

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

----- X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE
MANAGEMENT

----- X

September 18, 2017
Start: 1:10 p.m.
Recess: 7:28 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers-City Hall

B E F O R E: ANTONIO REYNOSO
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

BEN WEINSTEIN KALLOS
ANDY L. KING
VANESSA L. GIBSON
COSTA G. CONSTANTINIDES
STEVEN MATTEO

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

Kathryn Garcia
Commissioner of the New York City Department of
Sanitation

Bridget Anderson
Deputy Commissioner for Recycling and
Sustainability for the Department of Sanitation

Annabel Short
Deputy Director at ALIGN, the Alliance for a
Greater New York

Melissa Iachan
Senior Staff Attorney in the Environmental
Justice Program at New York Lawyers for the
Public Interest

Justin Wood
Director of Organizing and Strategic Research at
NYLPI

Eric Goldstein
Senior Attorney with the Natural Resources
Defense Council

Sean Campbell
President and Principal Officer of Teamsters
Local 813 representing Private Sanitation in New
York City

Priya Mulgaonkar
Policy Organizer for the New York City
Environmental Justice Alliance

Ben Weinstein
Member of Grassroots Organization called Clean
Up North Brooklyn

David Biderman
Executive Director and CEO of the Solid Waste
Association of North America, SWANA

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

Sarah Martin
Co-Chair of the Morningside Heights West Harlem
Sanitation Coalition

Sarah Currie-Halpern
Chair of the Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board

Greg Todd
Member of the Brooklyn Solid Waste Advisory Board
And a Chair of the Organics

Mary Cleaver
Owner of the Cleaver Company and Owns a Farm to
Table Restaurant called the Green Table

Adriana Espinoza
Manager of the New York City Program at the New
York League of Conservation Voters

Maggie Clarke
PHD, Founder of Zero Waste New York National
Recycling Coalitions Disaster Debris Mitigation
Committee, Chair of the Waste Prevention
Committee of the Manhattan SWAB

Vandra Thorburn
Founder of Vokashi Kitchen Waste Solutions

Claire Meslin
Architect Leading the Process of Developing the
AIA New York

Alireza Vaziri
Co-Founder of Roho Compost

Rolando Guzman
Testifying on behalf of the Organization United
For Trash Reduction and Garbage Equity Outreach

Jacquelyn Ottman
Expert in the Area of Green Marketing

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

Alessandro Ciari
Volunteer for the Manhattan and Brooklyn SWAB

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

3

[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Good morning

everyone. Good afternoon, good afternoon. Time flies when we're having a sanitation committee hearing, it's so exciting. Good afternoon, I'm Council Member Antonio Reynoso, the Chair of the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management. Thank you for attending this oversight hearing on getting to zero waste by 2030. We will also hear Intro Number 1573 sponsored by Council Member Kallos in relation to establishing a goal of zero waste for New York City by 2030. Getting to zero waste in New York City is an important and extremely ambitious goal. The plan outlines several initiatives including expanding organics, enhancing curbside recycling, reducing the use of non-compostable waste like plastic bags, giving all New Yorkers the opportunity to reduce waste, making all schools zero waste, expanding e-waste and textile recycling, developing a save as you throw program, and reducing commercial waste by 90 percent by 2030. I greatly appreciate the hard work of the Department of Sanitation and have seen progress in several of these initiatives but there is still so much work left to do. I'm looking forward to

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

6

1
2 understanding the benchmarks that we are hitting for
3 these initiatives, what measurable goals are in place
4 to ensure that we are staying on track and the plans
5 to improve our progress along the way. I'm especially
6 interested in learning about the progress being made
7 to reduce commercial waste and how those reductions
8 are being tracked. I look forward to hearing
9 testimony from DSNY, the environmental advocates and
10 other interested groups about their experience with
11 these initiatives so far and any advice that they
12 have for how the city could be doing more to reduce
13 waste. and I'll... alright and I want to just mention
14 that we are joined by Sanitation Committee Member
15 from... thank you Ben for being here... but we're waiting
16 for Council Member Ben Kallos who will speak on his
17 bill in a couple of seconds but we are joined by
18 Committee Member Steven Matteo from Staten Island.
19 So, he's going to... do you want to...

20 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: [off-mic] I'll be
21 quick... good afternoon, I want to thank the
22 Sanitation, Sanitation Committee Chair, Antonio
23 Reynoso for having this important hearing and
24 Commissioner Garcia though we may disagree... may...
25 though I may disagree with both of you about the

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

7

1
2 siting of certain stations I want to thank both of
3 you for your partnership on reducing waste,
4 increasing diversion. When I ran for city council in
5 2013 everyone in my district was opposed to a marine
6 transfer station but I suggested that we were arguing
7 about the right... the wrong thing when we had an
8 opportunity to really have a broader conversation
9 about what we did with waste in our city and I
10 suggested that we could head towards zero waste which
11 is something that the Mayor has set as a city policy
12 and so I was proud to introduce legislation that
13 would actually require it as we've learned from the
14 federal administration, sometimes executive orders
15 can be changed especially with changes in
16 administration and laws are a lot harder to do
17 especially as we see in the federal level. So, I want
18 to thank the Committee Chair for prioritizing and
19 hearing this legislation and hopefully this can help
20 reduce the burden of putrescible waste through... for
21 districts throughout our city, so thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you Council
23 Member Kallos and now we are joined by Bridget
24 Anderson, the Deputy Commissioner for Recycling and
25 Sustainability of the Department of Sanitation and

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

8

1
2 the Commissioner of the New York City Department of
3 Sanitation, the Kathryn Garcia.

4 KATHRYN GARCIA: Good afternoon Chair
5 Reynoso and members of the Committee on Sanitation
6 and Solid Waste Management. I am Kathryn Garcia,
7 Commissioner of the Department of Sanitation. With me
8 here to answer your questions is Bridget Anderson,
9 Deputy Commissioner for Recycling and Sustainability
10 for the Department. As Commissioner of the agency
11 responsible for developing and managing the most
12 ambitious and comprehensive sustainable solid waste
13 management program of any city in the nation, I
14 welcome this opportunity to share with you our
15 experiences, observations, and progress to date in
16 achieving this administration's goal of sending zero
17 waste to landfills by 2030. My testimony today will
18 highlight just a few of the many aspects of the
19 city's zero waste initiatives but this is
20 fundamentally about how we as a city view our waste,
21 it can be and is a valuable resource. It is
22 especially fitting to mention that today is the
23 beginning of climate week 2017, a time when cities
24 across our nation and the globe are coming together
25 to raise awareness and inspire action on climate

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

9

1
2 change. Waste management including both solid waste
3 and wastewater treatment accounts for four percent of
4 citywide greenhouse gas emissions and achieving zero
5 waste to landfills is a key part of the city's 80 by
6 50 commitment. Management of New York City's solid
7 waste has evolved considerably over the last three
8 decades. By the 1980's New York City came to
9 symbolize the modern garbage crisis with a growing
10 volume of waste and declining options available for
11 in city disposal. By this time the Fresh Kills
12 Landfill had become the largest municipal landfill in
13 the country and the city's incinerators burned
14 garbage with few of the environmental controls of
15 today's energy from waste facilities. Over time the
16 city improved its waste management operations by
17 closing its outdated incinerators and landfills and
18 in 1989 the city created the nation's largest
19 municipal residential program. At the time New York
20 City became the only major city to collect
21 recyclables at the curbside from all residents
22 regardless of building size. The 2006 solid waste
23 management plan was a landmarked achievement for long
24 term waste planning and environmental justice. The
25 plan was designed to reduce the city's reliance on a

