to us  
4 to help them answer the questions about well how  
5 can they do it.

6 This project sort of slipped off  
7 from the Brooklyn Food Coalition and we are trying  
8 to connect people with agencies and I think it's—,  
9 I really support, I really endorse the city land  
10 inventorying reporting bill but I would make a  
11 couple of small changes. First of all I think  
12 it's crucial that contact information for agencies  
13 be included. I've been particularly working on a  
14 piece of land at the border of Bed-Stuy and  
15 Clinton Hill that has been vacant and has was  
16 promised to the community and it took us a very  
17 long time to figure out who the right person to  
18 talk to. And now, we are actually going to be  
19 having a community meeting and the commissioner of  
20 the agency that owns the land is coming to speak  
21 with us, but it took us about a year to figure out  
22 who to talk to it as a cause about three months to  
23 get this meeting set up, so just sought to, sort  
24 of, that information is out there and we can get  
25 it.

1  
2 I'm also wondering about the  
3 language of suitability for urban agriculture.  
4 Urban agriculture looks a lot of different ways  
5 and New York City, composting is certainly urban  
6 agriculture is a production of goods soil for  
7 growing food. Bucket gardens that are growing  
8 delicious tomatoes that I for one can't afford to  
9 buy at farmers market prices that certainly urban  
10 agriculture on a fire escape is suitable for that  
11 so I worry about seeing that language as included  
12 in the metrics I worry about who is going to be  
13 making that determination on the other hand there  
14 is a lot of urban agriculture or already going on  
15 in New York City that goes unreported.

16 One unfortunate kink and using that  
17 PLUTO for this data is that many, many, many of  
18 our community gardens thriving community gardens  
19 that had existed for 20, 30 years are actually  
20 classified as vacant map PLUTO. So, when we  
21 actually go out on the ground and investigate each  
22 of the sites where finding gardens which is great  
23 and they're not vacant but New York City's land  
24 planning databases don't have a category for urban  
25 agriculture, so we don't have a way of measuring,

1  
2 we don't have a way of documenting that's, so I  
3 would certainly include that as an amendment to  
4 the bill. Thank you for letting me testify.

5 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thanks you so  
6 much for all your efforts. Who's next?

7 ANYA POST DEVA: Hi. I am Anya  
8 Post Deva and I have Chris with me our founders of  
9 Vertically Integrated Farms and we have SAVE which  
10 is nonprofit part of that project will be talking  
11 more about this.

12 CHRISTOPER TOOLE: Council Member  
13 Brewer you may remember me as a banker or the  
14 corner of 87th and Broadway and GreenPoint Bank

15 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Yes I do but  
16 you have to identify yourself.

17 CHRISTOPER TOOLE: Yeah, my name is  
18 Christopher Toole. I am the farmer at Vertically  
19 Integrated Farms, are Anya is the owner. And, up  
20 and tell about a year ago I was a banker working  
21 at GreenPoint, North Fork, Independence Community  
22 Bank, Sovereign Bank, and achieved a senior  
23 position and since last August I've been in urban  
24 farmer.

25 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: I remember you

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kept changing banks.

CHRISTOPER TOOLE: Yes, and banks kept changing on me, even when I did and move. So, I have been on one side with some people would call part of the problem and now we're trying to be part of the solution, whatever that means.

So, we look for land and we developed an unreported urban agricultural space in our apartment where we currently have 500 fish and we're growing food fish. That is tilapia and were growing lots of vegetables.

We have gone to the point the CDC and Hunts Point shall we say the center of all food and New York. As we believe that should be the place where food technology of New York is demonstrated. We think that's a great place for the world center of food to have a hub. And to that and we are looking to develop a school of applied sciences with regard to some technology to layer on top of and continue from the high school that is designated for that zone to start soon.

So, we are strongly in support of what the Council is doing and means bills that are before the Council we can't speak to the specifics



1  
2 but we can speak to our own experience is that  
3 it's very, very difficult to find a piece of land  
4 to use for this type of project.

5           The classification of what is  
6 suitable for urban farming is very, very  
7 difficult. We are doing it in a one bedroom  
8 apartment. We need light. It doesn't matter  
9 where it is we don't use the ground were on top of  
10 that were water based.

