

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HOUSING JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 1

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CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HOUSING JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

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November 30, 2016  
Start: 1:05 p.m.  
Recess: 3:18 p.m.

HELD AT: Committee Room - City Hall

B E F O R E: Ritchie J. Torres  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Rosie Mendez  
James G. Van Bramer  
Vanessa L. Gibson  
Donovan J. Richards  
Laurie A. Cumbo  
Rafael Salamanca, Jr.  
Antonio Reynoso  
Steven Matteo  
Costa Constantinides

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2 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 2

3  
4 A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

5 Eric Goldstein  
6 New York City Environment Director - Natural  
7 Resources Defense Council.

8 Priya Mulgaonkar  
9 Policy Organizer for the NYC Environmental Justice  
10 Alliance

11 Sarah Martin  
12 Co-Chair of Morningside Heights - West Harlem  
13 Sanitation Coalition

14 Jamie Shell-Holmes  
15 Resident, Polo Grounds Towers

16 Elena Tenchikova  
17 Project Manager - New York City Housing Authority

18 Bridget Anderson  
19 Deputy Commissioner Recycling Sustainability and  
20 Department of Sanitation.

21 Steven Costas  
22 Director, Bureau of Cleaning & Collection

23 Kilsys Payamps-Roure  
24 Chief of Staff to the General Manager - New York  
25 City Housing Authority

Miguel Acevedo  
Tenant Association President at Robert Fulton Houses

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2 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 3

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

4 Jason Fuhrman

5 Legislative Director for New York City Public  
6 Advocate Tish James

7 Chance Brown

8 Former team leaded GCF and NYCHA Recycling  
9 Apprenticeship Program

10 Jarred Sessum

11 Director, Love Where You Live, Green City Force

12 Patina Heyward

13 New York City Department of Sanitation

14 Carlton G. Davis

15 President of Resident Association of General Grant  
16 Houses

17 Barbara McFadden

18 Resident Leader Nostrand Housing

19 Joy Junious

20 NYCHA Environmental Ambassador

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3 [sound check, pause]

4 [background comments, pause]

5 [gavel]

6 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Good afternoon and  
7 welcome to the Joint Oversight Hearing concerning the  
8 NYCHA Recyclables Program. We'll also be hearing  
9 testimony concerning Intro 820 which concerns the  
10 establishment of a pilot program to provide  
11 incentives for recycling to residents in community  
12 districts with high rates of public housing. Local  
13 Law 19 of 1989 better known as the New York City  
14 Recycling Law requires residents to source separate  
15 recyclable materials including paper, cardboard,  
16 metal, glass, and plastic for recycling at all  
17 residential buildings in the city, including NYCHA  
18 Properties. NYCHA has struggled to comply with the  
19 Local Law 19 for a variety of reasons, including the  
20 design of its buildings which often lack indoor areas  
21 where recyclable bins can be located and ongoing  
22 budget issues which have made it difficult to  
23 implement a robust recycling program. In May of  
24 2015, in partnership with DSNY, the Mayor's office  
25 and NYCHA announced the NYCHA Recyclables Program.  
Its goal is to address compliance challenges with

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3 Local Law 19 to have recycling programs in all NYCHA  
4 developments by the end of 2016. The program  
5 includes installing recyclable bins in all NYCHA  
6 developments as well as the creation of Ambassadors  
7 Initiative where NYCHA residents attend training  
8 sessions and then act as community outreach to  
9 encourage other NYCHA residents to recycle. Now with  
10 starting this program challenges remain. As of  
11 November 3rd, NYCHA has installed bins at only 227 of  
12 328 developments. In addition, most of these bins  
13 are located outside which poses an obstacle for  
14 residents who want to recycle in cold and inclement  
15 weather. Also, NYCHA custodial staff will need to be  
16 adequately trained to insure that recyclables are  
17 properly sorted for DSNY pick up. We look forward to  
18 hearing from NYCHA, DSNY and others about the NYCHA  
19 Recyclables Program and how we can insure its  
20 success.

21 I want to acknowledge the members that  
22 are present with us today, Council Member Salamanca,  
23 Council Member Richards, Council Member Matteo, and  
24 co-chairing with me today, the Chair of NYCHA  
25 Committee, Committee on NYCHA, there you go, not

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1  
2 NYCHA. I gave him a big upgrade. He's working on it  
3 from the Bronx, the Council Member Richard Torres.

4 I would like to call up a panel before we  
5 bring up NYCHA just to speak on this issue. We have  
6 Eric Goldstein from Natural Resources Defense  
7 Council, Sarah Martin from Morningside Heights - West  
8 Harlem Sanitation Coalition, Priya from the New York  
9 City Environmental Justice Alliance, and Michelle  
10 from We Act. If you could please come up?

11 So Eric, Sarah, Priya and Michelle.

12 Thank you for being here and I guess, Eric, you want  
13 to start and we'll go down from my right to your  
14 left? Thank you.

15 ERIC GOLDSTEIN: Thank you very much.

16 Good afternoon Chairman Reynoso, Chairman Torres, and  
17 members of the Committee. My name is Eric Goldstein,  
18 New York City Environment Director at the Natural  
19 Resources Defense Council.

20 As you know, NRDC is a national nonprofit  
21 environmental organization headquartered here in New  
22 York. We've long been active on waste issues in New  
23 York City where our primary objective has been to  
24 transform city waste policy from primary reliance on  
25 land-filling and incineration to making waste

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3 prevention, recycling, composting and environmental  
4 justice the cornerstones of city waste policy in the  
5 21st century.

6 When New York City Council passed the  
7 Mandatory Recycling Law of 1989, it held the promise  
8 that all New Yorkers would have access to convenient  
9 and effective recycling services, and it required  
10 that all landlords take steps to achieve that  
11 objective. The Housing Authority is the City's  
12 largest landlord with more than 400,000 residents  
13 living in its 328 public housing developments, and  
14 the recycling law has been on the books for more than  
15 25 years. Nevertheless and despite some significant  
16 steps to add recycling bins at many of its  
17 developments, NYCHA has failed thus far to implement  
18 an effective recycling program for the vast majority  
19 of its residents. This failure is not insignificant  
20 and is having significant adverse consequences. Most  
21 obviously, hundreds of thousands of NYCHA residents  
22 are continuing to be denied convenient access to  
23 participate in the City's recycling program. More  
24 than a thousand tons a week of recyclables generated  
25 at NYCHA's developments are apparently continuing to  
bypass recycling facilities and end up in landfill

1  
2 and incinerators where they contribute to air  
3 pollution and increase generation of climate  
4 generating methane emissions. And NYCHA's lack of  
5 participation in the City's recycling program  
6 continues to drag down the overall citywide recycling  
7 weights where the Sanitation Department has been  
8 making program. It'll be difficult to achieve the  
9 administration's admirable and ambitious OneNYC goals  
10 for getting New York City out of landfills and  
11 reducing global warming emissions if NYCHA's  
12 performance can't be improved.

13           There are precise steps that NYCHA has to  
14 take to implement an effective recycling program.  
15 Those have been clear for decades and they're  
16 summarized in this testimony. Suffice it to say that  
17 bins alone is not all that is required. We  
18 understand that NYCHA faces numerous financial,  
19 logistical and management challenges, and we  
20 recognize that over the past 18 months NYCHA has  
21 taken steps to install recycling bins in many of its  
22 developments. That's encouraging, but the mere  
23 installation of bins does not bring NYCHA into  
24 compliance with the City's recycling law and the mere  
25 installation of bins does not mean that NYCHA is

1  
2 implementing an effective recycling program in the  
3 more than 2,500 buildings under its jurisdiction.

4           We believe that NYCHA residents should  
5 not have to choose between getting their elevators  
6 repaired or their hall lights fixed or the mold in  
7 their apartment removed with their recyclable and  
8 non-recyclable wastes properly and effectively taken  
9 off the premises. These are all basic services to  
10 which they're entitled. And indeed, it was the  
11 residents from NYCHA buildings themselves and their  
12 community groups including the Morningside Heights -  
13 West Harlem Sanitation Coalition, Mothers on the Move  
14 and We Act for Environmental Justice who reached out  
15 to NRDC more than three years ago to complain that  
16 NYCHA residents were being denied their right to  
17 recycle and asking for help in moving the  
18 bureaucracy, and you'll hear from representatives of  
19 those groups momentarily.

20           It's safe to say that NYCHA management  
21 does not yet have an effective recycling program in  
22 the vast majority of its buildings. NRDC, in  
23 anticipation of these hearings, visited a number of  
24 NYCHA developments that lacked effective recycling  
25 services back in May 2015 when we first wrote to

1  
2 NYCHA pointing out the failure to comply with the  
3 recycling law, and what we found was not particularly  
4 encouraging. At the Manhattanville Houses on West  
5 126th Street, for example, bins have been installed  
6 at several locations outside of the buildings, but  
7 these bins are inconvenient for residents and  
8 insufficient in number. Indeed, most of the bins we  
9 observed were filled to the brim with recyclables.  
10 They apparently had not been emptied for days and  
11 there was no space for residents to deposit  
12 additional recyclables. The lesson we drew from that  
13 visit and others was that it's false to claim that  
14 NYCHA residents do not want to recycle. If given  
15 half a chance, recycling can work at NYCHA properties  
16 and for NYCHA residents. Meanwhile at other  
17 developments we visited, NYCHA had not yet even  
18 installed bins.

19           We have three recommendations we'll  
20 summarize here. First, what is needed is a change of  
21 culture among NYCHA building managers. They must  
22 hear from NYCHA's highest authorities that making  
23 recycling work at their buildings is a priority and  
24 that their performance assessments will be based in  
25 part on an evaluation of whether designated

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2 recyclables were effectively being placed out for  
3 collection at the buildings under their control.

4 Second, NYCHA must adopt new mechanisms to track the  
5 implementation of its recycling program and to  
6 measure the results of its efforts. Absent any  
7 reliable data on collection and we haven't seen any  
8 yet, it's safe to assume that very little, if any, of  
9 the recyclable trash generated at NYCHA buildings is  
10 making its way to the Sims Recycling Facility at  
11 Sunset Park. What gets measured gets done and it's  
12 up to NYCHA's top management to begin a comprehensive  
13 data collection and monitoring system for recycling  
14 at each and every one of its 328 developments.

15 Finally and of upmost importance, NYCHA's leadership  
16 must get concerned residents and community groups  
17 much more involved in making recycling work at each  
18 NYCHA property. This program will never succeed if  
19 it's just a top down operation. Tenant groups must  
20 be given authority and some incentives to get their  
21 cotenants to participate in the program. NYCHA staff  
22 should start with a handful of demonstration projects  
23 that empower those tenants to designate and to design  
24 programs that will boost collections and incentivize  
25 participation. We and our community group colleagues

1  
2 have ideas for demonstration projects at the Grant  
3 Houses, at the Mott Haven Houses, and at the Polo  
4 Grounds Houses as a first step in moving forward from  
5 here.

6           Additionally, we believe it makes sense  
7 for the City Council to enact legislation that would  
8 propel such recycling actions at NYCHA properties,  
9 and that legislation would deal with at least three  
10 elements. One, directing NYCHA to fund at least  
11 three modest tenant-based demonstration projects;  
12 Two, requiring NYCHA to collect systematic data on  
13 recycling at its properties; and Three, seeking  
14 inclusion by NYCHA of recycling as a key benchmark in  
15 the performance evaluations of NYCHA building staff.

16           We thank Public Advocate Tish James for  
17 her long term advocacy on this issue and for getting  
18 the ball rolling in drafting proposed legislation,  
19 and we stand ready to work with you, with the members  
20 of this Committee and with the Public Advocate to  
21 advance these important programs as we move forward.

22           Thank you again for holding this  
23 important hearing.

24           PRIYA MULGAONKAR: Good afternoon  
25 Committee Chairs Reynoso and Torres and members of

1  
2 City Council. My name is Priya Mulgaonkar and I'll  
3 be testifying on behalf of the New York City  
4 Environmental Justice Alliance.

5           Founded in 1991, NYC-EJA is a nonprofit  
6 citywide membership network linking grassroots  
7 organizations from low income communities and  
8 communities of color in their struggle for  
9 environmental justice. NYC-EJA empowers its members  
10 organizations to advocate for improved environmental  
11 conditions and against inequitable environmental  
12 burdens. Through our efforts member organizations  
13 coalesce around specific common issues that threaten  
14 the ability of low income communities of color to  
15 thrive and coordinate campaigns designed to affect  
16 city and state policies, including solid waste  
17 policies that directly affect these communities.

18           NYC-EJA has been a leader in advocating  
19 for a more equitable and sustainable solid waste  
20 system for over twenty years. NYC-EJA led efforts  
21 for comprehensive policy reforms to address solid  
22 waste and the impacts of dozens of transfer stations  
23 on a handful of low income communities of color  
24 throughout New York City.

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2           Because a number of NYC-EJA member  
3 organizations come from communities overburdened by  
4 garbage, we advocate for strong policies that  
5 minimize the impact of truck traffic in our  
6 neighborhoods which leads to public health and safety  
7 concerns for residents. Public housing near waste  
8 transfer stations and along prominent truck routes  
9 are especially vulnerable to excessive truck traffic  
10 associated with trash pickup. This includes Grant  
11 Houses, Lehman Village, Carver Houses and Thomas  
12 Jefferson Houses in northern Manhattan, Ingersoll  
13 Houses, Farragut Houses, and Red Hook Houses in  
14 Brooklyn, and Mott Haven Houses in the South Bronx.

15           As recycling increases in these buildings  
16 and surrounding communities, over time the City  
17 should be able to reduce the number of traditional  
18 trash trucks as more materials are diverted to  
19 efficient recovery facilities. A higher diversion  
20 rate also reduces the amount of recyclable waste  
21 exported to landfills and incinerators via the land-  
22 based transfer stations clustered in a handful of  
23 communities of color. Also, about 1,400 tons per day  
24 of Manhattan's waste is burned at the Essex County  
25 incinerator just across the river in New Jersey. Due

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2 to prevailing southeasterly wind patterns in New  
3 York, it is likely that toxic pollution from that  
4 facility blows right back into Lower Manhattan and  
5 Brooklyn.

6           While we commend the City's effort to  
7 initiate recycling and public housing, we are  
8 concerned that such efforts rely too heavily on a  
9 top-down incentives-based approach while issuing  
10 comprehensive recycling education and engagement.  
11 Simply adding recycling bin to NYCHA properties does  
12 not necessarily lead to higher rates of recycling.  
13 One of NYC-EJA's members, the Morningside Heights -  
14 West Harlem Sanitation Coalition pioneered an  
15 innovative approach to recycling education with the  
16 tenants of Grant Houses which resulted in recycling  
17 rates higher than the city average. It is community-  
18 based programs such as this that can maximize the  
19 efficacy of recycling bins in public housing.