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

10

1 network of land based transfer stations and long-haul
2 trucking to export residential waste. By switching to
3 an equitable framework of marine and rail transfer
4 stations located in all five boroughs. Two weeks ago,
5 the department opened the Hamilton Avenue Marine
6 Transfer Station in Brooklyn, the second of the four
7 MTS's that will open under this administration. We
8 are working to bring the remaining marine transfer
9 stations on board over the next two years. When the
10 final marine transfer stations are opened we will
11 have reduced truck travel associated with waste
12 export by more than 60 million miles per year
13 including more than five million miles in and around
14 New York City. The New York City Department of
15 Sanitation collects more than 3.5 million tons of
16 waste and recyclables each year. Last year we
17 collected 3.2 million tons of waste for disposal and
18 another 640,000 tons of recyclables and organics.
19 Since 2005 the amount of refuse collected by DSNY has
20 decreased by 12 percent while the city's population
21 increased by six percent. As a result, the average
22 New Yorker today throws out an average of 14 pounds
23 of garbage at home each week, lower than or on par
24 with other cities across the country even those on
25

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

11

1 the West coast. The amount of waste is not the only
2 thing that has changed over time, I just want to
3 bring your... you'll notice the two pie charts, to
4 understand what New Yorkers throw out, the Department
5 regularly completes waste characterization studies. A
6 comprehensive residential study was conducted in 2005
7 and updated in 2013 and we are currently in the
8 process of it again. The results of this year's study
9 will be published in early 2018. These studies give
10 us valuable information about how well New Yorkers
11 are recycling and help us identify realistic
12 opportunities to divert other material from disposal.
13 These studies have shown that rapidly changing nature
14 of our waste stream over time and they have
15 reaffirmed trends that the rest of the nation is
16 experiencing. In the last decade, the amount of
17 overall waste has decreased due to, to changes in
18 what people are throwing out. The volume of paper and
19 newsprint has declined significantly and early
20 results will say that it has declined even more in
21 the 2017 waste characterization as a result of the
22 growth of the digital economy. Many manufacturers are
23 eliminating glass containers, more costly to
24 transport and prone to breakage in favor of rigid
25

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

12

1
2 plastic containers which the city added to the
3 curbside recycling program in 2013. As we look
4 forward we expect economic and social trends to
5 continue to influence what is in our waste and the
6 nature and scope of the programs we must develop to
7 sustainably manage it. the waste characterization
8 study shows us that our waste should be viewed as a
9 resource from which we can extract value, energy,
10 nutrients, and new products. Today we recycle more
11 than 20 percent of our waste, we are moving in the
12 right direction and achieving positive change
13 compared to just a decade ago but we know New Yorkers
14 and the Department can do more. The Department has
15 developed a set of interrelated initiatives that
16 together create a roadmap to meet... to meeting our
17 goal of sending zero waste to landfills by 2030. We
18 have already taken great steps to implement these
19 initiatives, many at a scale and scope unparalleled
20 in the United States and in some cases the world.
21 With a coordinated effort, we can as a city eliminate
22 the need to send our waste to landfills and we will
23 minimize the overall environmental impact of our
24 trash. In sanitation we take our role as heralds of
25 this movement very seriously and in the last several

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

13

1
2 years we have already put in place transformative
3 expansions to the services we offer New Yorkers and
4 the infrastructure to handle it and we will continue
5 to aggressively on this path but we also know that
6 full realization of the city's vision is going to
7 require all hands on deck, change may not be linear
8 and growth of programs is not instantaneous but with
9 the full backing of the city council and of New
10 Yorkers we are confident that the approaches we are
11 pursuing as I will outline below will result in
12 significant step changes over the next 13 years to
13 get us to our collective goal. For much of the 20th
14 century the Department of Sanitation primarily engage
15 in the carefully choreographed art of collecting and
16 disposing of whatever New Yorkers decided to throw
17 away. Today however we know that away does not exist.
18 Our greatest ability to influence New Yorkers path
19 towards zero waste though lies in the curbside
20 collection and drop off programs that divert waste
21 from landfills for beneficial use. As I mentioned
22 earlier the city has had a mandatory curbside
23 recycling program for more than 25 years, today we
24 are collecting more recyclables than in any point in
25 the last decade and we are the only major city in the

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

14

1
2 United States that collects recyclables in two
3 streams; comingled paper and separately metal, glass,
4 plastic and cartons. Advances in sorting and
5 recycling technology have now made it both feasible
6 and economical to separate mixed material into high
7 value commodity bales. The Department is currently
8 working with our recycling processing vendors; Sims
9 Municipal Recycling to develop a plan to retrofit the
10 city's recycling system to accept single stream
11 recycling starting in 2020, this will make it easier
12 for New Yorkers to recycle and will allow us to more
13 efficiently collect recyclable materials. Food
14 scraps, yard waste and food soil paper suitable for
15 composting also known as organics make up one third
16 of the city's, city's residential waste stream,
17 stream. In 2013 the city began a pilot curbside
18 organic collection program on Staten Island, today
19 the program serves nearly 570,000 households and over
20 800 schools across the city and by the end of this
21 year nearly 3.3 million New Yorkers will have regular
22 DSNY curbside organic collection service. No other
23 city provides a curbside organic service that is
24 operated on such a large scale as New York City's
25 program. By the end of next year New York City

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

15

1
2 organics will serve all New Yorkers with either
3 curbside collection service or convenient
4 neighborhood drop off sites. From the beginning of
5 our voluntary organics pilot to today we have
6 collected more than 55,000 tons of organics from
7 participating households, schools, and agencies. In
8 2011 the city launched RefashionNYC, a partnership
9 with Housing Works to place clothing recycling bins
10 in apartment buildings at no cost to the city. Today
11 nearly 1,500 buildings with 146,000 individual
12 households participate in the program. As clothing
13 and textiles make up six percent of the residential
14 waste we continue to work with our partners to expand
15 opportunities and convenience to donate, re-use, and
16 recycle these items. We support efforts by GrowNYC to
17 offer weekly clothing collections at Green Markets
18 and to host community scale clothing donations and
19 stop and swap events citywide. Last fiscal year we
20 collected and re-used or recycled more than 14,500
21 tons of clothing and textiles through these programs.
22 Although it comprises less than one percent of the
23 waste stream, electronic waste often contains toxic
24 materials like mercury, cadmium, lead and other heavy
25 metals. In order to prevent these materials from

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

16

1
2 polluting the environment upon disposal the
3 department has developed several options for
4 residents to properly recycle e-waste. the East
5 EcycleNYC Program developed at no cost to the city in
6 partnership with ERI has grown to be the most
7 expansive and convenient E-Waste collection program
8 in the country serving more than 12,500 apartment
9 buildings with nearly 800,000 households and two
10 million residents. We have also added on demand E-
11 Waste collection service for residents of the outer
12 boroughs expanding next month to Northern Brooklyn.
13 The Department also continues its popular safe
14 disposal program offering five permanent drop off
15 sites and ten borough wide safe disposal events per
16 year plus smaller pop up events hosted by community
17 partners. In 2015 New York State banned the
18 collection of electronics for disposal which has
19 helped to dramatically grow the participation in each
20 of our E-Waste services. Last year these programs
21 together diverted over 6,000 tons of electronics for
22 safe and proper recycling. New York City has a robust
23 reuse sector comprised of non-profit and commercial
24 enterprises that collect and re-distributes unwanted
25 goods. Re-use is considered to be a higher and better