11           So, again aquaponics is a  
12 combination of fish farming and hydroponics which  
13 is growing plants and water it except be using the  
14 plants to filter for the fish and using the fish  
15 to provide nutrients for the plants. There are  
16 other things involved too, but we've come up to a  
17 thing called perm upon exit which is a combination  
18 of time a culture which is permanent agriculture  
19 where you plant a fruit tree and harvested on an  
20 ongoing basis it is studied very intensively. And  
21 we are focusing on aquaponics because it's more  
22 appropriate for an urban environment, so we're  
23 trying to figure out how to mesh these things in  
24 and we're doing in the Hunts Point area with the  
25 SAVE CDC.

1  
2 We have located some land down  
3 there it took us awhile to figure out what might  
4 be suitable. We are able to use land that other  
5 people can't because we're not using this so well  
6 we don't have to change things. In NYEDC has  
7 fantastic websites they have fantastic  
8 transparency about their property, we know their  
9 of big landlord in Hunts Point, but we still have  
10 trouble getting the information, and we found  
11 ourselves referencing a 2004 document and looking  
12 at the maps and what was proposed and realizing,  
13 wait a minute it is a block away and behind the  
14 produce market wedged in back behind a warehouse.  
15 Let's go take a look. And until you go down and  
16 look at it, you don't know what it's about from  
17 here in looks like a warehouse; it's really a rail  
18 yard. So, it's not appropriate for people - -,  
19 but it is for us. Because we just put it right on  
20 top.

21 So our tale is anecdotal, but it is  
22 important because there's lots of people doing  
23 what we're doing right now and it's very hard to  
24 get the information. At least with this type of  
25 thing in Brooklyn you can go out and take a look

1  
2 and find out what it's been classified correctly  
3 are not, but if you're screening for what someone  
4 believes is appropriate for urban agriculture  
5 you're immediately wrong. You cannot eliminate  
6 any piece of property. We are on the 14th floor  
7 of apartment building growing and growing  
8 substantial amounts of food, commercial fish  
9 farmers may start with only a couple hundred fish.  
10 We have 500 fish in the apartment.

11 So, we think the city for its apart  
12 we think the city for its leadership on this on a  
13 worldwide basis we are communication on faced up  
14 with people all over the world this City of New  
15 York is leading the pack with this with these two  
16 pieces of legislation. I hope you find a way to  
17 get them we thank you for your support and any  
18 question you have for us. I've given you some  
19 information about building in manufacturing  
20 industry out of this at the stuff so we can export  
21 urban farming to other cities.

22 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you very  
23 much it's nice to see you.

24 CHRISTOPER TOOLE: It's good to see  
25 you.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Somebody else  
3 who's ready to testify.

4 DANIEL BOWMAN SIMON: Yup. Hi.  
5 Thank you Council Member Brewer for the  
6 opportunity to testify and to Council Members and  
7 learn and Dickens for the introduction and pre-  
8 consideration of these legislation. I just want  
9 to say the official notice of this hearing went  
10 out yesterday, so the willingness for so many to  
11 show up on a moment's notice to support speaks  
12 volumes.

13 My name is Daniel Bowman Simon. I  
14 am three classes away from a Masters of urban  
15 Planning Degree at NYU's Wagner School of Public  
16 Service. I'm a board member of the New York City  
17 Community Garden Coalition. I'm a gardener on  
18 what was previously a vacant lot in the Lower East  
19 Side Compost Community Garden. And this year I  
20 found it Snap Gardens which is an effort to ways  
21 of awareness that snapped benefits or food stamps  
22 can be used to purchase food producing plants and  
23 seeds as has been the case since the 1973  
24 amendment to the Food Stamp Act and Farm Bill made  
25 this choice possible and 38 years later most of

1  
2 the more than 44 and a half million Americans now  
3 on food stamps are unaware of this choice that  
4 they can make.

5 We are already working with eight  
6 community farmers markets in New York city's  
7 low income neighborhoods to advertise that choice  
8 where if these signages. This is English. This  
9 is Spanish. This is Mandarin. This Mong,  
10 actually, Cherokee, that's more than twice as many  
11 languages as USDA translates signage such as this  
12 two they just do English and Spanish generally.