20           We recommend that as the City moves  
21 forward in implementing this plan to meet its  
22 recycling goals that the Council look to groups like  
23 the Morningside Heights - West Harlem Sanitation  
24 Coalition and their comprehensive efforts to create a  
25 successful engaging recycling program at Grant Houses

1  
2 and consider putting more resources into community  
3 and tenant groups that can devote on-the-ground  
4 expertise educating tenants. Thank you.

5 SARAH MARTIN: Good afternoon everybody.  
6 New York name is Sarah Martin, and I'm the co-chair  
7 of Morningside Heights - West Harlem Sanitation  
8 Coalition. I'll tell you a little bit about us. We  
9 started about 1994 looking at the rats and cleaning  
10 up parks and vacant lots, transportation, all things  
11 that concerned our quality of life, and we moved on  
12 to recycling because the rats were so... I mean they  
13 were everywhere in Grant across the street  
14 Morningside Gardens, 123rd Street, so we did block  
15 association, we had meetings, we took tours and met  
16 with the Department of Health and management of both  
17 developments and block associations, so finally  
18 moving forward a little bit we decided to pay  
19 attention to recycling.

20 We did some block associations, we did  
21 supers, we did community centers, we did some  
22 schools, and we learned as we went. And we finally  
23 settled on maybe doing recycling in a large area like  
24 a NYCHA development at Grant Houses which I lived  
25 there for 57 years so I know all about recycling and

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2 where it started and where it failed. NYCHA had  
3 started it three times in the past years that I lived  
4 there. Each time it failed. So the Sanitation  
5 Coalition members and the residents wondering why did  
6 it fail? We came up with the conclusion that it was  
7 lacking of education. What to recycle, where, why,  
8 and you need to know those things to get it in here  
9 because recycling is just like taking the garbage out  
10 every day or cleaning your house, brushing your  
11 teeth. It's a part of your lifestyle. And I think  
12 it should be owned by the residents. NYCHA should  
13 put up a flyer, you must recycle, it's the law. They  
14 put a couple of bins on the sidewalk and everything  
15 but the kitchen sink went in there. Then they put in  
16 the rear of the building and contractors and all kind  
17 of debris went in there. In the meantime, nobody was  
18 really recycling. So we took the task of doing it  
19 and this is the way we did it, a pilot program with  
20 the help of NYCHA and our City Council and Department  
21 of Sanitation and the residents. You need all of  
22 those entities working together to make it work. So  
23 I started visiting each building in Grant Houses,  
24 getting residents out, meeting, talking about it, the  
25 why we should recycle, a convenient way to recycle,

1  
2 because we're not going to go down the block, across  
3 the street to recycle. We'd rather just put it down  
4 with the garbage. Now, most NYCHA buildings have no  
5 convenient way of recycling. So we asked the  
6 residents with their input and they decided where to  
7 put the bins. Of course now they have been moved out  
8 to the rear of the buildings and no recycling is  
9 being done. So in 2006 we took that task on helping  
10 the residents at Grant Houses recycling and that I  
11 mean by education. At the completion of hands-on  
12 workshops in all our nine buildings we were recycling  
13 above the city average which you just heard from  
14 another speaker. Along the way we helped train  
15 coordinators of Grow NYC. They adopted our hands-on  
16 workshops and they call it the recycling game.

17 Intro 820 introduced by Public Advocate  
18 Trish James is based on a top-down which you heard  
19 earlier, which would not allow the residents to take  
20 ownership of it, and it's important that residents  
21 take ownership of this because we're the ones who are  
22 recycling. You know it has to be something that you  
23 have a need for, cleaner air, a cleaner environment  
24 that you're living in, those are the important things  
25 to us. Not a 10-cent discount on a pizza or a

1  
2 McDonald's hamburger or nothing like that. That kind  
3 of incentive does not work. It needs to be real to  
4 us. We're the ones who are doing it. I mean I  
5 appreciate her efforts and all of NYCHA's efforts,  
6 but look at it in a realistic way and let the  
7 residents themselves take leadership. Lay that egg,  
8 hatch it, and raise that child because it belongs to  
9 us. Okay, they need to know why we recycle.

10 Now, moving forward, the reason recycling  
11 is so low in public housing is simply because a lack  
12 of education and putting up a sign or NYCHA hiring  
13 one person to go out to all these developments and  
14 have a 10 minute meeting with 15 people or less  
15 showing up, it's not the better way. You have to  
16 have a hands-on... well, we proved it. We proved it,  
17 okay?

18 So I'm against that Intro 820 because the  
19 money spent on this bill should be used for training  
20 residents in public housing or putting that money to  
21 something that's going to improve our quality of  
22 life, and we should be the ones to decide it, not any  
23 Public Advocate or any City Council Member. So thank  
24 you for allowing me to talk about our very successful  
25

1  
2 program and any questions I'll be willing to take if  
3 you have any.

4           JAMIE SHELL-HOLMES: Good afternoon. I  
5 would like to ask one question of each one of you on  
6 the Committee while I'm speaking. I see everybody's  
7 doing different things. I'm looking at each one of  
8 you so I would like you to look at me so you can get  
9 a feel of what I'm speaking on. Okay, my name is  
10 Jamie Shell-Holmes (SP?). I'm a 48-year resident of  
11 Polo Grounds Towers. Polo Grounds used to be one of  
12 the best places to be. Now, of course, it's not, and  
13 recycling is a huge issue for my family every day.  
14 Now, first and foremost for all NYCHA developments, I  
15 know it's not just Polo Grounds, we have these  
16 recycling bins that are truly a joke. When you see  
17 the size of the development you know thousands of  
18 families are in there, how do you have something the  
19 size of a tall kitchen garbage can? After it gets  
20 filled, what do you do with the recyclables? So  
21 residents are saying, well look, my garbage won't  
22 fit, it goes down the chute. They're not recycling.  
23 I personally, my family, we put everything in the  
24 recycle, we separate the cans and the plastics and  
25 the papers and we put them into separate bins but a

1  
2 lot of times they won't fit. We have garbage every  
3 day. So this creates an environment that's conducive  
4 to all kinds of vermin and rodents and what about the  
5 people who can't get downstairs to that one or two  
6 bins in front of each building, number one? Number  
7 two, the workers. The workers do a phenomenal job  
8 with what they have. We also have to charge the  
9 superintendent and above with making sure recycling  
10 goes through. My window is right across from the  
11 recycling bins. I'm on the sixth floor. I can look  
12 down and watch how they change the bags. I have, on  
13 several occasions, witnessed them taking the clear  
14 recycle bag out with recycles in it, putting it in a  
15 black bag, tying up the black bag and throwing it  
16 with all the trash that's going to go to a landfill.  
17 What is the point? Why are we making the effort to  
18 recycle and NYCHA is not making the effort to  
19 recycle? So the workers are not given the tools to  
20 work with. The tenants are seeing these meetings on  
21 recycling maybe the day before the meeting. If you  
22 work, if you go to school, if you have a family, you  
23 need more than one day notice, and it's at an  
24 inconvenient time, sometimes four in the afternoon.  
25 If you work, who's home at four in the afternoon? Or

1  
2 if you go to school, as I do, at night, if you tell  
3 me it's five o'clock and my class is at six o'clock,  
4 I can't be there. Okay, so you have to generally  
5 give the residents enough notice as well because the  
6 residents are a big part of this.

7           So today I have a few issues that I am  
8 charging this whole Committee with. One, who's going  
9 to make sure that the New York City Housing Authority  
10 is adhering to all of the recycling rules and  
11 guidelines? Who's going to be the watchdog over  
12 them? Okay. Number two, who will assure that the  
13 workers and residents are properly educated and  
14 trained and have the tools that they require to  
15 follow all of the recycling guidelines, not just  
16 some, every guideline, and how can residents do their  
17 part 100 percent and not have outsiders come? If you  
18 put your recycles, let's say the plastics, all in a  
19 big bag, which I used to. Now I separate my soda  
20 bottles and you have someone come look in the bin,  
21 they dig.. they rip open the bottles, throw your  
22 garbage all over the place and then they take the  
23 bottles, that's not helping the recycling. So what  
24 steps can we as residents take to assure maybe  
25 there's a separate bin for soda bottles and cans?

1  
2           But this is something that needs to be  
3 address. This is something that needs to be looked  
4 into and this is something that needs to be worked on  
5 from all ends. Tenants and residents cannot just be  
6 told do this and that's it. Some people have to be  
7 educated, not all, but to be uniform you educate  
8 everyone and it shouldn't be a money thing. Yes, we  
9 know you need bigger bins. Put the money into the  
10 bigger bins. Okay, a thousand people can't all put  
11 their garbage in a waste basket, okay, and hold the  
12 staff accountable as well, hold the higher ups, let  
13 it go up the chain, hold everyone accountable because  
14 we are all New York City residents, whether it's  
15 NYCHA or not. We all have to live in these  
16 environments, whether you live ten blocks away or  
17 twenty miles away, rats travel. None of us want to  
18 deal with them. That's what I charge you with today,  
19 and I hope you've all listened and you take into  
20 consideration what I've said.

21           CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you for your  
22 testimony and anyone is encouraged to raise your  
23 hands if you wave if you support, and if you don't  
24 support just don't say anything, I guess. But I want  
25 to thank everybody for their testimony and we really

1  
2 wanted to have... it's tradition in Council Member  
3 Torres committee that we have residents come in at  
4 the beginning and speak on the issue before NYCHA  
5 speaks. It's a tradition. We might have to pull off  
6 sanitation once in a while, but we do have some  
7 questions for this panel, I know Council Member  
8 Torres as well. I just wanted to ask one quick one.

9 Sarah, you mentioned that you were  
10 concerned about the incentives, not giving the  
11 incentives, or that you at least have a choice as to  
12 what those incentives are and how they work, would  
13 that help modify your support for 820 or you just  
14 don't think incentives at all are important and that  
15 education is the key?

16 SARAH MARTIN: I don't think they're  
17 important at all because like I said it has to come  
18 from within, nothing without. It's just something  
19 that we have to take hold of and treat it like it's a  
20 part of our lives because it is in order for it to be  
21 successful. And to make it very clear, ten cents off  
22 of a lunch or McDonald's or pizza is not going to  
23 make one big difference. It may excite a few in the  
24 beginning but it's going to get old and we'll go back  
25 to the same behavior, but it has to be a part of my

1  
2 life every day like cleaning my house, brushing my  
3 teeth, getting dressed. It has to be a part of you,  
4 who you are, because you are concerned about where  
5 you live and the air you breathe. I mean I could go  
6 on and on and on but you don't have the time to hear  
7 all I have to say.

8 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: We've got some time.  
9 So Ms. Martin, what would you suggest as a proper  
10 educational method to get this information out to the  
11 residents of..

12 SARAH MARTIN: Well, Grow NYC adopted our  
13 hands-on workshops. It takes time. NYCHA doesn't  
14 have the time nor does NYCHA have the staff. That's  
15 why the ownership should belong to residents, and  
16 giving them that control allows them to become a part  
17 of what's going on in their daily lives. We went  
18 floor by floor with our goodies with non-recyclables  
19 and recyclables, and we talked about why we recycle,  
20 a convenient place, and what to recycle, and this is  
21 all very important and it was fun and we were given  
22 thank you's at the end of those workshops because  
23 they learn and they appreciate it, and they realize  
24 this will make their life better.

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CHAIRPERSON TORRES: I just have one question and obviously and much of the hearing will be center around NYCHA's plan, but it seems like we're going from a place of no recycling at NYCHA to some attempt at recycling so there is progress. We can have a debate about the extent of the progress but we are moving forward. NYCHA does have a plan and I believe known as NYCHA Recycles which fits into the broader strategic plan. I guess my question is as residents and as stakeholders did NYCHA engage you in the process of formulating a plan for recycling?

SARAH MARTIN: No. No. When recycling began at Polo Grounds Towers, first of all we didn't know it was going to be recycling. One day we were sitting in front of the window and we saw these workers digging up the ground and putting down concrete, didn't know what it was for, and a couple weeks later we saw these bins. That was it. And then about I'd say within a couple weeks of the bins going there, no stickers were on there, just they stuck signs on every floor this time, and each building has 30 floors. So they stuck signs by the elevator saying "It's the Law, you must recycle." That's it. And it's like a child..

3 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: And you're from Polo  
4 Grounds, right?

5 SARAH MARTIN: Yes, Polo Grounds.

6 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Are you aware of any  
7 trainings that were done for residents at Polo  
8 Grounds?

9 SARAH MARTIN: There was no training or  
10 anything else. What happened after they stuck those  
11 signs up, our resident association president went and  
12 spoke with management about that and said how do you  
13 stick these signs up saying it's the law and people  
14 don't know what to do? And the management at first  
15 said, well, you know, the cards that the Department  
16 of Sanitation just mails out to everybody about  
17 recycling, residents know to look at the card and  
18 then they know what to do. Not every resident is  
19 going to do that.

20 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: What about Grant  
21 Houses, were there any trainings that you were aware  
22 of, were you engaged in the process of formulating  
23 the plan for recycling?

24 SARAH MARTIN: Say that again?  
25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Were you aware of any  
3 trainings for residents regarding recycling at Grant  
4 Houses?

5 SARAH MARTIN: You mean from NYCHA?

6 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Yes.

7 SARAH MARTIN: Well, yes, I was at that  
8 meeting when the representative came from NYCHA, and  
9 they came with the little bag. I guess they put up a  
10 flyer, you know, letting everybody just know they  
11 were coming, but besides myself and the people that  
12 already knew about recycling, I guess there was about  
13 15 people at that meeting including the NYCHA staff.  
14 Yeah, one time. And I go back to the same thing. I  
15 guess NYCHA wants to do it because they don't want  
16 any outside people doing things that they supposed to  
17 be doing, but something like that, I go again,  
18 belongs to the residents and we got people to come up  
19 from each building to go floor by floor, knock on the  
20 door, announce who they are or put up a flyer and say  
21 we're going to meet at the elevator, come out, and  
22 they came out but they're not going to come out for a  
23 NYCHA resident, not too tough... I mean a NYCHA  
24 representative, okay? I don't want to be bothered,  
25 no, not today, no, I don't want any. It's not going

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2 to work that way. And once again it goes back to  
3 who's doing what, when and where, and it's our  
4 recyclables, we're doing the recycling, it belongs to  
5 the residents. We need your help but we don't need  
6 you to come out and do half a job of trying to  
7 educate residents. It takes ongoing education. You  
8 have residents moving in as well as residents.. the  
9 new residents should be... well, the way I did it was I  
10 was in touch with management and each time we got a  
11 new resident I was informed and I would send them a  
12 letter introducing the board and we recycle, and when  
13 we have our meetings, etc. And goes to that person  
14 or someone from the board at the meetings, monthly  
15 meetings, we discussed recycling every month. It's  
16 an ongoing thing, and putting up a flyer by NYCHA is  
17 not going to work.

