

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

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June 7, 2016

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HELD AT: Committee Room - City Hall

B E F O R E: ANTONIO REYNOSO
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Andy L. King
Vanessa L. Gibson
Costa G. Constantinides
Steven Matteo

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

Sarah Currie-Halpern, Senior Policy Advisor
Zero Waste Program
NYC Mayor's Office of Sustainability

Molly Hartman, Director of Food Policy
NYC Mayor's Office of Food Policy

Kate MacKenzie, Director
Policy and Community Partnerships
City Harvest

Rachel Sabella, Director
Government Relations
Food Bank for New York City

Margaret Brown, Attorney
NYC Natural Resources Defense Council

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION & SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 3

2 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Good afternoon,
3 everyone and thank you for being here on this
4 beautiful day with budget hopefully soon to be over
5 in the next month or so. Just in case there's any
6 speculation. Good afternoon and welcome to this
7 oversight hearing that's to identify plans and ideas
8 to divert edible food waste from the landfills prior
9 to composting. And I want to just make sure that we
10 acknowledge our Council Member Costa Constantinides
11 from Queens who's here, and will eventually take the
12 helm of chairing this committee hearing while I go
13 and do my job at budget negotiating, but I should be
14 hopefully before it's over. And I want to thank the
15 council member for allowing me to go, and stepping
16 in. Approximately 40% of all food grown in the
17 United States is thrown away before it is eaten.
18 Forty percent of all food is thrown away before it is
19 even eaten. This means that our country spends over
20 \$200 billion every year to grow, transport and
21 dispose of food that is never eaten. While much of
22 this food can be donated by commercial businesses
23 instead of being composted or sent to landfills,
24 currently only a fraction of this food reaches food
25 banks and other food rescue organizations. This has

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION & SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 4

2 a real cost in New York City. In Fiscal Year, 2015,

3 the Department of Sanitation sent--spent

4 approximately \$1.4 billion to dispose of the city's

5 residential waste. Since 18% of the material is

6 composed of food waste, the cost of landfilling

7 residential food waste over--was over a quarter of a

8 billion dollars. In addition, pursuant to Local Law

9 77, the City has established, and is currently

10 expanding a pilot organics processing program. While

11 the goals of this program are laudable, I fully

12 support them. It would--it would be very expensive

13 to operate citywide organics program. Reducing the

14 amount of safe edible food that is ultimately thrown

15 away means less cost for our city taxpayers.

16 Importantly for my district less waste trucks on the

17 road. In addition, even though many of the pounds of

18 edible food are thrown out every year, the city faces

19 a growing hunger crisis. For many years

20 organizations such as City Harvest and others have

21 been feeding millions of New Yorkers. Despite the

22 enormous impact that the food rescue organizations

23 have had, there is still a vast need that is not

24 being met. Encouraging and facilitating more food

25 donations would serve a dual purpose of reducing food

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION & SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 5

2 waste while at the same time feeding hungry New
3 Yorkers. There are a number of strategies the City
4 Council could consider implementing to reduce the
5 amount of edible food being thrown away. For
6 example, standardizing date labels on food appears to
7 be a cost-effective way to inform businesses and
8 consumers about when food is safe to eat. In
9 addition, a citywide outreach campaign about ways to
10 reduce food waste would also be effective as it with
11 expanding food donation and rescue. I will look
12 forward to hearing from the Mayor's Office and other
13 witnesses about ideas to divert food waste from
14 landfills, and what the city can do about this
15 important issue. And I want to actually call up the
16 Mayor's Office to come up as a panel, the first
17 panel, which is Sarah Currie-Halpern from the Mayor's
18 Office of Sustainability. Thank you so much for
19 being here, and Marti Hartman from the Mayor's Office
20 of Food Policy, which I'm excited exists. [laughs]
21 It's good to--it's good to--to have you guys here.
22 I've been educating myself on this issue for about
23 the last couple of weeks, and it's extremely
24 interesting. It's something--and I originally
25 thought this hearing was going to be able organics

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION & SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 6

2 again, and I said no it's actually happens before the
3 food even gets to your home, which is I think is--
4 would be a surprise to many outside of folks that are
5 watching shows late night. But I'm excited to hear
6 what--what you guys have to say. So please, oh, and
7 I--and I apologize, and at this moment I'm going to
8 ask Council Member Costa Constantinides to
9 temporarily chair the committee while I head to DNT.
10 Thank you, Costa.

11 [pause]

12 SARAH CURRIE-HALPERN: Thank you. Okay.
13 Good afternoon Chair Constantinides and members of
14 the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste
15 Management, and thank you for the opportunity to
16 testify on behalf of the Mayor's Office of
17 Sustainability and Food Policy. I'm Sarah Currie-
18 Halpern, Senior Policy Advisor of Zero Waste Program,
19 and I'm joined by Molly Hartman of the Mayor's Office
20 of Food Policy. Food plays a critical role in
21 promoting a more sustainable, healthy and equitable
22 city. We have an important role to play as a leader
23 in building a viable food system for NYC where all
24 have access to nutritious food and where we limit the
25 impact our food has on the environment. One NYC has

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION & SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 7

2 made ambitious commitments to create a New York that

3 is more equitable and sustainable. Reducing food

4 loss and food waste are critical to the successful

5 achievement of the goals laid out in One NYC. I

6 would like to point an important distinction. We

7 believe there are two primary types of food waste.

8 First, food loss is edible food that could be

9 recovered or repurposed from grocers, restaurants,

10 caterers, arenas and other businesses and homes to

11 feed people instead of being disposed. Second, food

12 waste is non-edible food and organic material that

13 could be diverted from landfill or incineration and

14 beneficially used as animal feed or for composting

15 anaerobic or aerobic digestion or some other

16 beneficial use. Food loss and food waste happen

17 across the food supply chain at farms and

18 distribution and warehousing facilities, in food

19 manufacturing, in transportation, in preparation and

20 in serving it to customers whether in homes,

21 restaurants or cafeterias. Understanding where and

22 how so much food gets lost is an important step in

23 reducing food waste and increasing the efficiency of

24 food recovery efforts. While we have a sense of how-

25 -how great this problem is, and what an impact it has

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION & SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 8

2 on our environment and our food system, New York City
3 does not yet have robust data on how much edible food
4 is wasted, although this is a priority for us to
5 determine. We are in conversations with the
6 Rockefeller Foundation and the Natural Resources
7 Defense Council to explore opportunities to undertake
8 a food waste assessment for New York City to identify
9 how much food goes to waste in New York City and its
10 sources across the supply chain. This will have
11 impact on our strategies related to working with
12 residents, businesses and non-profits in an effort to
13 capture and/or divert more of the food lost along the
14 supply chain. To date, we do know that roughly 31%
15 of our residential waste and 35% of our commercial
16 waste organic material that could be diverted to
17 landfill and incineration. With our Zero Waste goal
18 of reaching 90% reduction in waste to landfill by
19 2030, if we captured all recyclables and all organics
20 in our waste stream, we could feasibly reach a 74%
21 residential diversion rate, and an 89% commercial
22 diversion rate. In order to get closer to 90%, we
23 will need to focus on smarter purchasing, handling
24 and transport of food and other materials in order to
25 reduce waste before it happens. Why do we want to

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION & SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 9

2 divert organic material from landfill incineration?