13 Anyway they-. We are helping to  
14 successfully cultivate successful gardening  
15 experiences among food stamp recipients. This can  
16 be a very rewarding choice if done properly. The  
17 return on investment from a food stamp dollars  
18 unparalleled and in many cases provides access to  
19 fresh healthy food in areas where purchase options  
20 are lacking. While some people would say that  
21 poor people don't have the time to garden or the  
22 interest, but the reality is that many New Yorkers  
23 have already expressed their excitement at  
24 learning of this choice.

25 However, perhaps the number one

1  
2 obstacle I've heard from food stamp recipients is  
3 if I only had some land. And similarly from  
4 policy makers great idea in theory, but people on  
5 food stamps generally don't access to arable of a  
6 land.

7 Now I'm not here to advocate that  
8 all city owned vacant lots be automatically turn  
9 over to people on food stamps and they can grow  
10 their own food, but even if that happened to a  
11 wooden and hunger and improve health outcomes for  
12 all 1.8 million New York City food stamp  
13 recipients, but let me echo Joel Berg and quote  
14 Mayor Bloomberg who's a champion of public health  
15 and has admitted and administrative priority to  
16 improve the health of city residents through  
17 improved food choices.

18 He likes to say that in god we  
19 trust everyone else bring data. Now Mayor  
20 Bloomberg it were asking for your data on city own  
21 land vacancies. In this case, this data matter  
22 because if we knew what we have people might be  
23 able to put land in productive years at least  
24 temporarily, while it's vacant.

25 Just to be clear, the concept of

1  
2 vacant lot cultivation is not new while the  
3 origins are biblical today I defer to the average  
4 small American advocate of this concept to explain  
5 some of the benefits briefly.

6 In January 1895 in the midst of the  
7 economic crisis, Hazen S. Pingree the mayor of  
8 Detroit told the Detroit, and council that it  
9 seems to me the experiment in vacant lot  
10 cultivation has just demonstrated first that the  
11 least 95 percent of the people who are invested  
12 two circumstances as a result of hard times are  
13 ready and willing and anxious to work. Second  
14 that a large number of these people can be  
15 supported by utilizing they get lands on the  
16 outskirts of the city. Third, that a very small  
17 space of ground is sufficient to raise enough  
18 vegetables to support the family through the  
19 winter. Fourth, that the majority of our citizens  
20 who own vacant land which much rather allow it to  
21 be cultivated by the poor than pay a large tax for  
22 their support. And fifth the needy are well exist  
23 without creating the demoralization in the habit  
24 of the people that gratuitous aid always entails.

25 The concept spread quickly to New

1  
2 York City. The Astor family was one of those to  
3 allow for the temporary cultivation of the land in  
4 Harlem and the Bronx. There's anecdotal evidence  
5 there's actually good evidence that unemployed  
6 people took this new agricultural skill set and  
7 found good jobs on farms. And we have really old  
8 aging farmers in America and in New York now.

9 In Brooklyn gardeners were given  
10 free rail passes to commute from their homes to  
11 their pet gardens plots. New York State's  
12 governor Franklin Delano Roosevelt when he was  
13 campaigning for president said the most  
14 independent as well as the most economically  
15 secure man on the world is he who has partially  
16 sustained by farming and partially by industrial  
17 employment whenever the opportunity offers.

18 FDR went on to lead the  
19 administration that originated food stamps and  
20 lead the country during World War II, when in 1943  
21 it was estimated that 40 percent of the produce  
22 was cultivated in victory gardens. Some of the  
23 cultivation took place on vacant land in Brooklyn.  
24 A man by the name of Fred Trump, the Donald's  
25 father, allowed people to cultivate victory



1 gardens on his vacant land. In the interest of  
2 time I'm really fast forwarding now. A tomato is  
3 still a tomato corn is still corn, generally,  
4

5 [laughter]

6 And, this broccoli that I have here  
7 was grown by upstate by Cheryl Rogowski [phonetic]  
8 who introduced Speaker Quinn at the Food Works  
9 brunch. She's been accepting food stamps by  
10 wireless EBT just as long as any upstate farmer  
11 whose sells in New York City and she would love to  
12 generate more revenue for her farm especially in  
13 the spring when money is tightest on the farm by  
14 selling plan starts to the farmers markets years  
15 like broccoli plants that can provide nourishing  
16 food on vacant lots across the city.