18 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: And very quickly with  
19 the stakeholders, I'm assuming you had no role in  
20 shaping or formulating the planner?

21 PRIYA MULGAONKAR: No, we weren't  
22 consulted.

23 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay.

24 ERIC GOLDSTEIN: No.  
25

1 COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HOUSING JOINTLY WITH  
2 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 30

3 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Great, that's the  
4 extent of my questions.

5 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSA: Any other Council  
6 Member have any questions for the panel? We really  
7 do appreciate your time. We hope you can stick  
8 around, listen to NYCHA and Sanitation's testimony  
9 and see where we go from there. Thank you.

10 SARAH MARTIN: Thank you for listening.

11 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSA: Can we get the NYCHA  
12 rep out while the whole panel is here? Please  
13 announce yourself and state your name and title and  
14 the agency you work with before you start your  
15 testimony and I'm going to allow for you guys to  
16 decide where we start because I'm pretty sure you  
17 guys are prepared. One second.

18 COMMITTEE CLERK: [oath]

19 ELENA TENCHIKOVA: Elena Tenchikova,  
20 Project Manager, New York City Housing Authority.

21 BRIDGET ANDERSON: Bridget Anderson,  
22 Deputy Commissioner Recycling Sustainability and  
23 Department of Sanitation.

24 STEVEN COSTAS: Steven Costas, Director of  
25 Bureau of Cleaning and Collection, New York City  
Department of Sanitation.

3 KILSYS PAYAMPS-ROURE: Kilsys Payamps-  
4 Roure, Chief of Staff to the General Manager at the  
5 New York City Housing Authority.

6 ELENA TENCHIKOVA: And before we start our  
7 testimonies, we would like to show you a video if  
8 that's okay?

9 VIDEO: Live in public housing throughout  
10 New York City and they produce 450 tons of garbage  
11 every day. Like all New Yorkers, residents of the  
12 New York City Housing Authority known as NYCHA want  
13 to see a future that's cleaner and greener and live  
14 in safe, clean and connected communities. With the  
15 support of Mayor Bill De Blasio, the Department of  
16 Sanitation and New York's Public Housing have been  
17 working closely together to launch a new recycling  
18 program and NYCHA.

19 By the end of 2016 all of NYCHA will be  
20 in compliance with the New York City Recycling Law.

21 NYCHA is a key component of the Mayor's  
22 vision of zero waste by 2030.

23 At school we talk about recycling and I'm  
24 excited to do that at home.

25 I'm getting trained and then training my  
staff on what to do.

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2           We have to do things a little  
3 differently. It's all about making the effort.

4           Everywhere I go residents tell me they  
5 want their developments to be cleaner and greener.  
6 At NYCHA we should recycle and we will.

7           ELENA TENCHIKOVA: Chairs Ritchie Torres  
8 and Antonio Reynoso, members of the Public Housing  
9 and Sanitation and Solid Waste Management Committees  
10 and other distinguished members of City Council, good  
11 afternoon. I am Elena Tenchikova, Project Manager in  
12 NYCHA's Management Services Department. Joining me  
13 today are Kilsys Payamps-Roure, Chief of Staff to the  
14 General Manager and my colleagues from Department of  
15 Sanitation Bridget Anderson, Deputy Commissioner of  
16 the Bureau of Recycling and Sustainability, and  
17 Steven Costas, Director for Bureau of Cleaning and  
18 Collection.

19           Thank you for the opportunity to discuss  
20 the historic progress NYCHA has made in recycling as  
21 part of the next generation NYCHA, the Authority's  
22 10-year strategic plan. Next generation NYCHA is  
23 guiding the authority to create safe, clean, and  
24 connected communities and transform NYCHA into a more  
25 sustainable organization.

1  
2 Mayor De Blasio made the bold commitment  
3 for New York to become the most sustainable big city  
4 in the world. Through the OneNYC plan and its goal  
5 to send zero waste to landfills by 2030 via a series  
6 of initiatives including recycling, through the  
7 leadership of the Mayor De Blasio, NYCHA Chair Shola  
8 Olatoye, and DSNY Commissioner Catherine Garcia, and  
9 the strong partnership with collaborators which  
10 include both Chair Torres and Chair Reynoso, this  
11 administration is doing something that no other  
12 administration has been able to accomplish in nearly  
13 three decades. Our effort differs from past attempts  
14 because of the partnership we formed with government  
15 entities, residents and nonprofits such as Green City  
16 Force, Grow NYC and the Robin Hood Foundation. These  
17 partnerships give us confidence that we will succeed  
18 as it takes buying from the entire community to  
19 change culture, and that is what we're doing. By the  
20 end of 2016 we will have made recycling available at  
21 public housing for more than 400,000 residents living  
22 in nearly 2,600 buildings across the five boroughs.

23 As the country's largest public housing  
24 authority in the nation's largest city, NYCHA has an  
25 important part to play in preserving the land we live

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2 on, the water we drink, and the air we breathe for  
3 this and future generations. As Mayor De Blasio puts  
4 our city on a path towards long term waste reduction  
5 and greater sustainability, NYCHA is fostering  
6 leaders on environmentally conscious practices like  
7 recycling. The Authority understands that proper  
8 waste disposal is a quality of life issue for our  
9 residents. For too long conversation focused on  
10 NYCHA's challenges with basic garbage issues, litter,  
11 dumping, pests, improper waste disposal, and  
12 recycling got left out of the equation. Under this  
13 administration, recycling is an important piece of  
14 NYCHA's overall waste management strategy and  
15 operational plans, and not work with residents to  
16 feel ownership and empowerment to love where they  
17 live.

18 NYCHA had made some efforts to recycling  
19 since 1989 but it was not a systemic approach.  
20 Recycling is a challenge for any landlord of  
21 scattered multi-family dwellings where you have a  
22 concentration of people and minimum space. It was  
23 clear to us that overcoming these infrastructure  
24 challenge specific to our developments an educational  
25 outreach was necessary to achieve a successful and a

1  
2 comprehensive program at NYCHA. Our buildings, the  
3 majority of which were built prior to 1960s, were not  
4 designed with recycling in mind. In many cases, our  
5 developments lacked a dedicated space where  
6 recyclables can be stored until they are picked up  
7 and a variety of development configurations require  
8 more than one infrastructural solution. Also, the  
9 Department of Sanitation had to incorporate NYCHA  
10 developments into its existing collection routes, in  
11 addition education of residents and training of staff  
12 was needed to make recycling part of a new paradigm.

13           Finally, it was historically difficult to  
14 identify and allocate funds to remedy the issues in a  
15 landscape of federal funding for public housing. An  
16 improved and a more comprehensive approach was  
17 tailored to address the obstacles to a successful  
18 system-wide recycling program. First we looked at  
19 the issue. We discussed the challenges with staff  
20 and residents who provide the recommendations. Then  
21 we formed a waste management working group where  
22 NYCHA staff and industry experts discuss how we could  
23 implement a safe and effective program based on best  
24 practices and other landlords.

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2           With luck user-friendly bin design and  
3 designated areas for collections that are accessible  
4 to staff and residents and that encourage proper  
5 waste disposal. We then conducted an assignment of  
6 all of our sites to determine the infrastructure  
7 needed such as concrete paths to support bins and  
8 instructive decals to facilitate sorting of  
9 recyclables. During the site assessments we also  
10 inform residents at the site about the recycling  
11 program and in concert with residents and staff we  
12 identified appropriate locations for the bins. Then  
13 we installed the necessary infrastructure including  
14 signage in coordination with Department of  
15 Sanitation. Following the infrastructure additions,  
16 we launched an extensive outreach campaign to educate  
17 residents on what, why and how to recycle.

18           In partnership with DSNY we've engaged  
19 more than 11,600 residents in all 328 developments at  
20 about 350 kickoff meetings and special events  
21 including these geared towards youth and seniors.  
22 We've publicized the recycling program and its  
23 protocols and the dedicated website, and in the NYCHA  
24 Journal, a newspaper for residents. Chair Olatoye  
25 and Commissioner Garcia starred in an educational

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2 video shown in taxis to highlight the recycling  
3 initiative. We distributed informational materials  
4 such as mailings and flyers in multiple languages to  
5 every NYCHA household. We trained more than 1,400  
6 employees from frontline staff to borough management  
7 on recycling procedures in collaboration with the  
8 Department of Sanitation and Grown NYC. Finally,  
9 we've been working with the Department of Sanitation  
10 to arrange recycling pickups at every development.

11           We have spent almost \$3 million out of  
12 the \$13.5 million allocated over the five years of  
13 our recycling initiative installing the necessary  
14 infrastructure and educating residents at nearly all  
15 of our developments. NYCHA works with Jamestown  
16 Advanced Products, a woman-owned business in Upstate  
17 New York, to manufacture each 250-pound bin which was  
18 custom designed with input from staff and residents.  
19 By buying local, NYCHA saved on shipping costs and  
20 reduced carbon emission associated with transport  
21 since the other suppliers are based in California  
22 tock Canada. NYCHA employees performed the site work  
23 in-house laying the concrete paths for each bin which  
24 involved around 3,000 pounds of material. In total,  
25 we've installed 800 pads and 1,500 bins.

1  
2 NYCHA's current recycling efforts started  
3 at two developments in February 2015, and our program  
4 has grown considerably since then. I am pleased to  
5 report that as of October 2016, recycling is active  
6 meaning that DSNY collection routes have also been  
7 initiated at 1,960 buildings that means nearly  
8 370,000 residents that represents 91 percent of our  
9 population currently have access to recycle.

10 The second phase of the initiative which  
11 is currently underway is continued outreach and  
12 education at every single development to  
13 significantly increase resident participation. These  
14 educational activities, workshops and events will be  
15 conducted in collaboration with the Department of  
16 Sanitation and Grow NYC, our nonprofit partner.  
17 Staff training will also continue. With support from  
18 the Department of Sanitation, the staff will be  
19 retrained annually on recycling procedures. As we  
20 continue to raise awareness about recycling, we will  
21 assess whether developments require additional  
22 infrastructure.

23 To monitor the effectiveness of the  
24 program, we will conduct recycling inspections,  
25 communicate regularly with the Department of

1  
2 Sanitation and submit periodic reports to the Mayor's  
3 Office of Sustainability.

4           As I mentioned, the partnership we  
5 developed with the city, nonprofits, residents, and  
6 employees are crucial to our success. Now, I'd like  
7 to describe some of these efforts.

8           Resident engagement and education have  
9 been a central part of our implementation. Thanks to  
10 the vital support from partners like Green City  
11 Force, Grow NYC, and Department of Sanitation, we've  
12 encouraged thousands of residents to make recycling a  
13 mindset and a daily practice. Residents are  
14 collaborating with us to foster the program's  
15 success. Fifty Green City Force energy core members,  
16 young NYCHA residents preparing for green color  
17 careers, are promoting recycling and developments,  
18 participating in the Mayor's action plan for  
19 neighborhood safety, a collaborative effort to make  
20 communities safe and healthier. Grow NYC is training  
21 residents to become volunteer Environmental  
22 Ambassadors who share their knowledge and enthusiasm  
23 for recycling with the community. Eighty staff in  
24 our resident engagement department have been trained  
25 on recycling outreach and education tailored to

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2 constituents like youth, adults, seniors, and  
3 resident leaders. They take every opportunity to  
4 incorporate instruction and recycling into their  
5 daily interactions with the residents. As part of  
6 the Robin Hood funded program that train residents to  
7 become caretakers, participants learn about recycling  
8 and best practices in a daylong training and also  
9 visit our local recycling facility thanks to the  
10 support from Department of Sanitation. This is an  
11 effective opportunity, not only to engage residents,  
12 but to future NYCHA staff as well.

13           Our recycling community events have been  
14 well attended such as one held at Cooper Park Houses  
15 where elected officials like Speaker Mark-Viverito  
16 and Chair Reynoso have participated. This outreach  
17 is inspiring a new generation of leaders to dedicate  
18 themselves to our greener city. Joy Junious, a young  
19 resident of Brownsville Houses, is one of NYCHA's  
20 Environmental Ambassadors. About her work, she said  
21 my goal is to make my neighborhood a better place,  
22 make it cleaner and more visually appealing for  
23 current and future generations. Recycling and  
24 healthy environments go hand in hand, and with proper  
25 trash disposal you see the benefits immediately.

1  
2 Another Ambassador, Pamela Azora (SP?), of Pomonok  
3 Houses said that the blue and green recycling bins at  
4 her development are a beautiful site, and she hopes  
5 to become really proficient in delivering the message  
6 to residents and neighbors that we're going green,  
7 they care about the planet and want their children  
8 and grandchildren to grow up in a healthy  
9 environment. One of these amazing Ambassadors is  
10 with us today. The enthusiasm for recycling is  
11 evident in Marlboro Houses where recycling has truly  
12 became part of the development's culture thanks to  
13 the collaboration between residents and staff.  
14 Marlboro was one of the first sites to become active,  
15 and DSNY collection reports show consistently good  
16 recycling grades. Other successful developments  
17 include Baruch and Woodson Houses.

18 NYCHA's staff were excited when they  
19 heard about that we would be discussing a recycling  
20 initiative at the City Council hearing and you'll  
21 have the opportunity to read the comments that  
22 several employees submitted from the public record  
23 about their role in the launch. Recycling is a  
24 challenge across the city but we believe we have  
25 developed a program that will be successful in NYCHA

1  
2 and help move the city toward a zero waste goal. To  
3 overcome the major obstacles, our comprehensive  
4 approach includes resident involvement, staff  
5 education, appropriate infrastructure that's based on  
6 best practices, and collaboration with Department of  
7 Sanitation and other partners.

8           This is a historic initiative. By  
9 January 1st every single NYCHA resident will be able  
10 to recycle. We're installing innovative  
11 infrastructure in every development and the extent of  
12 our resident engagement is unprecedented. We will  
13 continue reaching out to residents over the next few  
14 years to educate them about the need for recycling  
15 and the process. With Department of Sanitation, the  
16 City Council, our nonprofit partners, residents and  
17 staff all working together we know we will be  
18 succeeding and boosting our city's environmental  
19 health and awareness reducing NYCHA's carbon  
20 footprint and improving the quality of life at our  
21 developments. Thank you for your continued support,  
22 your presence in the community, standing with us at  
23 our recycling events inspires staff and residents  
24 alike. We're happy to answer any questions you may  
25 have.