3 Food and organic material breaks down into methane,

4 which is more than 25 times potent as greenhouse gas

5 emissions--sorry--as greenhouse gas and carbon

6 dioxide. When food and organic waste are diverted

7 from landfill for beneficial use, the amount of

8 methane released is significantly reduced. In the

9 One NYC plan, Mayor de Blasio committed the city to

10 cut its greenhouse gas emissions 80% by 2050. We

11 continue to expand upon the Mayor's major 80 by 50

12 initiatives, which are broken out into four

13 categories: Buildings, Energy, Transportation and

14 Waste. We have determined that two of the greatest

15 needs to cut down on our greenhouse gas emissions are

16 by reducing waste in general, and diverting as much

17 organic material as possible from landfills. Overall

18 waste reduction and diversion of organics will

19 continue to be cornerstones of our work as we move

20 One NYC forward.

21 The Mayor's Zero Waste Challenge. I am

22 the Program Waste of the Mayor's Zero Waste

23 Challenge. We have 39 business locations

24 participating from a variety of sectors including

25 arenas, restaurants, hotels, building owners and

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION & SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 10

2 commercial tenants, schools, TV productions, caterers

3 and wholesale--food wholesalers. Participant

4 committed to divert 50% of their total waste from

5 landfill incineration by June 15th, just a few days

6 from now. As part of the challenge they are also

7 required to donate all edible leftover food to local

8 charities to feed hungry people. Through the course

9 of the challenge, we have found that 37% of our

10 participants are donating leftover food to feed

11 hungry New Yorkers. Barclay Center, City Field and

12 other very large facilities participating are

13 donating edible food to feed New Yorkers. Our

14 participants are engaging in creative waste reduction

15 techniques such as offering reusable coffee mugs to

16 all employees, and using non-traditional parts of

17 fruits and vegetables such as broccoli stems and

18 leaves in their dishes served. Our results with

19 participants have been very promising. We will have

20 more to share in the days ahead as this program

21 reaches its conclusion, and we announce the results.

22 The issues of food waste and food loss are gaining

23 attention and momentum in New York City, and we are

24 working with our partners to build on this energy. A

25 feeding of 5,000 Event took place on May 10 in Union

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION & SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 11

2 Square and successfully fed upwards of 10,000 people
3 with a massive meal made from rescued food collected
4 by City Harvest. Five thousand people were served
5 live in Union Square, and an additional 5,000 meals
6 were sent to soup kitchens and food pantries across
7 the city. The Mayor's Office and EPA endorsed the
8 events, Feedback and International Food Waste
9 Prevention non-profit hosted and partners including
10 City Harvest, Grow NYC and many other local
11 organizations. Feed the 5K events have taken place
12 in London and other cities around the world. As I
13 mentioned before, we are in conversations with the
14 Rockefeller Foundation and the Natural Resources
15 Defense Council to explore opportunities to undertake
16 a food waste assessment for New York City to identify
17 how much food goes to waste and its sources across
18 the supply chain. The Office of Recovery and
19 Resiliency in partnership with the NYC Economic
20 Development Corporation is nearing completion on a
21 comprehensive multi-prong study to improve our
22 understanding of the flow of food through the region.
23 Better understanding these pathways including which
24 facilities and transportation routes are critical to
25 distribution will help the city locate its resiliency

2 investments to reduce the risk of food system
3 interruption. Food waste and food loss are gaining
4 attention and momentum at the national level. EPA's
5 Food Recovery Hierarchy points out the most ideal to
6 the least ideal methods of managing food loss and
7 food waste. Starting at the top, the most ideal is
8 source reduction or waste reduction followed by
9 feeding hungry people, then feeding animals,
10 industrial uses, composting and finally we want to
11 avoid altogether landfill and incineration.

12 In 2013, USDA and EPA launched the U.S.
13 Food Waste Challenge creating a platform for leaders
14 and organizations across the food chain to share best
15 practices on ways to reduce, recover and recycle food
16 lost and waste. By the end of 2014, the U.S. Food
17 Waste Challenge had over 4,000 active participants
18 well surpassing its initial goal of reaching 1,000
19 participants by 2020. Obama's goal through this food
20 waste announced in September 2015 are as follows:

21 USDA and EPA join with the private sector
22 and charitable organizations to set the nation's
23 first food waste reduction goals. These goals call
24 for a 50% reduction in food waste nationally by 2030.
25 National interest in rationalizing our food labeling

2 system and reducing food waste is growing as seen by
3 HR 4184, the Food Recovery Act of 2015 introduced by
4 rep Shelley Pingree. This is an omnibus food waste
5 bill focused on expanding food donation and raising
6 awareness of food waste. And HR 5298, Food Date
7 Labeling Act of 2016 to establish requirements
8 regarding quality dates and safety dates including
9 labeling and for other purposes. Many North American
10 Cities and states are address food waste and food
11 loss. We are looking towards other cities
12 domestically and internationally as we decide how to
13 move forward. Addressing food waste and loss is part
14 of the Milan Urban Food Policy Act, an international
15 protocol crafted by a steering committee of 40 cities
16 including New York City, and signed by 100 cities in
17 October 2015 at the World Expo. The Pact recognizes
18 the cities host over half the world's population and
19 have a strategic role to play in developing
20 sustainable food systems. In the context--in a
21 context of challenges including hunger and
22 malnutrition, climate change and food waste and loss
23 as well as the need to collaborate between urban and
24 rural areas and between the public, private and non-
25 profit sectors. The Pact represents a commitment to

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION & SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 14

2 develop a sustainable food system that among other
3 things minimize food waste and loss and recommends
4 actions to participating cities including raising
5 awareness of food waste, convening--convening and
6 collaborating with food and some actors including the
7 private sector to monitor food loss, and review
8 municipal policy around food loss and waste and
9 facilitating food recovery and redistribution of safe
10 and nutritious foods. C-40 is the convening a food
11 systems network to provide ongoing support for
12 participating cities including New York City. In our
13 One NYC Plan we committed to make NYC a more
14 equitable and sustainable city. Efforts to reduce or
15 prevent wasted food and food loss help provide more
16 food to New Yorkers that need it. It saves
17 consumers and businesses money, conserves energy and
18 resources and reduces our overall carbon footprint
19 consistent with our One NYC goals. I would like to
20 thank the Council's Sanitation and Solid Waste
21 Committee for its continued leadership in helping to
22 improve solid waste management, for your interest in
23 reducing food loss in the city, and for holding this
24 hearing this afternoon. Thank you. We'll take
25 questions now.

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION & SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 15

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you
3 so much for your testimony. We've been joined by our
4 Minority Leader and our good friend from Staten
5 Island Steve Matteo. Thank you for being here, and
6 thank you for your testimony. I have a few
7 questions. One just from personal experience. So
8 over the weekend I had a local civic association have
9 their annual health fair and they ended up with over
10 a thousand sandwiches more than they needed from the
11 Port Authority, and they're like a local community
12 organization. They had literally no idea what to do
13 with, and--and so--in--instances like that, how do we
14 prevent that from just becoming food loss. Well,
15 how--how is it to donate, you know, food to shelter
16 or to other places? How do we get that out to the
17 public to let them know that here when you have that
18 type of situation, here is what you should do, and--
19 and it's--and it's easy?

20 SARAH CURRIE-HALPERN: Well, it is easy.
21 There's--there's fantastic food donation groups out
22 there. I'm sure you know. City Harvest who is the
23 room, and there are others who actually takes more
24 smaller scale amounts of food. We can certainly
25 recommend some of the ones that we've been working

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION & SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 16

2 with, but I think it's a great point to make sure the
3 public knows of these organizations, and they can
4 reach out to donate.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Because I
6 felt very--you know, they felt one that they didn't
7 realize they were going to have that much. It wasn't
8 something they could plan for, and then secondly I
9 think okay, how do we do this quickly and without a
10 lot of--they didn't have a lot of capacity. We're
11 talking about, you know, seven, you know, seniors who
12 volunteer their time to run this. And they didn't
13 have a--a truck or they didn't have any really
14 capacity to do that.