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

17

1
2 use than recycling as product can continue to be used
3 for their original intended purpose. These efforts
4 reflect a changing focus how we export and dispose of
5 waste has become an opportunity for us to build
6 industries and develop a local economy around
7 materials that can be recovered. Last year we don't...
8 launched our DonateNYC web and mobile app to provide
9 an easy way to find local opportunities to re-use
10 unwanted goods. We also provide support to the local
11 non-profit community to expand their capabilities and
12 reach more New Yorkers. Last year the DonateNYC
13 partners successfully diverted over 29,500 tons of
14 used or surplus materials not including textiles. In
15 the next year, we will continue to grow DonateNYC to
16 include food recovery and donation pursuant to local
17 law 176 signed into law two weeks ago. DSNY has
18 proudly served our partner agencies and city
19 government for decades, recently we have redoubled
20 efforts to engage these agencies not only in safe and
21 effective waste management practices but also as
22 partners in our efforts to achieve our zero waste
23 goals. More importantly the New York City Housing
24 Authority and the Department of Education with more
25 than 400,000 residents and one million students

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

18

1
2 respectively are our two largest customers and the
3 success of our zero waste initiatives depends on
4 their commitment and dedication. Over the past two
5 years the Department and New York City Housing
6 Authority have entered into an historic partnership
7 to bring NYCHA Developments into compliance with the
8 city's recycling laws for the first time and to
9 encourage residents to recycle. As of December 2016,
10 all NYCHA Developments have consistent recycling
11 infrastructure and have received an unprecedented
12 amount of staff training and resident outreach. Over
13 the next year we will view voluntary incentive
14 programs that may increase resident participation as
15 required by local law 49 of 2017. Schools which
16 generate more than 40,000 tons of refuse per year
17 have been another point of focus in our zero waste
18 efforts. New York City schools are educating our next
19 generation of recyclers and in 2016 we partnered with
20 DOE to launch the first 100 zero waste schools with
21 the ambitious goal of diverting all recyclable or
22 compostable waste from those schools within five
23 years. Through additional resources and the
24 collaboration of teachers, principals, custodians,
25 and cafeteria staff it is our hope that schools will

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

19

1
2 become models for others and will advance a culture
3 of recycling and sustainability throughout the school
4 system. So far, my testimony is focused on efforts by
5 the Department to give New Yorkers the access to
6 programs to re-use or recycle waste. However,
7 education, outreach and enforcement are critical to
8 participation in these programs in achieving our zero
9 waste goals. Today the Department has a staff of 50
10 in our Bureau of Recycling and Sustainability that
11 develops and operates programs, conducts training and
12 outreach and deploys communication and promotional
13 tools from mailers to technical guides to social
14 media and advertising. Just last year we spent 4.5
15 million on communication and promotional tools
16 including mailers, flyers, advertisements, and re-
17 usable bag give aways. However, marketing and
18 promotion alone are not enough to achieve our
19 ambitious goals. We have found through decades of
20 experience implementing recycling programs that
21 direct and personal conversations with everyday New
22 Yorkers are the best way to achieve behavioral
23 change. So, we have implemented a diverse set of
24 outreach programs including partnerships through the
25 New York City Compost Project, GrowNYC, NYC Service

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

20

1
2 and other organizations to reach as many New Yorkers
3 as possible. In addition, we have specifically
4 targeted outreach assets in low income communities
5 that have historically had the city's lowest
6 recycling rates with a goal of doubling recycling
7 diversion rates in the community district with the
8 lowest diversion rates. We have translated recycling
9 education materials into the city's eight most
10 commonly spoken languages and we continue working
11 with local community organizations to give all New
12 Yorkers the tools they need to reduce waste and
13 recycle more. So, far this strategy has led to
14 demonstrable success in the first two years the
15 targeted districts have increased their diversion
16 rates by an average of 1.3 percentage points, a 14
17 percent increase since 2015. Today we are incredibly
18 proud of the work we have done so far to lay the
19 groundwork for achieving our zero waste goals however
20 we face a number of challenges on the road to
21 achieving zero waste to landfills in the next 13
22 years. Surveys conducted by the department have shown
23 that New Yorkers generally know what is recyclable
24 and it has a favorable view of... towards recycling.
25 The overall diversion rate of New York City has

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

21

1
2 increased from 14.8 percent to 20.5 percent however
3 despite the multitude of convening collection
4 programs and the amount of marketing and outreach we
5 conduct we know that we can achieve much more with
6 the current set of programs by continuing to change
7 mindsets and behaviors. One of the greatest
8 challenges to recycling in New York City when
9 compared to other American cities is the incredible
10 density and diversity of that building stock; storage
11 space, signage, and the level of custodial service
12 are the most important factors for recycling
13 compliance in our large dense city. Our work with
14 landlords and building managers has helped many to
15 come into compliance with the city's recycling law in
16 their buildings and we applaud them for their efforts
17 but we still see fewer separated recyclables than we
18 expect based on our waste characterization studies.
19 To further change behavior among New Yorkers we must
20 continue to evaluate options available including
21 penalties like stricter enforcement and the expansion
22 of mandatory participation programs as well as
23 additional marketing education and outreach tactics.
24 The Department anticipates spending more than 380
25 million dollars next year to dispose of waste in out

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

22

1
2 of city landfills and energy from waste facilities.
3 While the amount of waste we create has decreased
4 steadily over the past decade the cost of disposing
5 and transporting that waste, waste has increased and
6 space in landfills has decreased. However New Yorkers
7 are largely insulated from the growing cost of
8 disposing of their waste as these costs are paid out
9 of the city's general tax revenue. Monetary
10 incentives for residents and property owners have
11 been proven to lead to lower waste volumes and higher
12 recycling rates thereby reducing disposal costs and
13 decreasing the environmental impact of landfill and
14 waste. in New York City implementing a save as you
15 throw program that rewards those who waste less and
16 recycle more could reduce waste generation by as much
17 as 30 percent representing the largest potential step
18 toward achieving our zero waste goals. To evaluate
19 this policy and develop a fair equitable blueprint
20 for waste reduction the department is currently
21 finalizing a contract with a consultant to assess the
22 range of options available to help New Yorkers save
23 money as they reduce waste. However, any such program
24 is likely to be controversial and the administration
25 will depend on the support of the council to

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

23

1
2 implement a successful program. Zero waste is not
3 simply an end of pipe concept, while the vast
4 majority of the initiatives overseen by the
5 department focus on finding solutions for products
6 that New Yorkers no longer want we have also shifted
7 focus upstream to influence the choices that
8 manufacturers, retailers, and consumers make as they
9 create, sell and purchase products. However, the
10 amount of influence we as a city even the largest
11 city in the country have over these choices is
12 strikingly small. We have joined in partnership with
13 several consumer goods manufacturers, waste
14 management enterprises and other states of
15 municipalities to work toward a circular economy
16 where products and resources can be continuously re-
17 used, refurbished and regenerated for ongoing use as
18 new products. Some products simply do not belong in
19 our waste stream, while the city has shown aggressive
20 leadership in limiting or prohibiting certain
21 products including single use carry out bags, in food
22 service foam products from use in New York City, we
23 have time and again faced litigation and steep
24 preemption as threats to sound, solid waste
25 management policies. The department will continue to