3 BRIDGET ANDERSON: Bridget Anderson,  
4 Deputy Commissioner Recycling and Sustainability  
5 Sanitation. Good afternoon Chair Reynoso, Chair  
6 Torres, and members of the Committees on Sanitation  
7 and Solid Waste Management and Public Housing. I am  
8 Bridget Anderson, Deputy Commissioner for Bureau of  
9 Recycling and Sustainability at the New York City  
10 Department of Sanitation. With me today is Chief  
11 Steven Costas, the Director of the Department of  
12 Sanitation's Bureau of Cleaning and Collection.

13 Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the status  
14 of recycling in New York City housing complexes and  
15 the types of recycling services and support supplied  
16 by the Department to NYCHA buildings and residents.

17 I have some opening remarks and  
18 thereafter we are happy to join our colleagues at  
19 NYCHA in answering your questions.

20 For more than two decades, the Department  
21 has provided NYCHA with hands-on assistance to  
22 implement recycling in NYCHA housing, and there has  
23 been substantial interagency cooperation between the  
24 Department and NYCHA in all aspects of waste  
25 management. While there are challenges, we believe

1  
2 that NYCHA developments can successfully implement  
3 the City's recycling program.

4           Improving the recycling rates and load  
5 diversionary of the city and specifically among NYCHA  
6 residents is an important priority for the Department  
7 of Sanitation. We continue to support NYCHA's effort  
8 to enhance resident access to recycling  
9 infrastructure and staff management of the material  
10 so that more recyclables can make it to the curb for  
11 DSNY's collection. Doing so requires intensive  
12 outreach and close operational coordination between  
13 DSNY, NYCHA and its residents. As detailed in  
14 NYCHA's testimony, Phase One of the NYCHA Recycles  
15 program includes the installation of newly designated  
16 recycling bins, training for NYCHA staff, letters to  
17 all residents, new signage, educational materials,  
18 and kickoff meetings where residents play a recycling  
19 game to properly place materials in the right bins,  
20 residents recycling questions are answered by  
21 experts, and residents are provided with sort-and-  
22 store bags to contain their recyclables inside their  
23 home.

24           DSNY is providing recycling collection  
25 service to all developments where the program has

1  
2 been launched and we expect that Phase One will be  
3 rolled out to all of NYCHA by the end of this year.

4           To support resident recycling education,  
5 DSNY has committed the time and expertise of its  
6 nonprofit partner Grow NYC to train resident  
7 engagement staff and to directly engage with  
8 residents. In addition, we have insured that NYCHA  
9 residents and developments have access to information  
10 regarding how to recycle. Specifically, DSNY and  
11 NYCHA sent a joint mailer to all NYCHA households  
12 announcing the new program and included a recycling  
13 checklist which can be hung inside your apartment  
14 which describes what and how to recycle. DSNY  
15 provided all NYCHA developments with an initial  
16 supply of recycling decals for the bins, a customized  
17 decal to be placed in hallways to inform residents  
18 what materials can be placed in the garbage chute and  
19 what should be taken to the recycling bins. DSNY  
20 provided recycling checklists, comic books, coloring  
21 books and other pamphlets to each NYCHA management  
22 company for distribution to its residents in common  
23 areas. DSNY has set up an online order form for  
24 NYCHA staff to order additional decals and  
25 educational material free of charge.

1  
2           We worked with Grow NYC to create the  
3 Environmental Ambassadors program in order to support  
4 and increase NYCHA recycling. Environmental  
5 Ambassadors are NYCHA residents who are trained by  
6 Grow NYC in two recycling workshops, and thereafter  
7 they conduct 12 hours of community service outreach  
8 at their developments to encourage their neighbors to  
9 participate in the NYCHA Recycles program. In fiscal  
10 year 2016, 23 Environmental Ambassador candidates  
11 completed both workshops. Nine of these individuals  
12 have already completed their volunteer hours and the  
13 rest are in the process of completing their volunteer  
14 hours, and this program will be renewed again in  
15 Spring 2017.

16           To provide feedback to NYCHA on this  
17 program, DSNY conducts a curbside setup survey each  
18 week on recycling day. We send an activity report  
19 that summarizes the data collected every two weeks.  
20 The activity report flags any issues encountered by  
21 DSNY collection staff, and encourages NYCHA's staff  
22 to properly follow curbside setup procedures. Based  
23 on these activity reports, DSNY deploys supplemental  
24 outreach on an as-needed basis to NYCHA sites to help  
25 them resolve issues and support NYCHA staff.

1  
2           In addition to DSNY's activities to  
3 support increased recycling at NYCHA housing  
4 developments, the Department has targeted low  
5 diversion districts more generally as a focal point  
6 for additional outreach. DSNY is conducting  
7 community meetings, super trainings and public  
8 education events in these districts. Additionally,  
9 DSNY is exploring barriers to recycling in these  
10 districts to inform future recycling and outreach  
11 efforts.

12           As NYCHA moves into Phase Two of NYCHA  
13 Recycles, DSNY looks forward to continuing to support  
14 NYCHA staff and residents to insure that our efforts  
15 translate into a successful NYCHA Recycles program  
16 with measurable improvements in diversion.

17           Turning now to Intro 820, DSNY is  
18 interested in exploring the use of incentive programs  
19 in order to increase recycling and favors this  
20 concept. However, DSNY is not prepared at this time  
21 to operationalize the program as outlined  
22 specifically in Intro 820. First, DSNY has  
23 operational concerns with some aspects of the bill.  
24 For example, while the bill specifies that incentives  
25 are provided on the amount of recyclable material

1  
2 collected from the building or the public housing  
3 development on a weekly basis, DSNY simply does not  
4 measure weights collected for individual houses and  
5 buildings. DSNY feels that some time needs to be  
6 spent first engaging with NYCHA, nonprofit and  
7 grassroots organizations and businesses to examine  
8 incentive strategies to determine what would be an  
9 effective and feasible approach. We would want to  
10 test a few concepts to determine their viability and  
11 sustainability and then scale up as appropriate. We  
12 will be happy to engage in meaningful discussions  
13 with the Public Advocate, the Committee Chairs and  
14 anyone else as we move forward in developing such  
15 incentive programs. Thank you again for the  
16 opportunity to testify here, and we are now happy to  
17 answer any questions you might have.

18 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSA: Thank you for your  
19 testimony today and for coming in on this beginning  
20 of this wet weekend or week, I guess. I just wanted  
21 to ask a couple of questions. You know, hearing your  
22 testimony and hearing the testimony of the previous  
23 panel, it just seems like there are two different  
24 worlds we're living in, and I just want to know if  
25 you could speak to the experience that members of the

1  
2 Grant Houses and Polo Grounds have gone through and  
3 why that might be what their reality is and not  
4 necessarily the reality of the entire operation or  
5 NYCHA Recycles program?

6           ELENA TENCHIKOVA: Sure, okay. So in  
7 regards to Grant Houses, we really appreciate the  
8 energy that was invested by the group and the  
9 previous resident association leader when she used to  
10 live there because that's the type of energy that  
11 we're really looking for, right, and this is why we  
12 believe the Environmental Ambassador program is so  
13 critical because, you know, we could get people to  
14 really get engaged. And since the inception of the  
15 program, what we've done is we've actually met with  
16 the group. We had a site assessment where we  
17 collectively did a walkthrough, made a decision  
18 whether they want to upgrade to the newer bins or  
19 keep the existing ones, and since then resident  
20 association leader Mr. Davis is with us actually here  
21 today. We had a close relationship on determining  
22 whether they want to keep the bins there or move it  
23 further away, and over the course of their feedback  
24 from the residents we've learned that they actually  
25 did not want it in front of the entryways, that they

1  
2 prefer to move them away because it became a problem  
3 of improper waste disposal and having the ability to  
4 access the entryway of the buildings. And so  
5 collectively based on the feedback that we got, we've  
6 moved them to the rear of the buildings.

7 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSA: Just to respond to  
8 that, just to follow up, so you tried something out  
9 first then asked for the recommendations of the  
10 residents and then you modify? Why not engage early  
11 on in the process so that the modification doesn't  
12 need to be done and it gets done right the first  
13 time, I guess?

14 ELENA TENCHIKOVA: So the way that we  
15 implement, we always start with the first step which  
16 is a site assessment where we go and we actually do  
17 our physical walkthrough. Who participates in this,  
18 the site assessment, is the Recycling Implementation  
19 Team, property management staff, we invite the  
20 resident association leaders or their representative  
21 board members to come and join us, and our subject  
22 matter experts who lay like the concrete paths  
23 because we need their subject matter expertise in  
24 order to provide their input. And we go over the  
25 steps of the program, what to expect, you know, what

1

2 are the steps of each phase, and finally we do a  
3 survey and collectively decide on where we should put  
4 this. I mean we could have taken a different route.  
5 We could've either hired consultants or had  
6 construction professionals come and say, you know  
7 what, this is where it should go, but we took a  
8 different approach where we did want to involve the  
9 residents, the staff at the locations because they  
10 know these properties, they know...

11 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSA: So you're saying  
12 that residents are a part of that assessment early  
13 on?

14 ELENA TENCHIKOVA: Yes.

15 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSA: Okay. It seems like  
16 Phase Two is going to be community training and  
17 education is going to be a big part of Phase Two, so  
18 so far it seems like in the cases again that we  
19 talked about in the original panel, in the first  
20 panel, talked about a lack of education and community  
21 outreach. Can you speak to what methods you're going  
22 to be taking to make sure that you reach out to a  
23 large number of residents, not just 15 including  
24 staff, right, and we all know how difficult it is but

25

1  
2 what effort is being taken to insure that residents  
3 are educated on exactly how to recycle?

4           ELENA TENCHIKOVA: Chair Reynosa, just so  
5 that I'm answering your question, do you want me to  
6 cover some of Phase One initiatives that we took in  
7 order to reach the residents or do you just want me  
8 to talk about going forward?

9           CHAIRPERSON REYNOSA: Both, yes.

10           ELENA TENCHIKOVA: Okay, alright, sure.  
11 So as part of Phase One, again the first touch starts  
12 with the site assessment where we invite the resident  
13 association leaders to participate, then it moves to  
14 a mailing where it becomes not a direct but an  
15 indirect touch. Then we move to having a kickoff  
16 meeting in every community and to go over what one,  
17 how to recycle, our part in Grow NYC does a thorough  
18 presentation in conjunction with our Resident  
19 Engagement Department and then finally so these are  
20 kind of like the core, right, these three steps of  
21 touching the community. And then we move to the  
22 additional steps that we take. So our resident  
23 engagement works very closely with Grow NYC and  
24 Department of Sanitation. Some of the things that  
25 they do is targeted youth and senior meetings.

1  
2 They'll actually come out to different type of  
3 activities like special events. I could note some of  
4 like high end ones where we were able to reach, and I  
5 think it's like all about having that opportunity and  
6 tapping into the resources that they have, and so one  
7 example could be the Greening Garden Conference where  
8 we had about 450 people attend in 2016, and so we  
9 were able to collectively table and promote the  
10 program. Then like the RGC Summit that we had back  
11 in June 2016. We made it a whole recycling theme.  
12 So the whole day I was just like pure like recycling  
13 workshop, Department of Sanitation had their  
14 characters come out and like it was very engaging.  
15 And over there we were able to reach 100 residents  
16 directly on recycling. We've also did, through  
17 partnership with Green City Force and Department of  
18 Sanitation NYC Service Corps, a very interesting  
19 model that was really great at Vladeck Houses where  
20 we actually went door to door and we had 250 people  
21 come out and actually get the sort and store bags and  
22 kind of like sign that they are willing to  
23 participate in the program and excited about it. We  
24 had a really great turnout in some of the meetings,  
25 like targeted meetings to constituents like senior

1  
2 groups. At Hope Gardens we reached more than 100  
3 residents in one meeting. So like those type of  
4 things are really great opportunities and that's what  
5 it's all about. It was just like seeing where can we  
6 touch people indirectly through social media, through  
7 NYCHA Recycles website, through printed media. Like  
8 we have, and if I may, kind of quickly go over some  
9 of the things that you have in this. So which it  
10 covers some of the engagements and some of the  
11 promotional material that is out there. So what  
12 you'll find is the mailer that goes out and it's in  
13 four languages, English, Russian, Spanish and  
14 Chinese. And it talks about, this is kind of how it  
15 looks, and it talks about what one and how to recycle  
16 and announcements of the program. Then we have a  
17 NYCHA journal and I actually have an excerpt of the  
18 one that we made solely dedicated a whole section on  
19 recycling where we talk about the FAQs. We cover the  
20 wonderful kickoff meetings that were happening in  
21 various places, our progress to date, about the  
22 Environmental Ambassador program because that's when  
23 we were just launching it and really wanted to get  
24 folks excited about it. We also have the sort and  
25 store bags so with every educational opportunity that

1  
2 we have and where residents get trained, Grow NYC  
3 actually distributes them, and a little thing about  
4 them they're pretty awesome because they're made out  
5 of recycled material. They have a handle on the  
6 bottom which really makes it a little bit more  
7 convenient for the residents to sort and store it at  
8 home and then be able to bring it out, and a little  
9 bit about our bins we put in a lot of effort in order  
10 to try to make it as user friendly as possible for  
11 both residents and staff, and so based on the  
12 feedback that we got from residents we made sure to  
13 work with a manufacturer in order to modify the bin  
14 opening so that they're larger. So as residents go  
15 out there they can, you know, nice easily shake it  
16 out.

17 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSA: Because we have  
18 other Council Member that want to ask questions as  
19 well, so I can tell that there are programs and  
20 efforts in place to educate as many residents as  
21 possible. That's not easy to do in NYCHA given the  
22 amount of residents and the amount of buildings and  
23 the amount of developments that we have. But I do  
24 want to talk about, just my last question, is the  
25 work that's being done on the back end, it's the

1  
2 staff. So I guess it's a two-part question, is what  
3 is the diversion rates that we're seeing, is what  
4 we're getting valuable, is it a valuable amount? Is  
5 it sorted correctly? So I guess that's a DSNY  
6 question, and if it's not being done correctly, what  
7 is being done to modify behavior of NYCHA staff so to  
8 make sure that they comply and do it the right way,  
9 and are we keeping track of any of that and can I get  
10 any of that information? That's four questions. I  
11 had four questions in there.