15 SARAH CURRIE-HALPERN: Sure.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: There's--
17 they didn't have, you know, they were just struggling
18 to figure out what to do with all this food.

19 SARAH CURRIE-HALPERN: Absolutely.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: And how
21 do we get that message out there better to make sure
22 that that's not an issue again?

23 SARAH CURRIE-HALPERN: Are you suggesting
24 essentially like a resource guide or a--
25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION & SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 17

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES:

3 [interposing] Yeah, yeah, something that--something
4 that--

5 SARAH CURRIE-HALPERN: [interposing]

6 That's not a bad--that's a bad idea.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: That's
8 coming up some way to make sure that the public knows
9 that there is an easier way to do this. I mean, it--
10 it's simple.

11 SARAH CURRIE-HALPERN: Sure. Absolutely.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Just so
13 secondly just sort of going through some of the
14 questions I have here. You talked about this Zero
15 Waste challenging. You're forward. Do you think the
16 administration will be doing similar challenges and--
17 and expanding its program as--as they move forward?

18 SARAH CURRIE-HALPERN: Sure. The Mayor's
19 Office does plan to have a Zero Waste challenge in
20 2017, although it might be organized slightly
21 differently. We're not really sure on that yet so
22 it's not announced, but the answer is yes.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Okay, and,
24 you know, looking at recently adopted rules pursuant
25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION & SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 18
2 to Local Law 146, that required businesses to compost
3 their organic waste.

4 SARAH CURRIE-HALPERN: Uh-huh.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: You know,
6 is the city working with these businesses to make
7 sure they can donate edible food before sending it to
8 compost?

9 SARAH CURRIE-HALPERN: Yeah, absolutely
10 that was a requirement of the Zero Waste Challenge.
11 So those--that group is participating in the
12 challenge it's a requirement. For others I know DSNY
13 is working with them to give them the information on
14 who they can donate to before sending it for compost
15 or other beneficial use.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: And-and
17 does the city have an estimate of the percentage of
18 food that might be donated from these businesses
19 versus the waste that this composted?

20 SARAH CURRIE-HALPERN: I do not have that
21 number at this time.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Okay.
23 All right, and so we're looking at the Residential
24 Composting Pilot Program pursuant to Local Law 77.
25 The city doesn't have that much capacity yet. Are

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION & SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 19

2 there other diversion plans for food waste outside of
3 composting?

4 SARAH CURRIE-HALPERN: Well, I was going
5 to say DSNY believes there is sufficient capacity
6 for--

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES:
8 [interposing] Okay.

9 SARAH CURRIE-HALPERN: --for composting.
10 So I know that they are, they are working on that.
11 We can certainly follow up with them after this
12 hearing as far as other plans outside of compositing.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: And does
14 the city about how much potential food can be
15 diverted from donations of available food? How do--
16 how--?

17 SARAH CURRIE-HALPERN: We don't know, but
18 that's--I had mentioned the Food Assessment that
19 we're working on--

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Right.

21 SARAH CURRIE-HALPERN: --we're talking to
22 Rockefeller and NRDC about. So we hope to find that
23 out from that assessment.

24

25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION & SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 20

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: And is
3 food waste included in the strategies to address food
4 insecurity, and if so, how?

5 SARAH CURRIE-HALPERN: Yes. We recognize
6 that almost 1.4 New Yorkers live in food insecure
7 households, and might not be able to afford food at
8 some point during the year. We have a robust food
9 recovery program in City Harvest and other partners
10 that rescue food that would otherwise be wasted and
11 repurpose it, and we recognize that there's potential
12 for unused food, uneaten food to be eaten by those
13 who are hungry, and work with the restaurants and
14 repurpose.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: And we--I
16 mean as we harvest and--and some of your partners
17 have this really great resource guide for food
18 pantries that people are able to find them on a map,
19 and--and so on. Do we have that? Would we share
20 that with community boards? As a city are we making
21 sure that we know that--that other city agencies and--
22 -and in instances like community boards are sort of
23 linked in to know where the local food pantries are
24 so they can get that information out to their--their-
25 -their members?

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION & SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 21

2 SARAH CURRIE-HALPERN: Yes, so there's a
3 really map at foodhealth.nyc, which is an HRA
4 initiative, and I don't know the details of their
5 outreach plans, but it's publicly available.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Okay.
7 All right, I think that's--I--I- [background
8 comments, pause] Okay. Outside of food donation ahs
9 the city thought about investing other strategies to
10 reduce and in particularly standardizing food labels
11 and consumer education and outreach?

12 MOLLY HARTMAN: So Sarah mentioned our
13 interest in the National Food Date Labeling bill, and
14 we're supportive of that of the national solution to
15 food--you know, right sizing and making sense of the
16 food labeling. And we're, you know, actively looking
17 at other ways to help consumers and businesses manage
18 their food waste and reduce.

19 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: These are
20 things that we can do vocally as far as education,
21 letting people know about it.

22 SARAH CURRIE-HALPERN: It's definitely--
23 definitely something we'd like to talk you guys
24 about.

25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION & SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 22

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Okay, and
3 that's something I think we--we share an interest in--
4 --in trying to bring to some savvy, at least getting
5 education out. Some people don't understand what
6 these labels really mean.

7 SARAH CURRIE-HALPERN: Absolutely. Yeah,
8 yeah.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Because I
10 think there's--there's a misnomer that when--when
11 they're seeing these labels that the food is already,
12 you know, it's spoiled past that date.

13 SARAH CURRIE-HALPERN: Right.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: I think
15 even I'm guilty of that at one point in my life where
16 I said, oh, this is bad milk. It's--it's past this
17 date, and what does that date mean? I don't know.

18 SARAH CURRIE-HALPERN: Look at the time.

19 MOLLY HARTMAN: Yes.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: And then
21 is the city considering a public service campaign
22 similar to London's Food--Love Food Hate Waste
23 Campaign.

24 SARAH CURRIE-HALPERN: Yeah, that's one
25 of the things we're looking at nationally and

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION & SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 23

2 internationally that cities can do. That seems like
3 a great campaign.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: All right
5 because definitely I mean the more education we can
6 get out and especially in--in--in individual
7 districts I we definitely--I don't want to put words
8 in my--in the Chair's mouth but I'll definitely speak
9 for myself. I'm happy to be a partner with you both,
10 and--and figuring out how we can get this information
11 out to--in our senior centers and our libraries and
12 our community boards and ways we can really kind of
13 attack this and then let people understand, you know,
14 the importance of--of combating food loss, and also
15 in the labeling and education. So I'm happy to be a
16 resource in that way.

17 SARAH CURRIE-HALPERN: Absolutely.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: All
19 right, seeing that I don't have any other colleagues
20 with me at the moment I--I guess [laughs] I--I'll--I
21 will let this panel go.

22 SARAH CURRIE-HALPERN: Great. Thank you.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Thank
24 you. [background comments] All right, so this--I
25 see a packed room, but only three more slips. So if

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION & SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 24

2 there's anyone here who is interested in testify at
3 this hearing, now is the time to see the Sergeant-at-
4 Arms. He's the gentleman with the Council jacket on.
5 If he can raise his hand, and if you can fill out a
6 form because right now I only--I see a full room, but
7 only three more slips. So with that I'll call the
8 next panel. Kate McKenzie at City Harvest; Rachel
9 Sabell at Food Bank for NYC; and Margaret Brown at
10 NRDC, if you can all please step forward.