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

24

1
2 evaluate policy options to identify and reduce the
3 use of other non-recyclable and non-compostable
4 products, seek environmental stewardship and explore
5 options such as bans and fees to reduce the overall
6 impact these products have on our local environment
7 while encouraging New Yorkers to use more sustainable
8 options. We will rely on the partnership of the
9 council and our state legislatures to ensure that
10 sensible policies that help lead towards zero waste
11 can be put in place for the benefit of New Yorkers.
12 While my testimony so far has not addressed the topic
13 of commercial waste, I must acknowledge that this
14 sector plays an important role in achieving our zero
15 waste goals. Offices, stores, restaurants, and other
16 commercial establishments generate an estimated three
17 million tons of waste a year only one third of which
18 is currently recycled. The department is focused on
19 implementing the city's recently revised commercial
20 recycling regulations and expanding the commercial
21 establishments required to separate commercial
22 organics. In addition, we are pursuing the
23 implementation of commercial waste zones in New York
24 City, this policy represents a wholesale reform of
25 the commercial waste industry and will significantly

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

25

1
2 reduce truck traffic while simultaneously achieving
3 our goals of reducing waste disposal, improving
4 safety and working conditions and establishing clear
5 consistent customer service standards. We look
6 forward to working with the council and a range of
7 stakeholders in developing the implementation plan for
8 this new strategy. Lastly Intro Number 1573 under
9 consideration today seeks to codify into law the
10 administration's ambitious goal of sending zero waste
11 to landfills by 2030. As I have outlined today the
12 department firmly supports this goal and our efforts
13 to date demonstrate the measures we are taking to
14 achieve it. Achieving this ambitious goal will
15 require a combination of new policies and programs,
16 legislative reforms, and partnerships with the
17 private sector and I look forward to working with the
18 council as well as our advocates and the state on
19 legislative initiatives that are necessary to reach
20 this goal. Together we as New Yorkers have an
21 incredible opportunity to achieve our goal of sending
22 zero waste to landfills by 2030. I firmly believe
23 that all of the initiatives that I've outlined today
24 will place us on a clear path to achieving this goal
25 and I thank the administration and the council for

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

26

1
2 the past, present, and future support as the
3 department leads the city on this ambitious journey.
4 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this
5 important subject today and I am happy to answer your
6 questions.

7 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you
8 Commissioner. We've been joined by Council Member
9 Costa Constantinides and Council Member Brad Lander
10 as well, thank you for your testimony. And... so, right
11 now we're seeing the diversion rates around 20
12 percent you had, 20.5 percent?

13 KATHRYN GARCIA: Uh-huh.

14 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Which initiatives
15 will start pushing the diversion rates even higher, I
16 know you, you talked about save as you throw and
17 you've also talked about the waste... the... I'm sorry..

18 KATHRYN GARCIA: Well we have a lot more
19 control over the programs that we roll out and the
20 biggest step change that we are currently rolling out
21 is, is the organics program and getting participation
22 in the organics program and getting the service
23 across the city. As I said in my testimony, 3.3
24 million people will have the service by the end of
25 this year, that is almost three times the size of any

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

27

1
2 other city's program and by the end of next year we
3 should be fully rolled out with either curbside
4 collection or with convenient drop off service but in
5 terms of Save as you Throw one of the things that
6 happens is... well the way that I think about it in
7 terms of motivating people, there are certain people
8 who are highly, highly motivated by the environmental
9 benefits of recycling, you know there are certain
10 people who are motivated by enforcement and by... and
11 by penalties and then there are certain people who
12 sometimes are motivated by what is the coolness
13 factor and we're trying to speak to all those but
14 Save as you Throw is the... idea is to give you an
15 incentive for doing recycling the right way and
16 really make it so that you benefit directly from
17 actually participating and in other cities has been...
18 has... so you've seen significant change when those
19 have been rolled out.

20 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: So, we have 380... 80
21 million next year to dispose of waste in and of the
22 city, how much of your entire budget does that
23 account for?

24 KATHRYN GARCIA: The entire budget should
25 be a little bit over 1.6 billion this year so 380 is...

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

28

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

I can't do the math in my head right this second.. but that's the proportion of it. The vast majority of my budget still is personnel cost.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Yeah, the personnel cost and outside of the personnel cost is how much it costs to take the trash to landfills.. [cross-talk]

KATHRYN GARCIA: Right, the.. [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...and.. [cross-talk]

KATHRYN GARCIA: ...380 is just once, once we have gotten to our private vendors how much it costs once that occurs.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Okay and just to put it in perspective and correct me if I'm wrong about four years ago when we first started this committee and we asked about how, how much it would cost to send our waste to, to landfills it was closer to like 280 million so we've seen about 100 million dollar increase in four years in how much it costs to, to move the, the trash?

KATHRYN GARCIA: It was closer to 300 million when I started and yes, we are seeing extensive increases in the cost for disposal. So, while we have been at the curve on the amount that we

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

29

1
2 are producing the cost per ton has been expanding,
3 increasing, rising, going up.

4 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: That's, that's
5 good, good... no... organics I just want to speak a
6 little to what, what percentages are you seeing in
7 the participation of the program for organics from
8 folks because given that this is a, a large portion
9 of our... of our waste stream, 31 percent one do, do we
10 think we're doing a good job with the pilot program
11 or where we're expanding it to and should it go
12 citywide, do you feel that there might be a need to
13 consider making it mandatory?

14 KATHRYN GARCIA: So, we've seen anywhere
15 from participation rates from low in the six percent
16 to in the mid 20's which is as anticipated based on
17 our experience having rolled out other recycling
18 programs over time. So, would I like to be moving
19 faster, yes, I would but it is a voluntary program
20 and so you know this is actually better than the
21 mandatory metal, glass and plastic program was when
22 it first rolled out in the 80's. So, we are thinking
23 that there should hopefully become at some point a
24 path to mandatory considering we have not provided

25

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

30

1
2 the service as broadly as we would like yet, it would
3 probably be premature.

4 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: So, measuring I
5 think... I guess folks want to know where we are in our
6 path to zero waste by 2030, how are you measuring it
7 and, and where can the general public see the
8 progress that we're making to get to that goal, I
9 think a lot of folks see what Vision Zero is doing
10 and, and having a measurable goal and a target that
11 we can hit and not necessarily having the same
12 process or, or, or... being able to see the progress
13 we're making for zero waste, I just want to... what are
14 you using to measure your progress and can we ever
15 get a hold of, of some type of system that allows us
16 to see how... the progress we're making in the city?

17 KATHRYN GARCIA: I actually think you
18 have access, maybe my website is not as easy... [cross-
19 talk]

20 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Okay... [cross-talk]

21 KATHRYN GARCIA: ...to find... [cross-talk]

22 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Yes...