12 BRIDGET ANDERSON: So as I mentioned in my  
13 testimony, we take a survey on every recycling day  
14 for all the live developments and we do a bag count.  
15 We look at how many pieces are set up for recycling.  
16 We look at any quality issues so are the cardboard  
17 boxes broken down, are there barriers in the way for  
18 us to access the recyclable material, and every two  
19 weeks on average we sent that activity report back to  
20 the developments, the managers and the supervisors  
21 and to the headquarters. So that is information that  
22 we use and also NYCHA uses to figure out how we're  
23 doing and where do we need to target our resources.  
24 Sanitation, where we see major quality issues or non-  
25 participation coming out at the curb, we actually

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2

target those for onsite field trainings and we have

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NYC service volunteers. We have a volunteer corps of

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people, a number of them are actually NYCHA

5

residents, who go and they sit with caretakers and

6

they say this is how you bundle cardboard. This is

7

why the way you did it before isn't working for

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Sanitation. So we're trying to do as much. In

9

addition, we have the uniformed supervisors who are

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out there identifying quality issues and identifying

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challenges and we're going out. So we are on the

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ground sort of and location by location trying to

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troubleshoot as we go.

14

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSA: Can we get just more

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information about is it working, right? At the end

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of the day is every single development needing

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training because they're not meeting compliance or

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are you guys seeing 50 percent of them are doing had,

19

80 percent, and then what does doing well mean? I

20

just need more information as to the progress that

21

we're making on the program.

22

BRIDGET ANDERSON: Measuring the diversion

23

rates at NYCHA is very difficult because the way

24

Sanitation does its collection routes, we collect

25

from NYCHA on the same trucks that are collecting

1  
2 from regular residential, from schools, so we're not  
3 able to isolate the tonnage from NYCHA specifically  
4 so what we do is we use a proxy measure. So what  
5 we're doing is we're counting bags. It's not a  
6 perfect measure but it gives us a sense of effort and  
7 participation. So we do see contamination and so  
8 what we do is we work with the staff to identify what  
9 is too contaminated. If we're seeing a bagful of  
10 diapers in the recycling that's obviously not  
11 recycling and so that is something that should be  
12 diverted towards the trash. So what I would say is  
13 we're seeing modest participation. There is growth.  
14 One of the things we're focused on, this again is  
15 Phase One focus, are they setting out both material  
16 strains, are they sitting out paper and cardboard and  
17 metal, glass and plastic? Often, one of the first  
18 things that happens with the caretakers is they'll  
19 take their own cardboard, the things that are from  
20 their equipment and their facility's work and sit  
21 that out. And if it's only cardboard, we know that  
22 we're not getting the residential piece and so then  
23 we go back. So it's modest, it's growing, we do have  
24 some developments that are not consistently sending  
25 out material every week, and so those are the ones

1  
2 we're really targeting in Phase Two to try to figure  
3 out what's the barrier. Is it a staff barrier, is it  
4 a residential engagement barrier?

5 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Thank you. I  
6 actually want to follow up on the question that  
7 Council Member Reynosa asked about reporting  
8 information about the progress you're making. I  
9 think NYCHA indicated in your testimony that you  
10 might be or will be submitting periodic reports to  
11 the Office of Sustainability, did I hear correctly?

12 ELENA TENCHIKOVA: Yeah, so we submit on a  
13 monthly basis our progress report, and so I'll take a  
14 step back. The objective Phase One is to get it to  
15 like compliance like key things, right, the  
16 infrastructure in place, education, Department of  
17 Sanitation's collection. As we move to Phase Two  
18 this is where we're really talking about, you know,  
19 the quality of it from both operations side and the  
20 resident participation, and that's where the matrix,  
21 the goal setting really kicks in, because at first  
22 there was a huge effort in order to get us to where  
23 we are. I mean as you heard in my testimony, one of  
24 our bins is 250 pounds. That was, you know,  
25 delivered, installed, the concrete pad, so over 3,000

1  
2 pounds of material went into that. Department of  
3 Sanitation went to every site that was about to go  
4 live in order to determined, yep, this is the  
5 location, we're all in agreement, we're clear, this  
6 is where we're going to be coming. So to make sure  
7 that all of the stakeholders are involved in that and  
8 so on a monthly basis what we report out are key  
9 things which is our progress to date with going live  
10 which the sites that went live which represents  
11 infrastructure in place, education and receiving  
12 collection services. We also measure, you know, how  
13 many people did we reach directly and so we submit  
14 the information on all of the trainings that  
15 residents get.

16 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Are you willing to  
17 share that information with the City Council?

18 ELENA TENCHIKOVA: Oh absolutely.

19 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay. Are you  
20 willing to publish those reports online so that the  
21 general public can review them?

22 ELENA TENCHIKOVA: So this is all... most of  
23 the information is already on our NYCHA website. You  
24 can see the progress of...

25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: The reports that you  
3 submit to the Office of Sustainability are available  
4 on your website?

5 ELENA TENCHIKOVA: Yeah, do you want to  
6 comment on that, Kilsys?

7 KILSYS PAYAMPS-ROURE: I'm not sure  
8 whether or not they're on the website. We can  
9 definitely get back to your office and let you know.

10 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay. And what about  
11 sharing with the City Council?

12 KILSYS PAYAMPS-ROURE: I don't have an  
13 issue with sharing with the City Council.

14 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay. And I would  
15 suggest in the interest of transparency sharing with  
16 the general public. So I have conflicted views about  
17 NYCHA's plan. On one hand, it's probably the first  
18 systematic effort at recycling that we've seen in  
19 three decades, right, and that's something worth  
20 commending. On the other hand, I feel like is there  
21 a failure of imagination here because I feel like are  
22 we aiming for a little more than technical compliance  
23 with the Law, and I feel like we should be aiming for  
24 more than that, do you think that's a fair  
25 characterization? I just want to...

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2           ELENA TENCHIKOVA: Again, back to the  
3 objective. I think that we need to look at it  
4 holistically and understand that it is a new effort,  
5 and we really are involving all of the key  
6 stakeholders and making it a successful program. And  
7 it's going to take time. It's not going to happen  
8 overnight regretfully, but our goals should be to get  
9 to how the city is doing and maybe even better. You  
10 know, as we bridge those partnerships with the  
11 support that we have, I mean, yes, with time this  
12 definitely should be a realistic yet competitive goal  
13 to keep us on track moving forward.

14           CHAIRPERSON TORRES: I mean it seems like  
15 the focus is mostly about installing bins, the  
16 infrastructure. I remember two years ago Council  
17 Member Reynosa and I had a meeting with the  
18 Commissioner of Sanitation, the Chair of the Housing  
19 Authority. It was in September of 2014, and so NYCHA  
20 has been planning around and thinking about recycling  
21 for a long time, yet you have not installed all the  
22 bins in all the developments. It seems to be taking  
23 a long time. Why is it taking so long? Because on  
24 the surface it would seem to me installing bins is an  
25 uncomplicated undertaking, right? You're not

1 installing boilers, you're not installing roofs.

2  
3 These are simply bins, so why is it taking so long to  
4 complete the task?

5           ELENA TENCHIKOVA: Yeah, great question.

6 So we invested time in order to make it a thought out  
7 process. We started first with staff and resident  
8 input sessions where we learn about past experiences  
9 to get the recommendations. We actually had on the  
10 resident side a group tailored to just Green City  
11 Force, so that way we could learn like so what do you  
12 think is going to be like catchy for somebody that's  
13 young and, you know, like what's going to get your  
14 attention in this, and so we talked about the bin  
15 infrastructure, we talked about enhancement of like  
16 where it should be located and we also talked about  
17 how do we implement it in a successful way, what  
18 would get people excited from resident engagement,  
19 and then that turned into a larger conversation with  
20 the Waste Management Working Group because we wanted  
21 to make sure that as part of this review we visit  
22 other landlords. We actually went to like Stuy Town,  
23 Co-op City, Starrett City to learn similar  
24 configurations as to our buildings to see what  
25 they're doing, and in addition we also went to like

1  
2 innovative places like Lee Platinum (SIC) and new  
3 construction so it took time and effort in order to  
4 get it right so that way people would want to use it.  
5 That way that as staff servicing the bins is more  
6 efficient. For example, the container that we used  
7 to have, those old... we call them the gooseneck ones  
8 with the small openings which I think is the one that  
9 they were referring to in Manhattanville. The staff  
10 would have to walk around in order to service it, and  
11 now with this model what we have is the doors swing  
12 right open making it more user friendly for the staff  
13 so that way we could put it in a pathway so that way  
14 the staff comes, service it, and keeps going. And by  
15 doing that we're actually cutting two times that the  
16 staff would touch the garbage in addition if it was  
17 going down the chute. The more time that we save  
18 moving waste, the more efficient we are with other  
19 things. That means our staff could then go and  
20 invest it into cleaning the buildings, around the  
21 buildings and etc., right? And so with that we  
22 really wanted to get it right, and to give you a  
23 little bit more of a perspective we had to visit  
24 every site in order to determine and do the  
25 walkthrough on where do we put them? We didn't hire

1  
2 an outside company in order to do this. This is  
3 something that we did, and I could tell you  
4 personally I did like half of the site assessments so  
5 it's very...

6 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Did you survey the  
7 residents about where to place the bins or did you  
8 make that determination on your own?

9 ELENA TENCHIKOVA: Yes, so we did the site  
10 assessments so which means you go, I would provide an  
11 overview of what are the rollout and the  
12 implementation steps and then do the physical  
13 walkthrough through the whole grounds and you can  
14 imagine how sizeable some of our campuses are, and we  
15 collectively would make a decision where do we think  
16 is going to be the best...

17 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: How many residents  
18 are present in that site assessment?

19 ELENA TENCHIKOVA: I would definitely kept  
20 a track record and I can get back to you...

21 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Because it seems to  
22 me what's critical to this effort beyond  
23 infrastructure is resident buy in.

24 ELENA TENCHIKOVA: Right, absolutely.  
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CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Right, and I think if there ever were an issue on which we should survey the residents about where should we place these bins, right, because proximity means more participation. Like which location would best facilitate your effort at recycling. Like that would be a question to ask the residents. So did you broadly survey the residents of public housing about where to best locate these bins because that's a pretty important factor in the success of this program?

ELENA TENCHIKOVA: Yeah, we invited again resident association leaders and their boards. In the cases where they had resident green committees we extended the invitation as well.

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: But beyond the official resident structure, there was no broader engagement with public housing residents about the location of these bins?

ELENA TENCHIKOVA: That is correct.

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay. Your Power Point indicates that you want to pursue a comprehensive sustainability agenda, and you defined that as reducing nitrous carbon footprint to infrastructure, training residents, complying with

1  
2 Recycling Law, but when I read that list that's not  
3 exactly comprehensive, right? There are more  
4 elements to a sustainability agenda. For example,  
5 there was no mention of training employees. I think  
6 there was a resident in Grant Houses who testified  
7 that the residents were actually taking the  
8 initiative to recycling and it was the NYCHA  
9 employees that were undoing their work. So is that  
10 part of the sustainability agenda that NYCHA is  
11 advancing is training employees to..

12           ELENA TENCHIKOVA: Yeah. I'm happy to  
13 talk about the training efforts that we've done so  
14 far and what we have ahead. So far we trained our  
15 operational staff starting from the directors all the  
16 way down to the supervisors of caretakers and grounds  
17 on recycling and how to recycle, the operations, the  
18 best practices and proper set out. So that was like  
19 over 600 people. We also trained 80 resident  
20 engagement staff because they're the ones who are  
21 going to be delivering the message so we wanted to  
22 make sure that they have the same information and  
23 we're speaking in one voice, and also Department of  
24 Sanitation in collaboration with NYC Service has

25

1  
2 AmeriCorps folks come out and do the onsite trainings  
3 as well. Training is of course a very...

4 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: These are trainings  
5 for the employees?

6 ELENA TENCHIKOVA: Correct, correct.

7 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay.

8 ELENA TENCHIKOVA: And so as we're doing  
9 this and we're moving into Phase Two, it's going to  
10 be incorporated on an annual basis to have ongoing  
11 staff education and specific titles, and also as part  
12 of anybody that comes onboard in NYCHA's new employee  
13 orientation we're actually going to have a recycling  
14 message involved along with a checklist to inform  
15 them, you know, everybody has a responsibility to  
16 recycle including you. And so I'm really excited  
17 about that as well. And one of the things that I'm  
18 more so excited, just because it reaches not only  
19 staff, potential staff that we have, but the  
20 frontline staff and the residents that we have, which  
21 is the Caretaker J Program through REES and so it's a  
22 three-week program with a partner BWI, Department of  
23 Sanitation and Grow NYC all working together and our  
24 Caretaker J training, and what they'll do is they'll  
25 do soft skills for two weeks and then they go into

1

2 the regular janitorial training that they would get.

3 We carved out a whole day on recycling so we start

4 with a traditional in class type of training that's

5 hands-on, and then we actually go to the Sims

6 facility so that way they could see the bigger

7 picture and get them excited about this, and so I

8 think that with all of these efforts and the ongoing

9 staff training that we have, it's going to be very

10 clear on and is clear on the expectations.

11 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: And I suspect you

12 would acknowledge that infrastructure will only get

13 us so far, right, that there needs to be a change in

14 culture, and culture is not only about training, it's

15 about accountability, right, by telling the property

16 managers you will be held accountable for the levels

17 of recycling in your developments. So how is NYCHA

18 enforcing a culture of recycling at the property

19 management level?

20 ELENA TENCHIKOVA: Yes. Do you want to

21 take the lead on this Kilsys?

22 KILSYS PAYAMPS-ROURE: Sure. So when we

23 receive feedback from the Department of Sanitation

24 reports, that's given to the development managers,

25 and from there if there's any deficiencies they

1  
2 communicate that to the staff, and they work on the  
3 things that are not up to par. If we see that  
4 certain staff members are continuously doing the same  
5 thing wrong, you know, there is a disciplinary  
6 process at NYCHA and we follow that process. But,  
7 you know, this is an initiative that has come from  
8 the top down. You know, it's something that is part  
9 of our Next Generation NYCHA strategic plan. It's  
10 really clear that we're dedicated to this and during  
11 the role and during the trainings we've been really  
12 clear on that, but as far as accountability we do  
13 have the disciplinary process. We're also starting a  
14 quality assurance program in Phase Two which  
15 basically our quality assurance unit will go out and  
16 do inspections, and based on the reports then we can  
17 see where there are deficiencies and how we can  
18 address them.