11 [background comments, pause] All right, if you can--

12 KATE MACKENZIE: [off mic] How are you?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Good, how
14 are you? How are you doing?

15 KATE MACKENZIE: [on mic] Okay. Thanks
16 for convening this hearing on food waste in New York
17 City. I'm Kate MacKenzie, Director of Policy and
18 Community Partnerships at City Harvest. This is
19 clearly not only a timely topic, but City Harvest
20 actually feel that we were one of the pioneers in
21 addressing the food waste issue. Thirty-three years
22 ago we started when a woman in the Bronx was serving
23 on the food pantry demoralized because they ran out
24 of food, saw somebody next door throwing out food.
25 And has forwarded now to a fleet of 23 trucks,

2 rescuing over 55 million pounds of food this year
3 that would otherwise go to waste. And if you
4 consider over the course of 33 years, we've collected
5 and delivered 545 million pounds of food, which is
6 preventing over 500 metric tons of greenhouse gases
7 from being produced. That's the equivalent of taking
8 100,000 cars off of the road year. one of the things
9 that I really want to focus today on is on the soup
10 kitchens and food pantries, what we call our agency
11 network in New York City. Additionally, I will point
12 that we divert our own food waste to the greatest
13 degree possible by diverting it to Build It Green
14 Composting, and in one case to a Connecticut pig
15 farmer. We were pleased to host the USDA and EPA for
16 their announcement in September that as a country
17 we'll be reducing our food waste by 50% by 2030.
18 We're a key organizing partner to the May 10th
19 Feeding the 5,000 event at Union Square. In fact, we
20 helped source the food for the event, and ensured
21 that an additional 500--5,000 meals were prepared and
22 distributed to our network of soup kitchens and food
23 pantries across the city--across the city. In fact,
24 it went, Councilman Constantinides, to the Astoria
25 Salvation Army in your--your neighborhood. We're

2 energized with the city's ambitious food waste goals,

3 and we support the Mayor's Zero Waste Challenge by

4 helping to measure the amount of food that

5 participants donate to City Harvest and ideally

6 donations to City Harvest will increase as a result

7 of the challenge. We're also appreciative of the

8 process the city is taking to answer big questions

9 about strategy and impact. The recently commissioned

10 baseline study of food waste in New York City as well

11 as the Food System Resilience Study sponsored EDC are

12 two large pieces of work that will yield significant

13 information from which to base future decisions on.

14 We're able to see also how New York City agencies and

15 offices can embrace strategies to reduce food waste.

16 From school food to NYCHA the need is great, and

17 finding solutions will likely yield cost savings in

18 the long term to pay for investments in the short

19 term. America wastes more than 1,250 calories every

20 day, and they're--each in--and 35 pounds of food

21 every month. That's each American. As a country

22 that's--amounts up to \$218 billion, and if we break

23 that down to the individual level that's about \$1,500

24 a person. Imagine what the means for people in your

25 district to have an addition \$1,500 a year that

2 they're literally throwing out perhaps in--in regards
3 to food costs. Just one-third of the country's
4 wasted food could provide the caloric equivalent of
5 the entire diet for more than 48,000 food insecure
6 Americans if it could only be distributed properly.
7 In New York City we simply don't have enough
8 information on food waste to be able to identify
9 tactical strategies to combat it. You can't manage
10 what you can't measure as we all have heard, and we
11 will have baselined data and can then determine
12 programs and products to achieve the greatest impact.
13 I'd like to use this opportunity to draw attention to
14 a bottleneck in our system, and that's the capacity
15 of emergency food programs to receive donations.
16 I've been part of conversations around the country
17 that focus on striving to reduce the amount of food
18 waste we currently have. According to the hierarchy
19 of food waste reduction the second strategy, which is
20 source reduction is to feed people. This makes
21 logical sense and fulfills two important needs.
22 However the conversations tend to come to a halt when
23 I bring up the capacity of emergency food providers.
24 Many soup kitchens and food pantries are limited by
25 their ability to store food. They may not have

2 refrigerators or freezers, or they may not have
3 enough space to receive increased amounts of food.

4 Or, they may have inconsistent hours of operation,
5 which makes scheduling deliveries difficult.

6 Infrastructure like trucks, pallet jacks, staff,
7 refrigerators all must be considered when determining

8 how to direct wasted to--wasted food for use in the
9 emergency food system. We're encouraged by the work

10 that our--that NRDC represented here by my colleague
11 Margaret, is doing in Nashville to quantify these

12 types of infrastructure needs as part of the

13 Municipal Food Waste Initiative. I do want to be

14 clear that diverting food waste will not end hunger.

15 A soup kitchen needs a variety just like you and I

16 do. An emergency food provider can only take so many
17 potatoes before they, too, will actually spoil.

18 We're eager to see how reducing food waste could be a

19 path towards good food jobs through added value

20 produces made from food waste or product sold in

21 secondary markets like that of Daily Table in

22 Massachusetts. Food recovering networks in the U.S.

23 and in food banks and kitchen and pantries already

24 receive and distributed nearly 1.7 million tons of

25 rescued food a year. If you haven't already, I

2 encourage you to check out the ReFED Report and based
3 on that analysis, over three times the amount of
4 rescued food, up to 5.8 additional tons could easily
5 and feasibly be recovered from food businesses in one
6 day. In one day. The road map shows how
7 approximately 20% of those additional recovery
8 potential can cost-effectively be recovered over the
9 next decade. City Harvest is interested in how the
10 baseline study in New York City could lead to
11 recommendations and realizations of the potential for
12 even more food recovery efforts in the form of meals
13 to feed people in need. We're also interested in
14 supporting efforts at the federal level to address
15 consumer challenges with date labels. No national
16 uniform sister for--system for date labels exists in
17 the U.S., which allows companies to use various
18 forms, as we all seen: Sell by, use by, best by and
19 expires on. These dates are generally not intended
20 as safety indicators. They're a signal to the
21 manufacture's estimate of how long the food will
22 taste its best. Absence of federal law, governing
23 date labels have allowed states to regulate date
24 labels leading a wide range of labeling laws. New
25 York, in fact, does not require or regulate date

2 labels on any food product. The bill recently
3 introduced by Congresswoman Shelly Pingree is an
4 example of the kind of changes that we think could
5 reduce food waste, and help families save money at
6 the same time. She's proposed the creation of two
7 labels: One that says expired on and one that says
8 best if used by for everything else. The ReFED
9 Report found that this action has the greatest
10 economic value per ton of any other action. ReFED
11 found that standardizing date labels was the most
12 cost-effective of 27 potential solutions. City
13 Harvest is interested in working with NRDC, the city
14 and our other partners to pass State legislation that
15 could incentivize farmers to donate crops that don't
16 have a market. Consumer education campaigns, which I
17 heard you discussing just as I walked in, clearly
18 have significant ability to reduce food waste in city
19 Council--City Harvest urges the City Council to
20 utilize and RDC's Save the Food Campaign in
21 neighborhoods and community districts across the
22 city. In summary, I want to thank the Council for
23 convening this hearing. I commend the administration
24 for it's progressive and ambitious thinking and
25 action involving food waste.