23 KATHRYN GARCIA: ...but... [cross-talk]

24 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Okay... [cross-talk]

25

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

31

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

KATHRYN GARCIA: ...there are... there are really two, two ways that we're looking at it. One is, are we providing the access to the programs, are we getting penetration across the city with all of the different programs that we have provided to residents so that they can participate and then the second is basically always going to be at the end of the day, tonnage and those metrics we put out by district every month of how much material the city is producing.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Right, so, so we... so, so you have that somewhere in your website that speaks to that, does it speak specifically to zero waste or just general information about, about... [cross-talk]

KATHRYN GARCIA: So, it, it's, it's not... we don't break it off as zero waste because the whole, whole idea of zero waste is that is that we're going to end up with a very low tonnage number so that's the numbers that are still there. There's lots of information about the programs that make up all of the zero waste initiatives.

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

32

1
2 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Alright, so... and,
3 and you believe that all your measurements are
4 extremely accurate as to the progress we're making?

5 KATHRYN GARCIA: On tonnage they are
6 absolutely accurate because I, you know pay per
7 pound. So, those numbers are absolutely crisp. In
8 terms of the access... the, the access numbers are also
9 very accurate, they are based on census so how many
10 people have it is based on the last census numbers
11 for those districts but I think that they're... you
12 know I would... I would feel very secure that we are
13 at... going to be at 3.3 million people give or take a
14 few thousand by the end of this year.

15 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Alright and I think
16 we should have or maybe conversations offline as to
17 what a... the measurements look like and how they are
18 able to be connected to the progress we're making on
19 zero waste because I think folks independently and in
20 silos know the progress we're making on certain like
21 organics and metal, glass, and, and, and plastic and
22 so forth but as a goal as a whole it doesn't seem
23 like it's, it's too... it's together right now and
24 maybe that could be me but the conversations I'm
25 having with folks that really want to help the city

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

33

1
2 achieve this goal don't really feel that there's one
3 centered measurement or system that can really speak
4 to the progress that we're making and maybe it's not
5 necessarily the measurement but also just benchmarks
6 and, and... [cross-talk]

7 KATHRYN GARCIA: Well, well all of our
8 stuff is also managed by the Mayor's Office of
9 Sustainability and Operations in terms of did we say
10 we were going to... this is what we put out there, how
11 far are we along, we do report annually in terms of
12 the zero waste, the OneNYC report which just came out
13 back in April but we're happy to sit down with anyone
14 if they're feeling like they're not seeing what I'm
15 seeing, I mean I do live the details everyday but
16 we're happy to have further conversations about what
17 specifically they're looking for because we think
18 we're being pretty transparent but if we need to sort
19 of put it together and package it differently we're
20 happy to look at that.

21 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Well we should
22 because then we have Council Member Kallos's piece of
23 legislation that speaks to benchmarks and making sure
24 that we achieve them by law and I wasn't clear in
25 your testimony on whether or not you actually

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

34

1 supported the piece of legislation, what I, I saw
2 there was that you support the intent and through
3 your testimony have shown the progress that you've
4 been making but to set specific goals to reach the 90
5 percent diversion by 2030 is that something you
6 support...
7

8 KATHRYN GARCIA: I think there's
9 something we should have further conversations on
10 exactly what that looks like in legislation and how
11 that translates because we clearly are very committed
12 to that goal and are working really, really hard but
13 sometimes when things have been put into legislation
14 it hasn't actually translated into programs. For
15 example, there was legislation in the past
16 administration around what the recycling rates were
17 to be and I don't think that that has necessarily
18 helped us get to where we are today.

19 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: So, I, I guess
20 it's, it's part of the, the, the whole just being
21 able to see the progress we're making and having
22 those how far along have... are we to 90 percent and,
23 and people aren't going to contribute to get there,
24 see where the holes are again I just don't think we
25 have it... maybe because again you're living it every

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

35

1
2 day, you see it very clearly but for most folks on
3 the outside looking in there just doesn't seem to be
4 a, a narrative built around how we're getting there,
5 how far along are we to getting there and... in a way
6 again and I want to be clear that vision zero seems
7 to do that very clear, very clearly and we just don't
8 see that with, with zero by 30... zero by 30 so... I
9 guess we could have a conversation about... [cross-
10 talk]

11 KATHRYN GARCIA: Yep... [cross-talk]

12 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...what that looks
13 like or maybe it's a... it's an issue of putting the
14 data the right... in, in, in the right way but we're
15 very concerned and, and then I want to speak to zero
16 30 with commercial waste...

17 KATHRYN GARCIA: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

18 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...a big part of this
19 is the private industry... [cross-talk]

20 KATHRYN GARCIA: Yes... [cross-talk]

21 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...and the progress
22 that they're going to make and here you have 33
23 percent of what you're getting from... of the
24 information that you're getting from commercial waste
25 is recycled?

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

36

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

KATHRYN GARCIA: Uh-huh.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: So, you have it at 33 percent, our numbers are a little different, a lot different, it's like 22 percent that's a big gap... that's 11 percent, that's huge.

KATHRYN GARCIA: Alright, so there are... there are... there are a couple of things going on obviously the big step change will be commercial zone collection, that will be the big change but we are also have just begun doing enforcement around the new commercial recycling rules that went into place in August, we are doing enforcement against those who are required to sort... separate their organic material commercially and in addition one of the things that we've never really had a strong handle on because it was not regulated by the city was paper recyclers, scrap metal recyclers and so that whole industry was a little bit clouded for us and so we've just gotten in the beginning of the second quarter of their reporting and we think that, that those numbers will be really much more solid going forward. So, we're getting a better handle on how material is moving through the city as well as taking steps to make sure that we are enforcing all of the rules that we have

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

37

1
2 recently put in place but the big step change will be
3 zone collection because it just will make the
4 accountability about and the messaging for recycling
5 clearer.

6 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Alright, so I'm,
7 I'm extremely concerned about the commercial waste
8 and how exactly we're measuring the progress that
9 they are making if, you know we feel that there's a
10 lot of grey area and how the city might be measuring
11 or setting goals you can only imagine our concern
12 over what the commercial waste industry is, is doing
13 BIC is charged with collecting data on, on commercial
14 recycling rates that they kind of have information as
15 to where the garbage is going after it's picked up
16 and... [cross-talk]

17 KATHRYN GARCIA: That's actually DS...
18 [cross-talk]

19 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Excuse me?

20 KATHRYN GARCIA: That's actually DSNY,
21 you... you're talking about the tonnage in and out of
22 transfer stations?

23 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Actually we're
24 going from where the garbage is picked up and where
25 it's being sent so if you... [cross-talk]

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

38

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

KATHRYN GARCIA: Okay, that's different..

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Yes, it is. So, so we use that information to.. you know whether it's going to a MRF or it's going to a land.. a landfill it kind of helps us independently put together information to figure out if we're actually doing the recycling that we, we believe we're doing that's why we have 20 percent but you have 33 so obviously there's a discrepancy there where our measure.. our, our numbers don't lie now and I guess I want to speak to that.. is that what, what systems are in place to ensure that we believe that the commercial recyclers are doing what they're supposed to and the, the commercial haulers are doing what they're supposed to. Well we're going to see today after this, there's actually video of recycled materials just being thrown in the back of a truck, right... [cross-talk]

KATHRYN GARCIA: We have black bags, yes..

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Huh?