19 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Council Member  
20 Reynosa was asking what I think was one of the  
21 probably most important questions which was about  
22 measuring. Someone said to me yesterday what gets  
23 measured gets done. And I think you have two goals  
24 here, right? Your goal is to A: operate as a more  
25 efficient and effective landlord; and B: zero waste

1  
2 by 2030. But both of those require measurements so  
3 what are the metrics that you're using to determine  
4 the progress you're making towards the Mayor's goal  
5 and determining your progress toward becoming a more  
6 efficient and effective landlord, specifically on the  
7 subject of recycling.

8           ELENA TENCHIKOVA: So there again, Phase  
9 One, really get in the infrastructure out there,  
10 doing the education and getting the services. As we  
11 move to Phase Two, the feedback that we get on set  
12 out from Department of Sanitation will really help us  
13 guide on what kind of performance are we seeing, and  
14 we are in the beginning stages of making sure that  
15 it's going to get incorporated into each  
16 development's scorecard so essentially there are key  
17 things that we look at when we evaluate the  
18 performance of a development, right? So we would say  
19 how much rent did you collect or what is the rent  
20 delinquency, how many work orders do we have, and now  
21 we'll have something that includes recycling and what  
22 is to set out. And as we move forward to Phase Two  
23 and we're just in the preliminary conversation on  
24 setting goals and creating milestones, this is  
25 something that we would be able to do where you could

1  
2 easily see where are you falling in that, right? Are  
3 you meeting those milestones or are you exceeding,  
4 what are you doing if you're exceeding, and like  
5 maybe you could be the coach and share the best  
6 practices and then we could target the locations that  
7 have poor performance and getting a better  
8 understanding as to why. So, yes, as we move to  
9 Phase Two, metric and goal settings is going to be  
10 part of the very critical component into making sure  
11 that we reach that stage..

12 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: But it seems like  
13 it's the greatest challenge because based on what the  
14 testimony I heard from NYCHA and DSNY, there seems to  
15 be no objective means by which we measure diversion  
16 rates, recycling at the development level. They were  
17 mostly based on the casual feedback of sanitation  
18 workers collecting... like I feel like that's an  
19 unreliable foundation on which to evaluate your  
20 efficiency as a landlord in your progress toward the  
21 Mayor's goal of zero waste by 2030. So is there an  
22 effort to create more objective reliable metrics by  
23 which to measure your progress?

24 KILSYS PAYAMPS-ROURE: We have been trying  
25 to figure out what's the... measuring building by

1  
2 building in the city takes a lot of... many resources  
3 and we wanted to give something very consistent and  
4 streamlined as far as feedback for NYCHA. So we have  
5 this once a week. We don't call it a scorecard but  
6 an activity report. Every week it's consistent  
7 information collected and provided as feedback so you  
8 can see trends, maybe there's an uptick and then it  
9 goes down, why did it go down, so there is an actual  
10 objective. I mean it's an observation but it's  
11 consistently collected every week and it's managed by  
12 each development. When we are looking at citywide  
13 and diversion rates we measure diversion rates by  
14 district and so we hope to see and we always track  
15 month by month what's the diversion rate for each  
16 district. NYCHA developments exist inside districts  
17 and so we can look and track whether or not we're  
18 seeing changes in that district level diversion rate  
19 in the city. However, NYCHA is only a portion of the  
20 district. So it's just an incremental change and  
21 it's a little bit difficult the way we collect our  
22 data to isolate out the wait at NYCHA.

23 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: You said the trucks  
24 that collect residential waste elsewhere are the same  
25 trucks that collect it at NYCHA. Is there a way...

1  
2 maybe could NYCHA use different bags, I don't know,  
3 that distinguish it from every other residential  
4 waste? I mean there has to be some method of  
5 differentiations?

6 STEVEN COSTAS: Currently as we  
7 reincorporate the NYCHA sites onto our collections  
8 schedules for recycling, the material obviously gets  
9 compacted into 25-yard collection trucks. So as the  
10 truck crosses the scale at a recycling facility the  
11 truck gets weighed as a whole. It would probably be  
12 impossible to distinguish the NYCHA material once  
13 it's inside the truck mixed with residential  
14 material.

15 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay.

16 KILSYS PAYAMPS-ROURE: Just so you're  
17 aware, we have conducted tests in the past where we  
18 try to tag bags or mark bags, and when you go to the  
19 truck at the end after there's been multiple  
20 compactions it's very difficult to identify those  
21 bags after they've been in the truck with everything  
22 else.

23 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: One of the tenants  
24 who testified earlier said that even when you have  
25 the bins it's often overflowing. So how often does

1  
2 NYCHA clear out these bins, how often does DSNY pick  
3 them up for collection?

4 KILSYS PAYAMPS-ROURE: The quick piece for  
5 us is we have a once-a-week collection program for  
6 NYCHA which is consistent with the rest of the  
7 neighborhood.

8 ELENA TENCHIKOVA: In regards to our  
9 staff, our staff services the containers twice a day  
10 Monday through Friday and once a day on the weekends  
11 as we have significantly less staff on the weekends.

12 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Does it clear it out  
13 twice a day?

14 ELENA TENCHIKOVA: Yes.

15 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay. So I feel like  
16 if it's clearing it out twice a day it should almost  
17 never be overflowing unless you have a lot of  
18 garbage.

19 ELENA TENCHIKOVA: So if we're seeing an  
20 overflow and this is something I guess we move to  
21 Phase Two, like I convey as we do our staff training,  
22 it poses a question on like why is that happening,  
23 and you know what, it could be because they need more  
24 bins, and one of the things is a five-year budget and  
25 a five-year implementation plan until we fully feel

1  
2 like each individual department and development can  
3 procure this significantly expensive infrastructure.  
4 They may pose that maybe they need to expand  
5 infrastructure and now is the time and that is the  
6 cue. And the way that we ask the staff is like well  
7 take a look, is it... is the material contaminated or  
8 is it clean, right? If we see that on an ongoing  
9 basis there is an overflow then that means we need  
10 more infrastructure which is great so that is the  
11 whole goal of this, right, is to increase  
12 participation, increase the infrastructure that we  
13 have, and really increase the rates, right, and get  
14 us to the goal. The other thing could be well maybe  
15 there's contamination level and now it becomes an  
16 education component. Maybe we need to have targeted  
17 outreach at the location to really try to message  
18 that this is what's really supposed to be going here.  
19 So that is the question that I would say, is it  
20 because we are, you know, like it's happening and we  
21 need more and we need to extend or is it we need  
22 targeted education and do more work around there.

23 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: And just one final  
24 question. I asked the initial panel who in the panel  
25 and they got two stakeholders and two residents had a

1  
2 role in formulating NYCHA's plan and none of them  
3 raised their hand. None of them said they had any  
4 role. So what was the extent of NYCHA's stakeholder  
5 engagement around creating NYCHA Recycles?

6           ELENA TENCHIKOVA: Yeah, so I'll go back  
7 to where we started. We started with having resident  
8 and staff input sessions where we had several  
9 questions that we asked around their recommendations,  
10 around the challenges, about, you know, what were the  
11 lessons learned in previous experiences, and based on  
12 that then a report was developed and shared with the  
13 Waste Management Working Group which then  
14 incorporated those recommendations in developing the  
15 model and further then we developed the  
16 implementation rollout.

17           CHAIRPERSON TORRES: What organizations,  
18 can you name an organization that was engaged in  
19 crafting NYCHA's plan?

20           ELENA TENCHIKOVA: I would be happy to get  
21 back to you on that.

22           CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay. But you're the  
23 point person on...

24           ELENA TENCHIKOVA: Yes, correct, but  
25 those...

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So if you can't  
3 remember it that means there probably wasn't any,  
4 right?

5 ELENA TENCHIKOVA: Look, we worked with  
6 our Green City Force folks. We have..

7 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: I love Green City  
8 Force.

9 ELENA TENCHIKOVA: ...resident green  
10 committees.

11 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay.

12 ELENA TENCHIKOVA: Members that  
13 participate in the Gardening and Green Program that  
14 NYCHA has. So we had various people in the room that  
15 are engaged in staying safe and clean and an  
16 environmentally conscious NYCHA, and they were the  
17 ones to provide input and recommendations.

18 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay. Say like, for  
19 example, Natural Resources Defense Council I think  
20 actually brought a lawsuit against NYCHA regarding  
21 recycling. If I were the Housing Authority, I  
22 would've engaged NRDC, right? So that would seem to  
23 me a logical organization to engage. So my only  
24 advice is that you engage a broader range of  
25 stakeholders, even those who are critical of you.

1  
2 And I do commend NYCHA for making a valiant effort at  
3 recycling. I guess I worry are we aiming too low,  
4 are we moving too slow, but I'm sure that will be a  
5 matter of continuing debate. So that's the extent of  
6 my question.

7 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSA: Thank you, Chair. I  
8 think next year we need another one of these meetings  
9 because it seems like Phase Two is going to be very  
10 important to really justify the work that's being  
11 done and to cure a lot of these concerns that the  
12 residents are having. But Phase Two is a very  
13 important phase. I just want you to know we'll be  
14 paying attention and we will be calling you back.

15 We have a Council Member from the Bronx  
16 that would like to ask some questions, Council Member  
17 Rafael Salamanca.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Thank you, Mr.  
19 Chairs. Good afternoon, thank you. I want to  
20 commend NYCHA on your efforts for recycling. For  
21 years I've had many meetings with NYCHA supervisors  
22 asking what's happening with recycling, and it's good  
23 to see that something is happening. I cover the  
24 south Bronx and I have the third largest NYCHA  
25 portfolio in the city of New York. One of the

1  
2 concerns that I have is that the caretakers, either  
3 there is not enough or there's an issue with  
4 supervision. The regular garbage is not being taken  
5 down. Two weeks ago I was on the phone with your  
6 chair Shola because at Jackson Houses the garbage  
7 compressor was not cleared out and garbage on the  
8 chute was piled up up to the fourth floor, which I  
9 find it unacceptable and totally disrespectful to  
10 those tenants that live there because now they're  
11 placing their garbage in the hallways. With this  
12 plan that you have in terms of recycling, are you  
13 increasing the amount of caretakers that you're  
14 putting in these NYCHA developments since you're  
15 adding another task to them and asking them now to  
16 clear out these bins for recycling?

17           ELENA TENCHIKOVA: So I could touch up on  
18 how the waste management is connected and then I'll  
19 defer to Kilsys to speak about..

20           COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: I'm more  
21 interested in more knowing the staffing. I want to  
22 know what's going to happen with staffing. You're  
23 adding more responsibility to these caretakers.

24

25

1  
2 KILSYS PAYAMPS-ROURE: We're dealing with  
3 the same amount of waste. It's the matter of where  
4 do we collect it from.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Yeah, but  
6 you're dealing with the same amount of waste but now  
7 you have two different bins, two different bags, so  
8 now you're asking them to clear out the garbage in  
9 the compressors and then you're asking them to go to  
10 another part of the development and you're asking  
11 them to clear out the bins. So it's the same amount  
12 of waste but you're adding to their workload. So I'm  
13 interested in knowing about the increasing of the  
14 caretakers.

15 ELENA TENCHIKOVA: You could speak towards  
16 the staffing levels and I'll take a little quick  
17 explanation of the waste management process. So as  
18 you have the waste, whether it's designed for just  
19 trash to just go down the chute, it comes out into a  
20 large compactor sausage bag which then gets cuts into  
21 smaller pieces and then gets wheeled out on a hand  
22 truck and placed on the ground level where then  
23 another truck comes and picks it up, loads it, takes  
24 it to a centralized location and then they unload it,  
25 and at that point Department of Sanitation will come

1  
2 and pick up the regular trash. By having these  
3 containers at centralized location, you are actually  
4 eliminating two times that the staff would have to  
5 touch the garbage. So for example, and this is  
6 anecdotally speaking, the feedback that I got from a  
7 caretaker like Bronx River, he said, you know, I was  
8 getting ten bags, now I'm getting three less. And a  
9 hand truck holds about three bags so that means we  
10 cut a whole operation of them cutting it, loading it,  
11 and unloading it, so it actually makes the process a  
12 little bit more efficient for our staff and that was  
13 the goal. And by having it in a centralized location  
14 versus in front of the entryways or one for every  
15 building, you actually have a concentrated area and  
16 we try to put it on a truck route so that way we  
17 eliminate a caretaker that is assigned to the  
18 building servicing it and then loading it on the  
19 floor on the ground and then having the truck come  
20 and pick it up. Now, you would have the opportunity  
21 to just have the truck person come, service it, load  
22 it. That is kind of like from the waste management  
23 operation perspective but Kilsys could talk more  
24 about the staffing levels.

1

2

KILSYS PAYAMPS-ROURE: Like Elena

3

mentioned, because we find that it's more efficient

4

with doing recycling, we didn't have plans to

5

increase caretaker staff at our developments.

6

However, we'd be happy to set up a meeting with you

7

to discuss it further. We know that there's a lot of

8

challenges in the developments that you're

9

representing. You do represent a large housing stock

10

in the Bronx and we appreciate the interest that

11

you're taking so we're more than happy to set with

12

your office and discuss it.

13

COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Mr. Chair, I

14

just feel that it's part of this plan. I'm all for

15

recycling. It's an important component that we have,

16

but there needs to be some type of staffing component

17

to this because right now my NYCHA developments, as

18

much as I call NYCHA dirty, you know, sometimes to

19

change the light bulbs it takes the Council Member to

20

walk through the hallways so that a caretaker can be

21

there to change light bulbs, and you're asking the

22

same individuals to pack the trucks with garbage and

23

now go over to a centralized location to take the

24

recycles out. I just feel that more staffing is

25

needed for this. Now in terms of enforcement,

1  
2 sanitation, how are you going to enforce or ensure  
3 that NYCHA is following your recycling guidelines,  
4 and I'm going to bring this example and an official  
5 vehicle if they're parked by a fire hydrant, traffic  
6 enforcement will come and will tow your official  
7 vehicle or give you a summons, so I would like to  
8 hear what enforcement is Sanitation going to do in  
9 terms of when NYCHA is not following their  
10 guidelines. Are you going to provide them with a  
11 summons? What's going to happen, how are you going  
12 to hold them accountable?