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION & SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 31

2 RACHEL SABELLA: It's on. Okay. Good
3 afternoon. My name is Rachel Sabella, and I am the
4 Director of Government Relations at Food Bank for New
5 York City. First, Food Bank for New York City thanks
6 the City Council for your continued commitment to
7 addressing the issue of hunger and ensuring that all
8 New Yorkers have access to affordable nutritious
9 food. The City Council has long played a leadership
10 role in this arena and we are pleased to see
11 continued strong leadership on anti-hunger
12 initiatives this year. From 48 members of the City
13 Council signing onto a EFAP support letter--thank
14 you, Chair, for signing on--to expanding the in-
15 classroom school breakfast program, implementing
16 universal free school meals in stand-alone middle
17 schools; increasing enrollment of eligible households
18 in the SNAP Program, as well as increasing funding
19 for emergency food are especially appreciate. Food
20 waste reduction is an important topic, and one of the
21 many strategies that Food Bank for New York City
22 employs each year to provide 64 million meals to our
23 network of more than a thousand charities and schools
24 as we work to close the Meal Gap. The Meal Gap, New
25 York City's official food insecurity metric is the

2 most sophisticated food insecurity metric available
3 representing the translation into meals of the
4 financial resources needed by food insecure
5 households to secure an adequate diet year round.

6 New York City's Meal Gap is 241 million meals. Food
7 Bank for New York City employs other strategies to
8 close the Meal Gap, and to support our network with
9 food such as wholesale purchasing, donated food and
10 government commodities. Government commodities such
11 as New York City's Emergency Food Assistance Program,
12 EFAP provide a tremendous amount of food to the
13 Emergency Food Network. With regard to food waste
14 reduction, some specific strategies and our member
15 agencies employ include the Hunts Point Market. Food
16 Bank for New York City maintains a 90,000 square foot
17 warehouse in the heart of the Hunts Point Market.
18 Due our location, we are able to receive donated food
19 from our neighbors, wholesalers and distributors that
20 supply our city's supermarkets, bodegas, restaurants
21 and delis.

22 Retail recovery: Food retailers such as
23 grocery stores, wholesalers, and large scale food
24 distributors donate products such as meat, fish,
25 dairy, produce and self-stable products such as

2 canned goods and pre-packaged items. In some cases,
3 they are also able to donate needed non-food items
4 such as cleaning products, household paper goods,
5 feminine hygiene products and similar items. While
6 Food Bank receives donations of mixed products, so
7 donations of multiple items in one delivery, they are
8 sorted in our warehouse, gleaned to remove any
9 unsafe, inedible or inappropriate goods, repacked and
10 entered into our inventory and online ordering
11 system, which is available to our member food
12 pantries and soup kitchens. It is important to be
13 aware of the handling, where the handling that makes
14 donations require. By taking on the greening,
15 sorting and repacking in our warehouse, Food Bank
16 allows community-based food pantries and soup
17 kitchens--many of which are shoestring operations
18 without any paid staff--to focus their energies and
19 resources on directly serving the New Yorkers on
20 their minds.

21 Farmers markets: Food Bank for New York
22 City helps to align select farmers markets with local
23 emergency food providers who are able to take unsold
24 produce to distribute at their agencies once the
25 market is closed for the day. This helps to ensure

2 that safe, nutritious and healthy produce and other
3 products are able to be distributed to people rather
4 than left for waste.

5 Urban Farms and CSAs: Food Bank for New
6 York City has agreements with local urban farms and
7 CSAs to recover leftover products that is not picked
8 up or sold. We ensure that it is given to local
9 emergency food providers to distribute to clients
10 across New York City.

11 Food Bank for New York City learned early
12 in its--in our 33-year history serving our city that
13 donations alone could not provide the quantity,
14 variety and reliability of supply to ensure that
15 vulnerable New Yorkers have consistent access to the
16 basic nutrition they need to thrive. Indeed, what
17 made the city's EFAP--the city's Emergency Food
18 Assistance Program, EFP, so significant when it was
19 created in 1984 was that it filled those gaps by
20 providing a stable, year-round supply of a full
21 complement of food including hard to procure items
22 like protein and vegetables. EFAP is the second
23 biggest source of food for food pantries ad soup
24 kitchens and continues to play that same significant
25 role today. It has also come to play an important

2 role in helping to fill a kosher gap in the emergency
3 food supply--supply. I want to once again commend
4 the City Council for continuing to prioritize funding
5 for EFAP in the city's budget. While we are excited
6 about the potential for New York City to adopt a food
7 waste reduction policy, we're also cognizant that in
8 other areas that has adopted such policies, our
9 sister food banks have not seen a sustained increase
10 in food donations. We know that there are many
11 positive policy goals that are achieved by reducing
12 food waste. We certainly want to ensure that safe,
13 wholesome nutritious food that is fit for consumption
14 goes to individuals who need it, not to a landfill.
15 With respect to increasing donations of food for food
16 pantries and soup kitchens, however, a food waste
17 reduction policy should always be seen as a
18 complement to, not as a replacement for other
19 strategies to increase an emergency food supply that
20 routinely falls short of the need. We would welcome
21 the opportunity to work with the City Council and the
22 Administration to craft a strong food waste reduction
23 policy that effectively drives an increase in
24 donations of safe, nutritious wholesome food to

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION & SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 36

2 organizations that help New Yorkers in need. Thank
3 you again for the opportunity to testify.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Yes,
5 please.

6 MARGARET BROWN: Hi, good afternoon. Can
7 you hear me. That's great.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Great

9 MARGARET BROWN: My name is Margaret
10 Brown. I'm an attorney in the New York Program of
11 the Natural Resources Defense Council. Thank you to
12 the committee for holding such a hearing on such an
13 important issue. As you know, NRDC is a national
14 environmental organization. We're headquartered here
15 in New York City, and we've worked for more than four
16 decades on environmental and public health matters
17 affecting city residents including clean drinking
18 water, pollution and solid waste. In recent years
19 we've begun to seriously on food. Waste of food is a
20 serious economic, environmental and food security
21 problem. We waste more than 40% of the food we
22 produce. At the same time more than 48 million
23 people struggle to have enough to eat. Here in New
24 York one in six New Yorkers lives consist in access
25 to sufficient food, and food makes up 18% of our

2 residential solid waste stream, and when it goes
3 landfill it breaks down into methane, which is a very
4 potent greenhouse gas. Addressing food waste in New
5 York City is critical to reaching many of the
6 ambitious goals set out in One NYC including Zero
7 Waste by 2030 and 80 by 50 greenhouse gas goals. And
8 if done correctly, lowering our total waste generated
9 should reduce truck--truck traffic on city streets
10 and scale down facilities in already over-burdened
11 communities. New York City is well positioned to take
12 on food waste, and we believe a comprehensive
13 approach that addresses reduction, recovery and
14 recycling, as people have mentioned today, is
15 necessary. During the remainder of my time today, I
16 just want to share a few of the most promising
17 policies or programs the city could put in place.
18 First on reduction. Buying only the food we need in
19 the first place is the single most powerful step we
20 can take to reduce food waste. It's sort of like
21 energy efficiency in the energy sector. It's better
22 just to use less. Access to appropriate technology
23 and information can help consumers, businesses and
24 others reduce waste, and we think the City can plan
25 an important role here. First, we need to measure

2 what's being wasted, and as people have talked about
3 already, NRDC and New York City and the Rockefeller
4 Foundation are exploring an opportunity to conduct a
5 baseline assessment to understand what food is being
6 wasted and why. In short, our team has been full
7 measuring, but it's a very powerful tool to reducing
8 food waste, and thank you Councilman for bringing up
9 education before. We think this is a really critical
10 tool. Consumers account for more than 40% of the
11 food that is wasted, more than farms, grocery stores
12 and restaurants. So helping them understand how than
13 (a) that food wastes is a problem and (b) how they
14 can reduce it--reduce their own food waste. It's
15 key. NRDC recently launched a major national public
16 service campaign with Add Council, the people who do
17 Smokey the Bear and other popular things. And we
18 encourage the city to adopt the campaign and use it
19 ways that can be helpful, and I can share with you
20 guys some of the artwork that we have and where it's
21 been used in other cities. It's things like
22 billboards, if you have billboard space, MTA space.
23 The adds are pretty cute. They say--all of them say
24 "best if use" like on the date label. So, and the
25 campaign is open to co-branding by the city also,

2 which I think could be a really great opportunity,
3 and I'm happy to talk more about that if you all have
4 questions.