KATHRYN GARCIA: Yes, I've seen this.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: So, you've seen the videos, I'm glad. So.. but in that.. in that one instance you might be charging a lot of that to

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

39

1 recycling where, where we, we won't necessarily...
2 well... [cross-talk]

4 KATHRYN GARCIA: So, what... [cross-talk]

5 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...actually it'll all
6 go to... [cross-talk]

7 KATHRYN GARCIA: What DSNY looks like is
8 what goes over the scale at private commercial
9 transfer stations and what leaves so what tonnage is
10 going to MRF's and what tonnage is going to landfill
11 and so it's within that bucket. One of the reasons
12 why I suspect that the numbers are different is we
13 never had things where collections of paper went
14 directly to the paper recycler and that actually is a
15 pretty significant volume of material and so we're
16 happy to sit down and go through it, we are working
17 with and, and continue to try and figure out how to
18 more effectively enforce both against the carters and
19 the transfer stations regarding ensuring that they
20 are in compliance with the new commercial recycling
21 rules. We think they're very important, we want to
22 make sure we're being effective.

23 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: So, can, can you
24 speak to the... that enforcement, how many I guess

25

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

40

1 haulers have been... have been fined for mixing in
2 recyclable material with general waste, waste?

3
4 KATHRYN GARCIA: It's rare that we catch
5 the hauler, we tend to fine the businesses that we
6 fine when they're mixing materials, we have done that
7 across the board but we are looking at all of it as
8 we have put this... these new regulations into place
9 and holding transfer stations responsible as part of
10 that.

11 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Alright, so, so you
12 see the concern of, you know a business doesn't do
13 their job they get fined, a waste hauler throws all
14 the garbage that a good business has, has put
15 together and separated and they get to get away with
16 it and do you, you see where our concerns are
17 regarding our ability to get at zero waste if we have
18 like irresponsible haulers out there that can't be
19 in... it... where it, it seems like we can't necessarily
20 enforce appropriately.

21 KATHRYN GARCIA: No, I, I mean I think
22 that we are... we are developing strategies to make
23 sure that the enforcement is happening, I think that
24 one of the worst things that ever happens in
25 recycling program is when people lose faith that what

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

41

1
2 they are separating out is actually getting re-used
3 properly and I can let BIC speak to more of what they
4 do in terms of enforcement but we think that this is
5 a growing area in which we will be doing... be more and
6 more active going forward. We do not intend to let
7 them get away with it so you know that is where our
8 perspective is.

9 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Alright, so I, I
10 have a lot... many more questions but I want to open it
11 up to members of the council of course. We're going
12 to go with Council Member Ben Kallos first followed
13 by Council Member Lander so Council Member Kallos.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you for
15 your support and the testimony, this is all new for
16 me so we'll work together on this. So, how far along
17 are we towards the goal of zero waste in 13 years?

18 KATHRYN GARCIA: So, as you can see from
19 the testimony we have about 3.2 million tons of waste
20 that we still need to address. We have over 640,000
21 tons of recyclables that we have effectively
22 addressed so those are the big numbers, those are the
23 ones that I'm looking at in terms of how are we
24 driving that number down and it's been relatively
25 flat, it's always difficult going against a rising

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

42

1
2 population figure but we do feel that we are putting
3 in place the... right now our metric is access to the
4 programs but the over... the, the metric in the long
5 run is what are the number of tons that are still
6 going to landfill and what are the number of tons
7 that we have either diverted to recycling or diverted
8 to re-use.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: And so zero waste
10 is possible by 2030 and we are on track?

11 KATHRYN GARCIA: So, we are on track, I'm
12 going to need some help folks though, they're going
13 to be some big controversial projects that are going
14 to come up in the future maybe even a little more
15 controversial than single use plastic bags.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: With regards to
17 recycling I, I was a big fan, still am a big fan of
18 the multi stream bins that were put out, we have the
19 Clean NYC Initiative and despite not being thrilled
20 about the cost of the bins going up sanitation has
21 had concerns about allowing Council Members to not
22 only purchase a, a, a waste bin but also has not
23 necessarily recommended purchasing additional streams
24 if you can go into that a little bit more how we can
25 improve recycling in public or... I know that the MTA

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

43

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

takes their garbage bins and then they sort them or
at least they say so on the sides of their cans so...
[cross-talk]

KATHRYN GARCIA: I don't know where they
do that but okay.

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: So, so I guess
the question is what can we do there in terms of...
[cross-talk]

KATHRYN GARCIA: So... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: ...public
collection efforts and whether or not there's a
commitment perhaps for park... for sanitation as you're
doing it to match some of the 300 cans that we got on
the East side with recycling as well?

KATHRYN GARCIA: So, there are a couple
things happening; one is we actually think we
probably are going to pull many of the paper when we
get back the waste characterization, people just are
not carrying newspaper and so putting out a can
that's specifically designed to capture the many
newspapers in this city is really not going to
probably make sense in the long term. The second
thing is we are very cautious about putting out
recycle bins because they have been getting misused

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

44

1
2 and they cause... they have been causing a lot of sort
3 of overflowing trash bags, very, very, very highly
4 contaminated and so while I actually think that New
5 Yorkers know that the big blue one is actually for
6 the metal, glass, and plastic, you know sometimes
7 they don't always do the right thing and so we have
8 to balance between wanting to continue to message the
9 importance of recycling and the importance of
10 recycling infrastructure with the fact that it's as
11 important to keep the city clean on a daily basis
12 which I know this council has been making enormous
13 financial commitments towards so we are continuing to
14 try and figure out how to keep that balance, we have
15 thousands of public space recycling bins out there
16 today but it is something in which we need to make
17 sure that we are balancing that with the fact that we
18 do not want to create a cleaning condition in your
19 council district.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Alright, you're
21 not the first sanitation commissioner to bring up
22 save as you throw and I think one question just being
23 if, if per chance Council District Five were to, to
24 be courageous and be interested in piloting it in our
25

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

45

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

district and perhaps piloting it in District Eight,
District Six and I think... [cross-talk]

KATHRYN GARCIA: Five... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Five... [cross-
talk)

KATHRYN GARCIA: ...and Seven.

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: ...and, and at
least the... [cross-talk]

KATHRYN GARCIA: ...and Eleven.

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: ...that would
normally be served by a marine transfer station is it
possible that if we were to pilot save as you throw
that we might not actually need the marine transfer
station, forgive me, you can't blame me for trying?

KATHRYN GARCIA: I always appreciate the
fact that you are, you know never let go of that. So,
let me put it this way, if... we are not yet at what
save as you throw program would look like, so there
isn't yet anything for your districts to pilot at
this point in time. I think that we'd be very open to
working with you in terms of what it might look like
in, in your districts. There is still going to be
material that comes out of your districts so at this

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

46

1
2 point in time we still need the 91st Street marine
3 transfer station.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Okay and then
5 just back to the legislation, I think it's, it's
6 pretty bare bones, we're interested in exploring,
7 would you be open to adding a, a progress report
8 whether it's just what you already have on the site
9 or what you put in the MMR which if you haven't read
10 it, it just came out and it's absolutely riveting in
11 terms of your zero-waste report.