17 The people of New York City have as  
18 much ingenuity is ever the city can lead they way  
19 and inspire other vacant lot owners by making  
20 information about the vacant lot we all on  
21 together available the more we know, the more  
22 we'll be able to grow. So thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you very  
24 much. That probably looks delicious.

25 DANIEL BOWMAN SIMON: Would you

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2 like it?

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CHAIRPERSON BREWER: No.

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DANIEL BOWMAN SIMON: It's worth

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less than \$50.

6

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: I'll wait for

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my CSA next week. Thank you. I think Shelly

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Bennett needs it, and is Noah Goodman here also?

9

We believe we just need two more seats. Is Shelly

10

Goodman [phonetic] I don't know she's here, no.

11

Okay, well then Noah if you can just switch with

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somebody. Thank you all very much I think what

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came across to me in terms of the bills one of

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courses that even if you have the data it's very

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hard to access, so that's one issue and the second

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of course is that the metric make a lot of sense,

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so.

18

SHIRLEY CHI: [off mic] So, I have

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a question Shelley Bennett had to lead to go to

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work now.

21

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: You can

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definitely speak to her but later on fill out a

23

form. Why don't you start then.

24

SHIRLEY CHI: Okay. Thank you for

25

allowing me the opportunity to speak my name is

1  
2 Shelly Bennett and I have two children Cheyenne a  
3 third grader and Shane a kindergartner at Central  
4 Park East 2 Elementary.

5 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: What is your  
6 name though, so we know who you are?

7 SHIRLEY CHI: My name is Shirley  
8 Chi [phonetic] on behalf of WE ACT in an East  
9 Harlem childhood obesity and childhood diabetes.  
10 [reading] My child consumes two meals a day at  
11 school two thirds of their daily intake and the  
12 nutritious value of it or the lack thereof such  
13 meals it seems pointless to me that to feed kids  
14 food that they do that they do not eat as in the  
15 case of my son have little or no nutritional  
16 value, high in sodium, high in saturated fat and  
17 center, I don't understand how the DOE can  
18 consider this in a safe if they don't know is  
19 coming from. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you very  
21 much. Next.

22 NOAH GOODMAN: My name is Noah  
23 Goodman. I am a community gardener and an  
24 educator. I didn't come prepared to speak so  
25 lucky bit super brief, but I was just listening to

1  
2 everybody talking about soon me importance of food  
3 security but I want to tell a little story about  
4 yesterday that experienced a padre plaza community  
5 garden. I met this child to Jada [phonetic] who  
6 is the sixth grader and her Mom was worried about  
7 her going into middle school and, you know,  
8 bulling and what not. And she asked what she do  
9 if someone bullied here, she said that she prayed  
10 for them and as an educator just the strength of  
11 self-worth that goes into a statement like that I  
12 was floored by it and I still like a really  
13 because she meant it and that type of self-worth  
14 doesn't get appear up here it gets created through  
15 community, and this girl had grown up in that  
16 community garden.

17 And hearing about food security, I  
18 think that there's another component of it through  
19 coming together and having stewardship over a  
20 piece of land. We create organizations, we start  
21 looking at the trash on our street in front of our  
22 gardening and knowing that that's going to be in  
23 our plot if we don't they cannot. We start  
24 running summer programs that are created through  
25 these organizations up and in low income

1  
2 communities specifically these community linkages  
3 are support important so increasing access to this  
4 data on plots that can be used for community  
5 gardens is super important for our community ties.

6 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you both  
7 I want to thank everyone who has made the effort  
8 to be here today. I want to give Speaker Quinn  
9 credit for starting the discussion and for her  
10 effort. I think maybe we're part of Food Works so  
11 your effort is included in that great agenda.

12 And I want to thank all who  
13 testified these two pieces of legislation, I think  
14 you know from her background will be looked at  
15 carefully, suggestions will be incorporated and I  
16 know that in general these two pieces of  
17 legislation and others I think some of you  
18 testified about in the past are part of an agenda  
19 that is moving quite quickly, so thank you very  
20 much for being here today I look forward to  
21 working with all of you and the administration.  
22 Thank you very much this hearing is concluded.

23 [gavel bangs]

24 [applause]

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Amber Gibson, certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.

Signature

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Amber Gibson", is written over a horizontal line.Date July 3, 2011