5 Second, just briefly on recovery since my
6 colleagues have mentioned it already. It's--in the
7 event that you can't prevent food waste there's
8 always some food that's going to go uneaten. It
9 shouldn't go to a landfill. It should go when
10 healthy and edible to people in need. Currently at
11 national level food recovery efforts capture only
12 about 10% of the edible food available, and we have
13 some of the best food recovery organizations in the
14 country here in New York, and sitting with me. But
15 we think there are ways the City could help them,
16 many of which they have both mentioned. One thing I--
17 -two things I want to highlight actually. First is
18 in addition to providing increased capacity to the
19 emergency food system through refrigerators and
20 things like Kate mentioned, you could also provide
21 financial assistance to help emergency food providers
22 pay picking and packing costs to farms. So often
23 farms who would donate food, the cost of picking the
24 food, sorting it and getting it ready for someone to
25 pick up is too expensive, and prohibits them from

2 donating. And then the other thing I wanted to
3 mention is this idea--recently France passed this law
4 where it's--a grocery store over a certain size they
5 need to establish a relationship with a food pantry
6 emergency food provider, and offer that food for
7 donations. So you don't the emergency food provider
8 to become their waste hauler, of course, but the idea
9 behind the bill is that by establishing a
10 relationship you could begin to get more food into
11 the emergency food system.

12 Finally, on recycling, commendably and
13 the City Council has already shown great efforts on
14 organics recycling through Local Law 77 of 2013 and
15 146 of 2015, and we think the City should continue
16 these important efforts, and they require long-term
17 commitments to be truly successful. We also want to
18 echo Chairman Reynoso's--who is not here--concern
19 that the expansion of food waste composting should
20 not result in additional putrescible waste being sent
21 to communities of color or neighborhoods that are
22 already over-burdened with existing waste transfer
23 stations. We look forward to working with the
24 Council to ensure that our comprehensive food waste
25 composting moves forward--moves forward and NYC does

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION & SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 41

2 advance in a way that creates additional problems for
3 communities that already receive more than their fair
4 share of city trash. In short, addressing food waste
5 represents the unique opportunities to alleviate
6 economic, environmental and hunger--hunger concerns.
7 We think with a comprehensive effort, New York City
8 could be a national leader on this critical issue.
9 So I am looking forward to working with you all.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you
11 all for your testimony, and I want to make sure to
12 recognize Council Member Andy King from the Bronx.
13 Thank you for being here, Council Member King. I
14 just have a few questions. First, [coughs] how much
15 more food could you rescue per year with your current
16 capacity and resources?

17 [pause]

18 RACHEL SABELLA: [off mic]

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Could you
20 turn on your mic?

21 KATE MACKENZIE: I'm on. It all depends
22 on timing. So, right now, I would venture to say
23 that we could take on significant amounts of food.
24 Now, around the holiday time we naturally have a lot
25 more food in our--so it really depends on sequencing

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION & SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 42

2 and timing. It's not an issue, and I would also say
3 that City Harvest and Food Bank work very well
4 together and a lot--most of what we focus on is
5 perishable food items. So have a very--in fact we
6 were--when we first got our facilities we were really
7 instructed not to call it a warehouse because a
8 warehouse kind of implies that food is sitting
9 around, and the turnover with our facility is so fast
10 that we could--we--we can really just generate, you
11 know, food in, food out. But so we're--we're
12 actually also in a large partnership of organizations
13 and--and businesses working capacity for all of New
14 York City--

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES:

16 KATE MACKENZIE: --to help address that
17 potential for more food coming in, but more
18 importantly, where are areas of the city that under-
19 served right now, and how can we get that food to
20 those organizations more equitably.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: That
22 makes a lot of sense. I mean it--it--so I mean as
23 far as businesses, you brought up businesses that you
24 work with. How many businesses total do you work
25 with?

2 KATE MACKENZIE: We have thousands of
3 food donors in New York City and across the country.
4 Not all of them, as I think they are still here. Not
5 all of them as we are fighting, you know, are
6 consistent have a regular donation to City Harvest,
7 but it might be we desire that because it helps us to
8 plan, but sometimes if something at Barclays, for
9 example, they had an event, and there's a significant
10 amount of food left over, that's something that we're
11 just, you know, nimble enough to be able to recover
12 it at any one time. We are interested in figuring
13 out with greater accuracy the poten--the untapped
14 potential of food donors, and I want to illustrate an
15 example that Margaret made regarding the France
16 model. We know about--we have--virtually every city-
17 -grocery store in New York City is donating, if they
18 can, to City Harvest. But I will say without naming
19 any particular brands that some find it perhaps
20 easier to maybe use an anaerobic digester in their
21 store, which is, you know, you think about our
22 pyramid, is not the desire. It's the desire to get
23 it to feed people, but they're--they're still doing
24 something about food waste, which is great. It's
25 just not preferable right now. So I think that we

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION & SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 44

2 have a--unlike, you know, and it's interesting. I
3 was a--a meeting in Greece not too long ago, and
4 their food recovery it's just so--so--so in its
5 infancy compared to where New York City is. So for
6 many places, and I would imagine France is like this,
7 they--to make the connections with grocery stores to
8 feed hungry people is still somewhat of a novel idea
9 whereas in New York we've been doing it for 33 years.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: I guess
11 I'll sort of bring up my--my example in my first
12 question. So we see sort when there are large events
13 from large-scale entities that are able to sort of--
14 and have capacity. But how do we get the education
15 piece together that locally if there's an event where
16 there's--there's food that's--that's under--that's
17 not utilized, how do we get that out and, you know,
18 into groups and they understand like who to reach out
19 to, and it--it becomes easier. Because I think they
20 were--you know, sometimes they feel a little
21 mystified and--and--

22 KATE MACKENZIE: [interposing] Yeah.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: --they're
24 not sure where to go, and--

25 KATE MACKENZIE: [interposing] Yeah.

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION & SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 45

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: It's just
3 easier for them just to throw their hands up and say,
4 you know, I--I--we--we tried.

5 KATE MACKENZIE: Something that we--we
6 have--we started and are--are going to come back to
7 over the summer months, and I encourage everybody to
8 is to, you know, for caterers across the city it
9 could be wedding planners, or people that plan any
10 type of event to have a category in the contract to
11 say what do you want us to do with the food that's
12 left over? Because we--we can't--any food that has
13 been out on the serving line is technically not food
14 safe for us to be able to distribute. It--if it has
15 not been put on the serving line, then we can take
16 it. But food that's been put out, we can't. Now
17 that's not to say that we--we will try and link up
18 organizations, local soup kitchens and food pantries
19 to event halls and things like that. Because also,
20 you know, our facility is Long Island City, and for
21 us to take our Truck, it just sometimes doesn't make
22 logistic sense.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Yeah,
24 yeah, uh-huh.