12 KATHRYN GARCIA: I thought it was
13 riveting, I was very pleased with it. I think that
14 there is... there are actually I think all the pieces
15 are in a combination of places, they're in... they're
16 in what the mayor reports on in the OneNYC on their
17 dashboard with the Mayor's Office of Sustainability
18 and they're in the MMR, I mean there's some way we
19 can recast something so that it's... you see it almost
20 more branded, we can talk about that.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: I, I for one I, I
22 went and looked at the reports and I found them... but
23 there's absolutely a way to present them in a way
24 that's more user friendly, would love to see how far
25 you can break it down if you can break it down by

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

47

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

community boards or even council districts because I know that my district can get closer to zero waste than Antonio Reynoso's district and Brad Lander's districts.

KATHRYN GARCIA: Oh do... you don't want to take on Brad, you don't want to take on Brad...

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: I, I, I'm just saying... [cross-talk]

KATHRYN GARCIA: Brad has a... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: ...that, that... [cross-talk]

KATHRYN GARCIA: ...my, my, my best performing district followed not by upper... the upper East side but by Manhattan One, they're number two...

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Where, where, where... [cross-talk]

KATHRYN GARCIA: So... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Where's Manhattan Eight in that?

KATHRYN GARCIA: I can actually tell where Manhattan Eight is because I actually have your ranking, you are number four.

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: I, I, I was in the top five when... [cross-talk]

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

48

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

KATHRYN GARCIA: You were in... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: ...city and state did... [cross-talk]

KATHRYN GARCIA: ...the top five... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: ...did some analysis so it, it... it's okay to be in the top five with Brad and just where's, where's the Chair of Sanitation on this list, where's his... which community district are you?

KATHRYN GARCIA: He's... he crosses, he's hard... huh?

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Brook, Brooklyn One.

KATHRYN GARCIA: Why do I not see Brooklyn... oh here I can just do this one... you're down the list a bit...

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: We'll, we'll work on it.

KATHRYN GARCIA: Yeah.

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

49

1
2 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Well I, I would say
3 that one calling the MMR riveting I think that's the
4 first time I've heard that ever so...

5 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: I'm the GovOC's
6 Chair.

7 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: I know... I know you
8 are, we're, we're both data geeks so I'm, I'm looking
9 forward to, to reading it today as well. And again,
10 with pilot programs I don't... Save as you Throw I'm
11 glad you want to take that on, it's not as popular in
12 my district but I'm excited to, to help out. I just
13 want to talk about the, the zoning, the waste zoning
14 districts so a, a big problem that we have is we all
15 want to do this great recycling, we want to have
16 these diversion rates that are impressive but not at
17 the expense of one, worker safety... [cross-talk]

18 KATHRYN GARCIA: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

19 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...and two, the
20 environment... [cross-talk]

21 KATHRYN GARCIA: ...uh-huh... [cross-talk]

22 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...as you know when
23 it came to the organics pilot expansion I was very
24 excited about organics recycling in general but then
25 found out that a lot of the organics recycling is

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

50

1
2 going to happen within my district or the truck... the,
3 the waste transfer stations would be taking it on, a
4 lot of contracts and community board one, you are...
5 we... I've said it many times, the third highest rates
6 of asthma in the city of New York and 40 percent of
7 the city's trash being handled in our district, the
8 truck traffic is a huge issue. Our... can we speak to
9 equity and what we're going to be doing to make sure
10 that we do all this in, in a way that has less of an
11 environmental impact in these... in these environments
12 of justice districts and also worker safety has
13 become something that's, that, that the industry just
14 started to look at since I think last year or a
15 couple of years, they're, they're really focused on
16 it now because we had a study that... without a study
17 nothing happens but we had a study that showed that
18 it was a very dangerous job, probably the most
19 dangerous job here in the city of New York. We just
20 want to know what; what parts of this whole plan
21 speak to those two issues?

22 KATHRYN GARCIA: So, I mean I think that
23 both you and I are completely on the same page about
24 worker safety nationally workers involved in the
25 refuse and recycling industry have some of the

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

51

1
2 highest rates of injury, that's true within the
3 department, that's also true within the private
4 sector. We have been working very hard in partnership
5 often with many of the private sector carters to make
6 sure that we are doing symposiums about safety,
7 exchanging best practices, talking about training but
8 this will be a key component when we do the zoning.
9 The metrics on what worker safety looks like will be
10 something that will be definitely incorporated.
11 Secondly in terms of thinking about the organics
12 infrastructure you are correct that it does end up
13 having to go to a transfer station at this point in
14 time unless it's on Staten Island it goes to a
15 compost facility directly but we've been trying to
16 expand our compost facilities and some of our local,
17 our smaller community partners facilities and we made
18 investments in Brad's District at the Gowanus Compost
19 Facility, we are making investments in our Staten
20 Island Facility but there will be material that is
21 likely to go through transfer stations. There is
22 actually only one transfer station I believe that we
23 are actively using in North Brooklyn for organic
24 material which is waste management, there is no
25 material at this time going through city organics or

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

52

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

whatever they're calling themselves right now,
Brooklyn Transfer and they actually have no more
refuse, DSNY refuse trucks going through Brooklyn
Transfer.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: As of... as of when?

KATHRYN GARCIA: As of when I opened up
Hamilton.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Okay, thank you for
that.

KATHRYN GARCIA: Two weeks ago.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: That's, that's
progress, a lot of the folks don't know the details
but... [cross-talk]

KATHRYN GARCIA: A little inside
baseball... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...we're making some
progress... [cross-talk]

KATHRYN GARCIA: ...here for you... for folks
who... but you know we are looking to have
infrastructure in all of the boroughs to manage
organic material and so that is our goal.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: So, I know we're
diving in a little too early but given the need for
safety improvements, you know better trucks in

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

53

1
2 general and just the overall improvement of the
3 commercial sector of, of waste management, not the
4 company just the management of waste are you
5 concerned over the complexities and the increasing..
6 the increase of, of, of the cost of handling
7 commercial waste in the city of New York through a
8 franchising or a zoned program, I guess I'm asking is
9 in... will it cost more because you're asking more of
10 people?

11 KATHRYN GARCIA: So, I mean I, I think
12 that we're not quite there yet, we are engaged right
13 at the moment with all the stakeholders from all of
14 our research. One of the things we've found is that
15 small business owners tended to pay significantly
16 more per ton than large business owners in the city
17 of New York and that new zoned collection did not
18 necessarily in other cities cause costs to rise. So,
19 we think that it's not... depending on how the design
20 goes we'll probably likely drive what the cost
21 question is but this is something we will be engaging
22 with the council on extensively because with whatever
23 we end up developing jointly together I'm pretty sure
24 we're going to need legislation. So, you know that's

25

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

54

1
2 really.. we want to make sure that we are balancing
3 all of these different requirements.