13 STEVEN COSTAS: Currently NYCHA is in a  
14 similar situation as the Board of Ed where the  
15 Department would not issue a summons to the  
16 management staff. At this point, similar to other  
17 programs as we have them kicked them off, it's more  
18 of an educational and a corrective measure to get  
19 them to participate. If the residents who actually  
20 live in the housing sites don't actually recycle it  
21 would be difficult to turn around and hold management  
22 accountable for that.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: So I have for  
24 years in my Council District there's the (**INAUDIBLE**)  
25 consolidation that are across the street from private

1  
2 homeowners, and we have an issue with the caretakers  
3 there cleaning properly. The garbage pickup, when  
4 Sanitation comes to pick up the garbage, the pickup  
5 is right across the street from the homeowners. At  
6 times garbage bags break, garbage flies around, and  
7 it gets to the homeowner's front door and the  
8 sidewalk. Sanitation is very quick to give the  
9 homeowners a violation, a summons, but yet they do  
10 not want to hold NYCHA accountable and I have a  
11 problem with that. I think that if you are giving  
12 homeowners a summons for garbage that came from the  
13 NYCHA side and you go over to NYCHA and you see that  
14 garbage and you don't give them a summons and just  
15 education and then you should extend that same  
16 courtesy to the homeowners. I have a problem with  
17 that.

18 STEVEN COSTAS: Duly noted.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Alright, I'm  
20 done. Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSA: Thank you,  
22 Councilman. So just again, like I said, Phase Two is  
23 going to be very important. We really want to see  
24 what you guys do. I think we need to figure out a  
25 system to be able to track the progress that you're

1  
2 making. What we have now obviously is not working.  
3 I do think there might be an opportunity for the  
4 staff that Council Member Salamanca was talking  
5 about, more staff that can actually measure the  
6 weight and the work that they're doing prior to  
7 handing it over to the central location or putting it  
8 in the central location for pickup. I think we can  
9 figure something out prior to that how well we're  
10 doing. If not, then this can be for nothing. We can  
11 be spending all this time without measuring any of  
12 it. I mean we can't get to zero percent to landfills  
13 if NYCHA is not doing its part considering how large  
14 it is and how important it is in the City of New  
15 York. So Phase Two is going to be very important.  
16 There's a lot of concerns that we're all having but I  
17 always play the role of being very positive and  
18 hoping for the best, but I'll put the clock on right  
19 now. You have one year to show us that it's working  
20 because people don't have the time for another step  
21 back and waiting another 30 years for the program to  
22 be done the right way. We need to get it right right  
23 now. It's very important. And the reports, of  
24 course, so thank you so much for your time. I really  
25 appreciate your time. Thank you.

1  
2           And now we're going to call up Jason  
3 Fuhrman who is representing the Public Advocate  
4 Letitia James if he's still here? Jared Sessum from  
5 Green City Force, Miguel Acevedo from Fulton Houses,  
6 Chance Brown from Ralph Ave, I guess, and then... and  
7 this is going to be the next panel just to be  
8 prepared, George Yunis (SP?), Carlton Davis, Barbara  
9 McFadden and Petina Hayward. That's going to be the  
10 next one after this one. So those names that I just  
11 called, that's the second panel. So the names that  
12 are going to be on now are Chance, Miguel, Jared and  
13 Jason. Yes, and then after that. Just be prepared.  
14 Thank you.

15           And if you could just... because I might've  
16 butchered some of these names, so if you can from... I  
17 guess from my left to right you can begin. Make sure  
18 you state your name and where you represent and then  
19 start your testimony.

20           MIGUEL ACEVEDO: Good afternoon, Council  
21 Members. I appreciate you giving me this opportunity  
22 to speak. My name is Miguel Acevedo. I am the  
23 Tenant Association President at Robert Fulton Houses  
24 located in Chelsea.

1  
2           It is unfortunate that I heard other  
3 residents from public housing developments were  
4 having issues at their developments. We are  
5 fortunate at Fulton Houses that NYCHA has taken every  
6 single step to educate my residents and myself  
7 understanding the recycle process. They held  
8 workshops that was at full capacity, the rooms, to  
9 educate us to let us know that it is important to  
10 recycle. My residents were excited that something  
11 like this was taking place. The only issues we have  
12 was we didn't have enough bins only because  
13 scaffolding was in the way for them to install the  
14 bins, but we appreciate NYCHA taking the effort to  
15 educate us, to give us the opportunity in  
16 understanding the importance of recycling in New York  
17 City. Thank you.

18           CHAIRPERSON REYNOSA: I appreciate your  
19 testimony, thank you.

20           JASON FUHRMAN: Good afternoon. My name  
21 is Jason Fuhrman. I'm Legislative Director for New  
22 York City Public Advocate Tish James, and I am here  
23 today to submit testimony on her behalf. We'd like  
24 to thank the Chairs, Council Members Reynosa and  
25 Torres and their staffs as well as the Committee

1  
2 staff for holding this hearing on these vitally  
3 important issues. I'd also like to personally thank  
4 you for graciously allowing me to read the Public  
5 Advocate's testimony into the record.

6           NYCHA is the single largest public  
7 housing authority in the country. It has given  
8 generations of working families in New York the  
9 stability they need to make it in the city.  
10 Unfortunately, from the Upper East Side to Brooklyn  
11 NYCHA often epitomizes the inequitable divide that  
12 still plagues this great city. Pockets of extreme  
13 poverty literally surround it on all sides by some of  
14 the wealthiest people in the country. But we cannot  
15 allow the hundreds of thousands of people who live in  
16 public housing to be left behind in our city's march  
17 toward progress. They are our brothers and sisters  
18 and we are all inextricably tied together. They must  
19 rise as we rise or we will all be poorer for it.  
20 There is perhaps no issue that better illustrates  
21 this truism than environmental justice. Every New  
22 Yorker, no matter where they live, must have the  
23 ability to recycle or we will never achieve our  
24 shared goal of a green New York. In fact, it's low  
25 income communities that are hardest hit by

1  
2 environmental factors. It's residents of the South  
3 Bronx and North Brooklyn that have the highest rates  
4 of asthma because of decades of unfair policies  
5 overwhelming children with pollution from dirty high  
6 emission garbage trucks, long haul trucks and  
7 highways. It is low income children in public  
8 housing in neighborhoods across the country who are  
9 being poisoned by polluted water while wealthy  
10 families drink filtered and bottled water.

11           Access to recycling is just one symptom  
12 of a far larger problem, but it is one that we can  
13 and should solve once and for all. Your City Law  
14 requires landlords of buildings with four or more  
15 units to provide recycling services to all their  
16 residents. Unfortunately, NYCHA, the City's largest  
17 landlord, has historically failed to comply with this  
18 law. It is a disservice to both the residents of  
19 NYCHA who deserve a full complement of sanitation  
20 services and New Yorkers as a whole who share in the  
21 monetary and environmental costs of substandard  
22 recycling programs and public housing. Part of the  
23 issue lies with infrastructure challenges. It is  
24 harder to encourage recycling in buildings that have  
25 trash chutes and often lack a designated area where

1  
2 residents can deliver recyclables. However, there is  
3 still more we can do even given these constraints.  
4 To be clear, this administration deserves a great  
5 deal of credit for its work towards reversing decades  
6 of disinvestment from the state and federal  
7 governments and prior administrations. We look  
8 forward to getting more information about the  
9 progress of the NYCHA Recycles Program and working  
10 with the relevant agencies to create new policies to  
11 engage residents and speed the process along. While  
12 we understand the administration has concerns about  
13 the Public Advocate's legislation in its current  
14 form, we are grateful for their willingness to work  
15 with our office to make the substance of the bill  
16 under consideration a reality. It is clear that this  
17 administration shares the Public Advocate's goals for  
18 a greener New York and true equity for NYCHA  
19 residents.

20           The Public Advocate's bill that you  
21 consider today, Intro 820, would bring to New York a  
22 model that has worked wonders in more than 300  
23 municipalities and communities across the country.  
24 The model is simple. It recognizes that unlike other  
25 city services like water, electricity and gas,

1  
2 residents do not directly internalize the costs  
3 associated with their recycling practices.

4 Therefore, it provides an incentive program to  
5 encourage increased recycling. Recycling incentive  
6 programs allow participants to earn points for their  
7 recycling efforts. These points in turn can be  
8 redeemed on rewards through participating retailers,  
9 restaurants and other commercial establishments,  
10 including discounts and deals from local businesses.

11 Such incentive programs have proven to be successful  
12 in large cities throughout the country. If this  
13 exact model is not deemed to be the best fit here, we  
14 are also ready and willing to work with the Council,  
15 the Administration, as well as residents and  
16 advocates on other potential incentive programs best  
17 suited to the unique features of NYCHA and the city  
18 as a whole. We are all justifiably concerned by what  
19 November's election may mean for the environment, but  
20 we must remember that significant environmental  
21 change can be effectuated at the local level here in  
22 New York and locally throughout the world. There is  
23 much work to be done but we believe that making  
24 recycling more accessible and commonplace is an  
25 important step in the right direction. Thank you for

1  
2 inviting our office to this hearing today and for  
3 giving me the opportunity to testify the Public  
4 Advocate's behalf.

5 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSA: Jason, thank you so  
6 much for your testimony. I apologize we couldn't get  
7 you on our earlier panel. Just I messed up the  
8 cards.

9 JASON FUHRMAN: No, no, not at all. I  
10 wouldn't have gone any earlier if you'd asked me to.

11 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSA: Just to note that  
12 the Public Advocate Tish James is the one that  
13 introduced the Intro to have an incentive program to  
14 encourage more recycling at NYCHA and that's why  
15 they're here today testifying, and I really want to  
16 thank you for your time and your testimony.

17 JASON FUHRMAN: Thank you so much, sir.

18 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSA: Absolutely.

19 CHANCE BROWN: Good afternoon. My name is  
20 Chance Brown. I'm a former team leader for the GCF  
21 and NYCHA Recycling Apprenticeship Program. I had an  
22 amazing time being an apprentice. It was as if I  
23 part of the Resident Engagement Team. There are a  
24 lot of challenges when it comes to trying to get  
25 NYCHA residents to attend meetings. To reach

1  
2 residents we put flyers up. We went as far as  
3 putting flyers in the local bodegas and Laundromats.  
4 It was a very challenging job but I really enjoyed  
5 every minute of it. I enjoy working around a green  
6 economy. I currently work for Harlem Grown where I  
7 manage Wagner Houses in East Harlem. We are  
8 partnered with NYCHA as well Green City Force where  
9 we bring healthy options to the community and help  
10 build relationships inside the community. I work  
11 closely with children as well as adults in seeing  
12 teaching them proper and effective ways to plant and  
13 help grow different vegetables.

14 Just like recycling, we have challenges  
15 with getting residents to be a part of the movement  
16 but every day we try to engage someone new.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Ms. Brown, thank  
18 you for your testimony. We appreciate that and the  
19 work that you're doing to help us in NYCHA. We know  
20 it's not easy so thank you so much for that.

21 JARED SESSUM: Good afternoon. My name  
22 is Jared Sessum. Thank you Council Members for the  
23 opportunity to share my insights into NYCHA's  
24 Recycling Initiative. Over the past two years, I've  
25 been exposed to thousands of residents' perspectives

1  
2 on the Program's implementation, operations and  
3 impact in the community. My experience as the Public  
4 Housing Recycling Outreach Coordinator with Grow NYC  
5 combined with my knowledge acquired through my  
6 current role as Love Where You Live Director with  
7 Green City Force informs my unique vantage on the  
8 value of this initiative.

9 My primary focus related to the Recycling  
10 Program has been outreach and education for residents  
11 of NYCHA. In my previous role with Grow NYC and in  
12 partnership with NYCHA Resident Engagement  
13 Department, resident association leaders, and various  
14 community-based organizations and city agencies, I  
15 was involved with more than 200 resident meetings and  
16 community events reaching about 4,000 residents and  
17 staff between May 2015 and June 2016. Grow NYC's  
18 educational program emphasizes the sustainability  
19 triple bottom line describing the social,  
20 environmental, and economic benefits of recycling.  
21 Grow NYC teaches how proper waste disposal can  
22 improve quality of life for residents through the  
23 beautification of the community, reducing rodents and  
24 insect infestation, and improved public health. Now  
25 we explained how conservation of natural resources

1  
2 and the reduction of greenhouse gas emission benefits  
3 our environment, and we highlight the economic  
4 benefits related to a reduction of waste management  
5 costs through increased efficiency while creating  
6 employment opportunities. The overall response from  
7 residents has been positive and hopeful for success  
8 with the greatest enthusiasm expressed towards saving  
9 money and creating jobs that provide livable wages.

10           When stories are shared of young public  
11 housing residents who have been hired through Green  
12 City Force to work for NYCHA Resident Engagement or  
13 Department of Sanitation, Bureau of Recycling and  
14 Sustainability or other organizations dedicated to  
15 waste reduction such as (**INAUDIBLE**) and Grow NYC. It  
16 legitimizes our message and encourages resident  
17 participation. When the outreach includes residents  
18 themselves as in the case with Green City Force who  
19 partnered with Grow NYC and NYCHA, residents are  
20 particularly responsive. So significant progress has  
21 been made over the past few years by offering an  
22 opportunity for all residents in NYCHA communities to  
23 recycle but there is room for improvement such as  
24 additional recycling infrastructure can be installed  
25 to make the process more convenient for both the

1  
2 residents to drop off recyclable materials and staff  
3 to collect and set out the materials for Sanitation  
4 pickup, continued education for both residents and  
5 staff to help reduce contamination while increasing  
6 waste diversion from landfills, the introduction of  
7 other zero waste initiatives such as organics  
8 recovery and programs for electronic and textile  
9 recycling can also increase diversion rates while  
10 providing additional opportunities to increase  
11 awareness for the Recycling Program. We can have  
12 recycling coordinators hired and deployed based on  
13 NYCHA's own coordinator model to have staff who are  
14 dedicated to various activities such as compliance  
15 checks and waste audits as well as education,  
16 collection, sorting and set out. This would support  
17 the goals of the program while creating economic  
18 opportunity for NYCHA residents. Implementation of  
19 an incentive program for proper recycling can  
20 encourage behavior change and Green City Force Love  
21 Where You Live model through which Green City Force  
22 AmeriCorps members who are all young NYCHA residents  
23 in training have reached 10,000 residents in their  
24 homes with information engagement around behavior  
25 changes towards energy conservation could be a

1  
2 powerful model to adapt and apply to promoting  
3 recycling in NYCHA.

4           A collaboration between key stakeholders,  
5 community based organizations and city agencies has  
6 been a significant tool towards generating excitement  
7 around the Recycling Program and offering educational  
8 opportunities for residents to learn more about the  
9 program. Utilizing combined resources to harness the  
10 power of numbers has resulted in successful outreach  
11 initiatives and residents are drawn to recycling  
12 events where organizations and agencies come together  
13 to provide a variety of information that's relevant  
14 to their lives.