25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION & SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 46

2 KATE MACKENZIE: But we would try and
3 figure out where locally we can make some of that
4 matchmaking happen.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: It's--
6 it's an interesting thought about the catering halls
7 having that. It's very--

8 KATE MACKENZIE: [interposing] Just
9 having it as an option because most people that plan
10 events would love to know that their food is being
11 taken care of in some way.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: You know
13 what percentage of those halls now are currently
14 working with Food Bank or--? No. Okay, you're not
15 sure?

16 KATE MACKENZIE: Well, I think it's--it's
17 not necessarily--and--and this is an area worth
18 exploration. I think the baseline study might get
19 to, but it's not necessarily the hall's
20 responsibility so much as it is the caterers.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Uh-huh.

22 KATE MACKENZIE: And so finding those
23 caterers that do a lot of business or the food
24 preparers that give great performances is a--is a
25 great example of a--of a business that will go the

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION & SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 47

2 extra mile, and not to say that there aren't others.

3 That's one that I know.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Okay. As
5 far as--and--and, you know, what can the City do to
6 increase the amount of food which you rescue and
7 redistribute it?

8 KATE MACKENZIE: Well, I think that
9 there, you know, there's--there's a few things. One
10 I know and Rachel has pointed it out, and it is
11 timely, and that hopefully by Thursday we'll know
12 what's coming out in the City Budget with regards to
13 the Emergency Food Assistance Program.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: [laughs]
15 We're working on that one.

16 KATE MACKENZIE: Yeah, and--and I think,
17 you know, it will be--it will be interesting to see I
18 think in another few weeks the--the Mayor's Office of
19 Sustainability's Food Waste Challenge will--the
20 results will be in. And, you know, honestly I was a
21 skeptic until I saw also the data that the RESA
22 Report came out with, and others that really showed
23 that consumer education is--is the magic bullet here.
24 That's what's going to help with regards to food
25 waste reduction. If it's about increasing donations

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION & SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 48

2 to City Harvest that or the Food Bank, you know, we
3 have tried a number of--of strategies to get people
4 to know what they can and can't donate. I think some
5 of the--there's a few, and really it's--it's not a
6 majority. It's a few businesses that for whatever
7 reason just are opposed to it from a national like
8 their--their national office provides it. So
9 together with the AmeriFest, who is our umbrella
10 organization that supports Food Banks and food rescue
11 organization. We're working that angle, you know,
12 and I--I--I think honestly the city is really doing a
13 great job at promoting both of our organizations.
14 You know, I know something that is a little bit
15 challenging for us right now, but we're working on it
16 is when there are seizures in the, you know, of fruit
17 carts or something like that where, you know, things-
18 -we're--we're really working on that so that the food
19 is not thrown out, and it's coming to a place like
20 City Harvest. So, you know, it's great when both
21 sides are--are there to work together, and not trying
22 to defeat each other's purpose. I would also say
23 that, you know, something like today and having a
24 hearing on this topic is really useful. There's
25 clearly a lot of people in this room that are paying

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION & SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 49

2 attention to this issue, and hopefully, it's just the
3 start of a conversation. So maybe it's round table
4 discussions, maybe it's individual members helping to
5 have those conversations. But I think today really
6 allows us to grow with that.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: I--I hear
8 you. As far as the Save the Food Campaign that NRDC
9 has been doing, I mean how--it--it sounds like it's
10 really doing well. How can the City piggy bank on
11 what it is that you're doing currently?

12 MARGARET BROWN: Yeah, thank you for that
13 question. I think so the campaign is pretty new, and
14 we have started to think about rolling it out to
15 different cities and counties, and I think we're in
16 the beginning of discussions here New York. So
17 that's great, but there are a couple of ideas that
18 the ways the City can do it. First, like ad--you
19 have ad space. That's--you can donate that, and I
20 know the Ad Council has great relationships with
21 businesses who have ad space. So I think it should
22 be popping up New York City some regardless. A few
23 examples of that, which are a little better, if I had
24 pictures of them, but our-- You can get like stencil
25 stickers on the trucks that look sort of like--

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION & SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 50

2 they're like gorilla marketing, but they're not and
3 they come off, that say "Save the Food." They're
4 sort of like any place that the City owns, real
5 estate sharing it there would be great. And then
6 just asking businesses to use it as well.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Okay,
8 and--and how--what metrics are you going to use to
9 decide whether or not this is just an effective
10 campaign and, you know, with--like how do we--how do
11 we judge that--

12 MARGARET BROWN: [interposing] yes.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: --as like
14 a return on investment and--

15 MARGARET BROWN: So the--first of all,
16 the key point, and then RESA Report really hit this
17 home. The amount of the--the Ad Council is an ex--
18 relatively expense campaign. It's like \$100 million
19 in donated advertisement estimated, which just seems
20 like a lot of money, but is actually a pretty small
21 investment in the amount of food that it should save
22 or the amount of food waste that it prevents. So the
23 primary goal of the campaign is an awareness campaign
24 to get people to understand that food waste is a
25 problem, and then the second thing is to help them

2 through going to savethefood.com, change their
3 behavior towards displaced food by better storage of
4 their food shopping lists, different kinds of tips.

5 KATE MACKENZIE: I'll also just say that
6 I--I know--I know that the message testing and
7 creation of the campaign was like a year in the
8 making. So it was--it's a very scientific. The
9 messagings--the messagings the messages are tested
10 and clear--I don't--you know, there will be intense
11 metrics behind it as any ad--Ad Council Campaign has.

12 [pause, laughter, pause]

13 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: I'm hearing he
14 questioned you all anyway. [laughter] There's a lot
15 of questions--a lot of questions that happened. And
16 so can you just give us one second? I'm sorry. You
17 guys can stay in the panel. [pause]

18 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Okay. Hello, so, I
19 just wanted to ask a question regarding the
20 conversation of the expense to--to have food that
21 would traditionally be thrown away actually get
22 transported to like the City of New York for folks
23 that might need it, and the complications or the
24 expense that comes from a business' bottom line, and
25 at the end of the day, you're not going to spend more

2 money to do anything because they're a business and--
3 and that's all they care about. So, what are--what
4 can we do? What should we do when it comes to being
5 able to offset those--those costs so that we can get
6 that food to assist--to people that need it?

7 KATE MACKENZIE: It is a great question,
8 and it's something that--I'm Kate MacKenzie from City
9 Harvest, and we worked with our--the Mayor's Office
10 of Sustainability on that for our own business model
11 because as we are a private business, and we have
12 food, we have food waste as separate from food that
13 is going to feed people. And there are many, many
14 creative solutions that were explored including
15 things like--well, we do give our food waste to Build
16 it Green, which is a local organization that turns it
17 into compost to go to City's parks and other places,
18 places like New York Botanic Gardens and not--you
19 know, Brooklyn Botanical Garden. One of them is
20 Botanic and one of them is Botanical. I can never
21 remember, and those are probably for smaller
22 organizations, but I also want to call out, and I--I
23 know that it's--it's still in process, but again the
24 Mayor's Office has a series of focus groups occurring
25 throughout the summer to really kind of pick--

2 identify strategies and from all, you know, sort of
3 360 view about these types of--of questions.

4 Because, you know, we want to do--you know, I'm
5 speaking as a--as an organization, we want to do

6 what's right, but it will--it--it would cost us more
7 money. So how can we come up with alternative

8 solutions to getting rid of some of our organic

9 waste. And some of those things like freezing it

10 until we have enough to be able to--to divert them to

11 get enough. But it--it's one of those things, and I

12 think like the Mayor's Food Waste Challenge is an

13 example of getting businesses, restaurants and the

14 like that have food waste to be able to identify how

15 much could go to--could be donated. So that that

16 could reduce the amount of--of hauling fees overall.

17 And I think it's also--I--I don't--I'm not as sharp

18 on this as--as I--as I could be but, you know, life--

19 what is the Local Law 46 or, you know, the--the--the

20 organics law. But, you know, like any new law,

21 ultimately, it--it will result in companies

22 generating less waste because they don't want to have

23 to pay to haul it, and-- Now, I can't remember--I

24 don't know if it's San Francisco or where the other

25 municipalities have enacted laws like that. But

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION & SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 54

2 ultimately, it--it becomes the norm and--and, you
3 know, it--it evens out. So the alarm was doing
4 something new is natural, and ultimately it will even
5 out in a way that makes the burden on businesses not
6 nearly as great as the perception might be.

7 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: What does the--the
8 food--what does cost us--someone like in your
9 organization, for example--

10 KATE MACKENZIE: [interposing] Yes.

11 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: --is all the food
12 donated, all of it?

13 KATE MACKENZIE: All of our food is
14 donated.

15 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Oh, okay, all
16 right. That answered that question. All right,
17 congratulations. I just wanted to ask another. I
18 don't know if we've asked regarding the date labels
19 yet? Have we had any conversations with that. I
20 don't even know if this is the appropriate panel to
21 ask that question. But regarding the labels and how
22 we can I guess make those standard across the board
23 in the city of New York so that we have the exact
24 same system, and that in doing that, we have a system
25 that's also a lot clearer and better defined for

2 consumers so they understand exactly what that label
3 supposed to be doing and what it is.

4 KATE MACKENZIE: Yeah.

5 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Have--have we had a
6 discussion on that in the Mayor's Office about that?

7 KATE MACKENZIE: My reservation with
8 doing something at the local level is I'd rather have
9 New York City Council and Administration together in
10 trying to change that in Washington because it--
11 there--you know, I--I pointed out in my testimony.
12 Right now the State, New York State does not require
13 or regulate state labels of any kind. So if New York
14 can pose a city--in--introduces some type of labeling
15 scheme, my fear is that would only lead to further
16 confusion and chaos amongst people because also the--
17 the brands, the--the food man--it's the food
18 manufacturers that have to label or not, and it just--
19 -I would be very and have extreme reservation about
20 trying to--to legislate something about labeling at
21 the City level, and I'd rather fight the battle at
22 the federal level.

23 MARGARET BROWN: Yes, I would just second
24 Kate's point. I think New York City is in a pretty
25 good place on their date labeling--we have no date

2 labeling laws any more, which is the way you want to
3 be, and the same for New York, and as hard as it is
4 to get things passed in Washington, I do think that
5 either having a package of state and/or state entity
6 regulations leads to more confusion for consumers,
7 and we should do our best to push at the federal
8 level to get this done.

9 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: So it's a couple of
10 things. The date labeling is--is an issue because if
11 it's being produced somewhere outside of New York
12 whatever laws are--will pertain to that state, would
13 get translated over to New York City, right. So if
14 there is a--you have to put the sell by date or
15 expired by date in Pennsylvania, and that's where
16 we're getting whatever produce or product from, we
17 wouldn't see that type of label in New York City
18 because we don't have any laws or we don't have any--
19 any--any--any date label regulations. So, right now
20 it is convenient because there's four or five or six
21 different types of labels for different products.
22 And what you're saying is inaction is actually better
23 than action in the case of our local law because you
24 think it needs to happen at the federal level. Is
25 there an opportunity, though, and I think there

2 always is. New York City is very special. We've had
3 more--more-- product than any other city, and if--if
4 the majority of states, which I think is the--the
5 majority of us just don't have any bills regarding
6 date labeling. If we could start setting the
7 standard here, it might really make a difference and
8 start--start getting the state and hopefully the
9 federal going. But waiting I think is a big issue.
10 I don't--I don't see things happening any time soon
11 when it comes to date labeling at the federal
12 government.

13 KATE MACKENZIE: Well, there's been some
14 interesting legislation that has been recently
15 introduced, and it does have--some significant
16 traction. I would also say that the City has a--it
17 seems like every--every other year there's a massive
18 food study that's undertaken. I know one right now
19 around resilience is--is being undertaken about food
20 that's coming into New York. It would be interesting
21 to enter into conversations about the feasibility.
22 I'm not--I'm not, you know, putting my--announcing I
23 do not support City labeling. I had extreme
24 reservation about it, and I think once we know all of
25 the streams that, you know, where is coming into the

2 city and how--and the-- I think of the--in a sense
3 just it costing, but the--the logistics and the--the-
4 -how--how a date--a--a local date label would be
5 introduced. I'd just really like to see that before
6 any legislation would be introduced. Otherwise, I
7 think, you know, like anything it could be incredibly
8 burdensome without really having the intended impact
9 that I know you would want to have, which is
10 alleviate consumer burden and confusion.

11 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: So we just want to
12 be clear. This thing of keeping it the confused way
13 that we currently have it now is okay until we get it
14 done. I just--I really want to let you know that
15 because of New York City the amount of--of food it
16 consumes, I just feel that if we set a standard
17 across--in the city of New York that people will
18 start complying with that one, and given--and given
19 that the rest of the states don't have date labeling
20 regulations that we could start setting that. And
21 that they will conform to what we want because we are
22 New York City, and they want to make sure they're
23 settling here. And--but if you're saying that
24 there's something in the federal government that's
25 got--that's gaining traction, we want to be

2 supportive of that because that's the ideal situation
3 I think.

4 KATE MACKENZIE: Because it really is
5 also about and the two--the example that I used is
6 Congresswoman Shelley Pingree, which has--she's
7 suggesting two labels, and this is modeled after
8 what's happening in the European--European Union,
9 which is "expires on" for food that actually expires,
10 and if you eat it, you're risking ill health to your
11 body. And then the other label, which is "best if
12 used by" which is quite different than "expired by."
13 So those two label as opposed to the myriad of things
14 that is completely uncontrolled and anybody can say
15 whatever they want on food. Those two labels and I
16 do think it is getting traction for many reasons that
17 I won't necessarily go into now, but I'm happy to
18 offline. And, you know, it will be somewhat of a hot
19 potato determining where in Washington just like
20 frankly where in New York City it would live. Would
21 it be with Consumer Affairs, and how do they do that
22 with everything else that they're trying to enforce.
23 So thinking out the strategy and the implementations
24 before anything is--is introduced, is--is something

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION & SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 60

2 that I would absolutely support and would be happy to
3 be a part of.

4 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Right, yeah, we
5 wouldn't pass any legislation without going through a
6 process--a formal process of framing how it would
7 make sense and a pilot program and so forth, and
8 just--

9 KATE MACKENZIE: [interposing] Yeah,

10 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: So I agree 100%.
11 Nothing we would do would be done overnight. We
12 would, of course, ask for your expertise and the rest
13 of the panels that were here regarding that. So I
14 want to thank you guys for--for being here, and thank
15 the rest of the crowd, and I think at this moment,
16 we're going to close the hearing. So thank you.

17 [gavel]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date June 24, 2016