15           So when I went back to school to earn an  
16 advanced degree in sustainability I wasn't thinking  
17 about getting involved with recycling and the zero  
18 waste movement, but the opportunity presented itself  
19 and I've embraced it wholeheartedly. And being a  
20 part of this program has been a rewarding experience  
21 in many ways. I'll always take great pride in  
22 providing people with the opportunity to learn  
23 something new while hopefully inspiring them to take  
24 action themselves to create a better world. It's  
25 been an honor and a pleasure working with NYCHA staff

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2 and residents along with my colleagues at Grow NYC  
3 and Green City Force and our partners at various  
4 organizations, and together we can solve New York  
5 City's waste issues and create a prosperous future  
6 for all forever.

7 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSA: Jared, thank you for  
8 your testimony. The reputation of Green City Force  
9 precedes itself and I know that you love them just as  
10 much as the rest of us do and the work that they're  
11 doing, and we want to keep encouraging that type of  
12 partnership by NYCHA and the City with our local  
13 NYCHA residents and being able to work together to  
14 accomplish the goals that we need to like this  
15 Recycling Program. So I really appreciate your time  
16 as well. I want to thank you guys for being here,  
17 and I'm going to call on the next panel. Thank you.

18 JARED SESSUM: Thanks so much.

19 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSA: Thank you. Our next  
20 Panel is Joy Junious, Carlton Davis, Barbara McFadden  
21 and Patina Hayward.

22 Okay, welcome. Thank you so much for  
23 being here and for waiting. You're actually our last  
24 panel so we expect you guys to do a very good job  
25

1  
2 here and close it out strong. So we usually start  
3 from my left to the right so you can start.

4 Is it on? Is the mic on? The little red  
5 light, you got to press the button.

6 PATINA HEYWARD: Okay, alright. Good  
7 afternoon. My name is Patina Heyward. Working with  
8 both NYCHA in the Resident Engagement Department as a  
9 Green City Force Recycling Outreach Apprentice and  
10 with the Department of Sanitation has given me a  
11 wonderful opportunity to be a part of something that  
12 has been very helpful and useful for the community.  
13 I have been on the front end of both areas, seeing  
14 both the good and the bad. I was able to see what  
15 worked and what didn't with the Recycling Program. I  
16 was able to get a perspective on how people felt  
17 about the Program. As a Recycling Apprentice, we  
18 determined what we as a team could do to improve the  
19 situation. That made being a part of the recycling  
20 team a joy. Working in resident engagement gave me  
21 the opportunity to really interact with residents on  
22 a closer more personal level. Really being able to  
23 hone in on what residents were saying and needed  
24 done. Working in the Department of Sanitation gave  
25 me the opportunity to work closely with the New York

1  
2 City Housing Authority's Operations Team, their  
3 supervisors of grounds and caretakers and give them  
4 hands-on support. I was able to physically assist  
5 the Operations Team of NYCHA with handling the  
6 recycling bins, bundling and twining up cardboard and  
7 preparing their setouts and etc. Having so much  
8 involvement in both areas has been eye-opening. I  
9 believe the numbers have increased exponentially in  
10 terms of how far the Recycling Program has come with  
11 getting all of NYCHA developments involved in the  
12 program.

13 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSA: Thank you for your  
14 testimony. I appreciate it.

15 CARLTON DAVIS: How you doing? I'm  
16 Carlton G. Davis, President of Resident Association  
17 of General Grant Houses. And I'd like to enlighten  
18 on how recycling is going on in General Grant at this  
19 time. Over the past few years, recycling was pretty  
20 much decent there until we had a fluctuation of new  
21 residents where we had bins on our porch or the  
22 canopy as you call it. By that being all on the  
23 canopies, these bins caused people to put their whole  
24 entire living room, bathroom, anything, bedroom  
25 furniture, everything, mattress, box springs, you

1  
2 name it, all out on the front porch. I mean our  
3 complex looked dilapidated, blighted along with the  
4 other problems with we had with piping and fixtures,  
5 electricity and everything.

6 I had the bins removed in June. Since  
7 then we have virtually zero trash in front of all  
8 nine buildings canopies. People walking in and out.  
9 What I would like for NYCHA to do is to either reboot  
10 the initiative for recycling so the people that are  
11 new there can have access to what the old residents,  
12 General Grant residents been there for 20 to 50 years  
13 that have knowledge of where to put their recyclables  
14 and stuff. So we have a clash of the old group and  
15 the new group that's coming in that has no knowledge.  
16 They haven't been screened. There hasn't been no  
17 orientation or anything, you know, and we need  
18 workshops, you know, where new residents can come in  
19 and actually get a hands-on on how to recycling  
20 because we don't want to be in dilapidation. We  
21 don't want to wind up being one of the buildings that  
22 you had to shut down through them.

23 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSA: So even before they  
24 put in the infrastructure and the Grant Houses, there  
25 was a good system in place already for recycling?

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2           CARLTON DAVIS: It was working but just  
3 that with the bins being on the canopy it just  
4 created mass trash, bulk trash, and we lost a level  
5 of our recycling capabilities. I had the bins  
6 relocated. We still have recycling but NYCHA is not  
7 picking up whatever is left out there. It's  
8 sometimes out for two to three days. The caretakers  
9 are not picking up trash. Our trash is in the  
10 stairwell, recycles in the stairwells, because our  
11 newer residents, they will bypass your hopper and  
12 they still think that they are incinerators.

13           CHAIRPERSON REYNOSA: So you would like  
14 them to reintroduce the program now because of all  
15 the new residents that you have? If it would have  
16 been done three, four years ago it would've been  
17 fine, but now in that time there's been new residents  
18 and you want to reengage them so they can understand  
19 how it's supposed to happen so you can get back to a  
20 place where it was more decent?

21           CARLTON DAVIS: That is absolutely  
22 correct.

23           CHAIRPERSON REYNOSA: Alright, okay. And  
24 that's the Grant Houses, right?

25           CARLTON DAVIS: Yes, it is.

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2           CHAIRPERSON REYNOSA: Okay. So we'll  
3 definitely be on top of that. NYCHA is still here so  
4 all your testimony is being heard. NYCHA will take  
5 note and we'll follow up to see how that goes and how  
6 it happens.

7           CARLTON DAVIS: And just one more thing,  
8 the Sanitation Coalition with Ms. Sarah Martin and  
9 Ms. Joan Levine as it could be written, they did do a  
10 good job but it's just like as I stated the  
11 fluctuation of new residents, NYCHA residents, caused  
12 a severe decline which at this point now we removed  
13 all the trash and now we could reboot for that  
14 recycling.

15           CHAIRPERSON REYNOSA: Noted, thank you.  
16 Thank you for your testimony.

17           BARBARA MCFADDEN: Good evening everyone.  
18 You can do better, good evening everyone. Okay. My  
19 name is Barbara McFadden. I am the Resident Leader  
20 at Nostrand Housing which is located in Sheepshead  
21 Bay. I just want to tell you a little background  
22 about me. I work for the New York City Board of Ed  
23 as a teacher. I've been with the Board of Ed since  
24 1999. I love children. I love people. I love the  
25 parents. And I've also been with NYCHA for five

1  
2 years. I've been a Resident Leader for five years.  
3 I was elected twice, and of course I'm a Democrat. I  
4 work with my Councilman Maisel. I work with my  
5 District Leader Lew Fidler. I work with my  
6 Assemblywoman Weinstein and Senator Persaud. They  
7 know me very well in the Sheepshead Bay community  
8 because I'm very active.

9           Okay, so let's get back on topic.

10 Nostrand Housing was the first development to kick  
11 start the Recycling Program. I am very pleased that  
12 my children, parents, and overall community at large  
13 are utilizing the recycling bins because I do. My  
14 reason being is that when you recycling certain  
15 companies depend on recycling programs to provide  
16 them with raw materials that they need to make new  
17 products. Also, recycling promotes economic growth  
18 because job recycling in the United States is  
19 approximately \$236 billion a year industry. The good  
20 thing is NYCHA is making progress in this issue. Our  
21 residents was given training on numerous occasions,  
22 how to recycling their waste items. Also our  
23 Resident Engagement Team has been very resourceful  
24 because they have provided each development with  
25 recycling literature, materials to hang at each

1  
2 building, they did a lot of demonstrations, and they  
3 included my children too. Our Recycling Program at  
4 Sheepshead Bay Nostrand is working because I witness  
5 the tenants myself and children recycling their  
6 wastes. Last but not least I am part of NYCHA's 10-  
7 year plan. One of our first priorities is making  
8 sure each resident has a better quality of life  
9 because recycling helps us to promote a healthier  
10 environment and also for our residents. At  
11 Sheepshead Bay Nostrand, it is working. And let me  
12 give you an example. As the Resident Leader, I can  
13 walk out my building 3023 Avenue X. I can see the  
14 clear bags with all the plastic. I can see the  
15 aluminum from the Pepsi bottles. I can see my  
16 children, my seniors, myself, we are utilizing our  
17 bins and as a school teacher I'm all for education.  
18 So I support the NYCHA and Resident Engagement Team  
19 100 percent.

20 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSA: Thank you very much.  
21 I really appreciate your enthusiasm, and I can only  
22 imagine how all those elected officials must shower  
23 you with love. I can only imagine, but I appreciate  
24 your testimony and the fact that you are one of the  
25 first locations that it was done in and obviously it

1  
2 seems like you are satisfied with how it's rolled  
3 out.

4 BARBARA MCFADDEN: Yes, yes.

5 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSA: I appreciate that.  
6 The last but not least.

7 JOY JUNIOUS: Hello, my name is Joy  
8 Junious. I'm a Green City Force graduate. I worked  
9 as a Recycling Apprentice along with Patina and  
10 Chance, and I'm also a current Environment Ambassador  
11 through Grow NYC. As we already heard, NYCHA  
12 Recycles is a NYCHA project that has enabled NYCHA  
13 residents to take part in recycling and has allowed  
14 NYCHA to become compliant with the New York City  
15 Recycling Law. As a Recycling Apprentice, I got to  
16 work on the Residential Recycling Program with Grow  
17 NYC, DSNY, and the Resident Engagement Department of  
18 NYCHA. The Recycling Program is to be launched in  
19 every NYCHA development by the end of 2016, and in  
20 order to launch a development's recycling program,  
21 there must be a site walkthrough, bin installation  
22 and a kickoff meeting for the residents to become  
23 aware of the bins' arrival and also informed on how  
24 to use them correctly. At a kickoff meeting which is  
25 what I worked on organizing during my time as an

1  
2 apprentice, there was a slideshow followed by a Q&A,  
3 a recycling game, and a distribution of recycling  
4 sort and store totes which provided a way for  
5 residents to separate recycling in-house instead of  
6 outside of the bin. I also wanted to say that a lot  
7 of things went into organizing the recycling  
8 meetings. I heard someone say that there was no  
9 resident education. I agree that there should be  
10 more continued resident education but I have more  
11 about that in my testimony. But I did do a lot of  
12 organizing of the recycling meetings, and a lot does  
13 go into that process. A lot of the outreach was done  
14 by me, Chance and Patina ourselves which involves  
15 going to developments, posting signs saying, hey,  
16 this kickoff meeting is happening, knocking on doors  
17 saying come out and come learn about what's happening  
18 in your community, these bins are here, this is how  
19 you use them. So once the kickoff meeting took place  
20 the recycling bins are ready for use. In addition to  
21 my work as a Recycling Apprentice, I am also enrolled  
22 as a volunteer Environmental Ambassador.

23 Environmental Ambassadors is a volunteer group  
24 facilitated and organized by Grow NYC. The program  
25 has residents from NYCHA developments volunteer to be

1  
2 the Ambassador for recycling and other environmental  
3 projects in their development. What an Ambassador  
4 does is go to Grow NYC to get information on how to  
5 recycle and how to teach others about recycling.  
6 This is called Environmental Ambassadors training.  
7 The next step would be taking that knowledge we  
8 received from training out into the field in our own  
9 development. After training, Environmental  
10 Ambassadors go out into the developments to do  
11 outreach. Outreach can be done by tabling and the  
12 lobby of your development or speaking to your  
13 neighbors. We also go around the development  
14 cleaning up recyclable trash that is seen around the  
15 development. It's really up to each Environmental  
16 Ambassador what they'd like to do and what they want  
17 their project to be. The most important part is that  
18 by recycling we can create cleaner developments in  
19 neighborhoods while being kind to the environment at  
20 the same time. As an Environmental Ambassador I feel  
21 like that is part of the continuing education part  
22 because as someone said earlier it is up to the  
23 residents and so I took a stand for my community to  
24 be the point person. You have a question about  
25 recycling? Oh, Joy, she lives in Apartment whatever

1  
2 in 251, you know, and she can answer any question you  
3 might have about recycling. Being that recycling  
4 expert is how we can continue the education. If we  
5 have five Environmental Ambassadors in every  
6 development or maybe five in each building of every  
7 development then that is a number of point people  
8 that can come together to do big group projects or  
9 they can work with you one on one so that way you  
10 understand how to recycle. If there's a new resident  
11 that moved into an Environmental Ambassador's  
12 building, that Environmental Ambassador will probably  
13 pick up on that and be able to go to that resident  
14 and say, hey, I know you just moved in or, you know,  
15 I know you just, you know, started living here, but  
16 let me talk to you about recycling, you know, this is  
17 how we recycle, and if that Ambassador has on hand  
18 the sort and store totes they would be able to give  
19 it out to that person, you know, so that way they can  
20 be caught up and educated on how to recycle. So I  
21 think that the residents do play a big part in the  
22 continuing education and by having this Environmental  
23 Ambassadors program that's part of the way that we  
24 can continue education to other residents.

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CHAIRPERSON REYNOSA: I appreciate that.  
And I guess what this hearing was for was for a  
couple of things. It's the status of the programs,  
see how it's working in some locations, measuring  
goals, right? At the end of the day it's great to  
put the beautiful infrastructure out in NYCHA  
property but if it's not working we need to do  
something about it, and it seems like in the  
measuring portions of it are going to happen a little  
later. We're going to be able to figure that out.  
And the third thing is absolutely what the community  
believes in regards to the progress. The community  
buy-in is the biggest thing. If the community  
doesn't... it could be working perfectly and if you  
don't believe it, it doesn't matter. Alright, that's  
very important and we need to make sure that you're  
brought in and that you're educated on it, and  
obviously all the testimony we've heard after the  
first panel has been more promising and more positive  
so I'm happy to hear that. I'm looking forward to  
where you guys are going to be in a year from now,  
whether you're still going to be advocating for these  
things so I'm excited to see that and hopefully when  
we see the numbers that NYCHA is an active

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participant in New York City reaching its recycling goals which it never has been so I'm really excited about that being the conversation we have a in a year. So thank you very much for your time. I really appreciate it. And as of now, if I had my gavel, there it is. The meeting is now closed. Thank you.

[gavel]

C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date December 28, 2016