4 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Yeah, I just.. I
5 want to pass it on to Brad after just my concern is
6 that we've, we've tried to pass pieces of legislation
7 that I think are significant and would have had a
8 positive impact on the work that we're doing here in
9 the city of New York and it being shut down that
10 these other initiatives that we want to take on that
11 can significantly improve our diversion rates I'm,
12 I'm just concerned that that's.. that is.. that is the
13 foundation by which we intend to get to zero to 30
14 relying on us and the city council to pass these
15 measures and then after even if we do get that to
16 happen not being.. not being.. not allowing for the
17 state to be consumed over nonsense I think, I'm very
18 concerned about that so that zero to 30 is possible
19 but we need an all-in from the city council so we
20 should start advocating and lobbying now for that to
21 make sure we can have that.. it can happen. I want to
22 call on Council Member Brad Lander.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thank you Mr.
24 Chair and Commissioner, it's, it's.. it is.. I'm glad
25 we're here today and I.. you know of course I am proud

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

55

1
2 to represent the community that, you know is the best
3 at recycling and diversion and we're glad to have the
4 new composting facility in Gowanus and though it's
5 just across the line in Carlos's district, the new
6 Gowanus MTS is... you know just about visible from my...
7 from my house and we... we're trying to do our fair
8 share and obviously we're working together on so many
9 things. At the same time like we're, we're not... I
10 guess... we're not on path to zero waste by 2030 and I
11 do think we should be honest about it together, it's
12 the right goal, these are the right policies but
13 it's, it's slow going and building the level of
14 support we need both for the policies we need and for
15 the behavior that we need we're, we're not... I just... I
16 don't want to be complacent about it like we're not
17 on a glide path to it, we need some pretty
18 significant changes. The people in this room have
19 been pushing for but we don't have enough partners
20 in, in either New York City or in Albany so I... I
21 guess since we... since you've teed up the two areas
22 where... and you mentioned them in your... in your
23 testimony Commissioner just on, on foam and on single
24 use plastic bags let's just get a quick update, I
25 mean on foam at least I, I hope we're headed toward

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

56

1
2 implementation under your report, I assume we'll
3 have... [cross-talk]

4 KATHRYN GARCIA: We've being... [cross-
5 talk]

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: ...to be back in
7 court but your report is so good that I am optimistic
8 that the judge is going to read it and be persuaded
9 but why don't you just give us a brief update on
10 where we are?

11 KATHRYN GARCIA: I don't think opposing
12 council have found it very persuasive. So, they have
13 filed the same coalition has filed again, we are in
14 front of the same judge again and so our papers are
15 due I believe mid-October to late October. I am
16 cautiously optimistic that we're in a good place
17 there but I was wrong last time and so I'm hoping not
18 to be wrong this time, I think it is a stronger
19 determination than we did the first time and
20 hopefully we get where we need to be on that. I, I
21 was up actually in very, very upper Manhattan, you
22 know at an ungodly hour like 5:30 in the morning and
23 there is Styrofoam everywhere like literally all over
24 the street like something had happened on the
25 overnight to which, you know I got to the garage and

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

57

1

2

I was like okay you all are going to have to go clean

3

that up but it was breaking up all over the, the

4

street at the time. So, you know I wish that it was a

5

material that was recyclable, that would make my life

6

a lot easier but it's not and so we just have to be

7

honest about that.

8

COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Yep, no, no and I

9

mean I would urge anyone who wasn't at that hearing

10

to go back and, and watch it, the hearing, I mean

11

first read the character... you know the, the

12

Commissioner's report, it is quite clear and I have

13

my fingers crossed that the judge will read it

14

honestly and see it that way because the case is open

15

and closed, if you watched our hearing you would feel

16

the same way. So, I'm going to cross my fingers that

17

this... you know that the case is dismissed and that

18

you're able to move forward under the prior law from

19

last term but I guess just, you know Mr. Chair you

20

and I need to be on notice and, and put our

21

colleagues on notice that if it doesn't go that way

22

it's on us so like let's just... that's number one. On

23

plastic bags I guess I think you probably heard the

24

same that I have which is that meeting number two of

25

the Governor's Statewide Task Force is taking place

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

58

1
2 next month so we're a lot of months in and this will
3 be the second meeting but I'm also going to cross my
4 fingers there because nothing would make me happier
5 than the Governor's Task Force reporting out a good
6 statewide policy, California's got a dynamite
7 statewide policy that's dramatically reducing the use
8 of single use plastic bags and reducing paper bag use
9 as well and I know you would... you and I will be the
10 first ones to praise the, the state as soon as that's
11 in place. You... have you heard... you have... have you
12 heard any more than... [cross-talk]

13 KATHRYN GARCIA: I, I have... [cross-talk]

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: ...than that...

15 [cross-talk]

16 KATHRYN GARCIA: ...no more gossip than you
17 do but I have to say that the, the, the text of the
18 press release that created the task force gives me
19 optimism that they really are on the hook to come up
20 with something that maybe ends up being far broader
21 than what the city was thinking of doing.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Here, here look a
23 statewide policy is, is what... you know I think what
24 happened... [cross-talk]

25 KATHRYN GARCIA: Is better... [cross-talk]

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

59

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: ...in California
3 was that... [cross-talk]

4 KATHRYN GARCIA: ...yeah... [cross-talk]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: ...cities did a
6 range of experimentation and then they got to a very
7 strong and highly impactable statewide policy so I
8 would... I would love never to have to bring
9 legislation back to this body again because the state
10 puts a good policy in place at the same time if they
11 don't that's another place Mr. Chair where you and I
12 may have to be on notice for the future. I want to
13 talk a little more about save as you throw on both
14 the residential and the commercial sides. I will just
15 start by sort of joining in... you know with Council
16 Member Kallos in saying that, you know when it comes
17 to needing to look at a pilot program, you know that,
18 that our district would, would be open to talking
19 about it. The question for me and I guess I just want
20 to ask about the study and how we're thinking about
21 it is what are the incentives that get people to move
22 forward? So, I know one alternative idea is adjusting
23 collection schedules... [cross-talk]

24 KATHRYN GARCIA: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

25

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

60

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: ...you know so that
3 if you did once a week refuse pick up and twice a
4 week organics and recycling pick up, you know how far
5 does that get us and so... you know there's a... there's
6 some certainly behavioral economics about this, the
7 goal here is... you know is to try to find the things
8 we can best possibly do to alter people's behavior is
9 not difficult to... you know obviously if everyone just
10 recycled their recyclables and put their organics in
11 the compost bin we would be at radically higher rates
12 than we are and I... you know so, I'm, I'm... I guess I
13 want to hear a little more about the study that we're
14 looking at and how we're thinking not just like what
15 would it cost but what are the... what are the... how are
16 we thinking about the policies that would actually do
17 the most to drive behavior change in ways that
18 significantly reduce... [cross-talk]

19 KATHRYN GARCIA: Right, no certainly let,
20 let me talk a little bit to that. We're not that... as
21 far along as we are on the commercial zoned
22 collection, we don't have the consultant yet in place
23 whose been working on this but certainly we think
24 you, you are the only community board I think that
25 has ever come and asked for less collection which you

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

61

1
2 received. Yes, they were a three day a week refuse
3 and went to a two and so, you know there's definitely
4 opportunities but we have to look at that in a
5 context of how long does that mean your route one day
6 a week is for the sanitation workers and have we now
7 made that unachievable and how... you know there's some
8 other things that we're focused on but in terms of
9 looking at whether or not reduction and frequency is
10 an option we certainly want to think about that being
11 on the table as part of it so it's not necessarily
12 just a financial but also around a... you know what's
13 the most convenient. Clearly that's what some other
14 cities have done actually in parallel with save as
15 you throw programs.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: And then on the
17 commercial side, you know I'm a, a wholehearted
18 supporter of, of the zone system, I'm glad that we're
19 moving forward to it but I guess I do want to make
20 sure to connect the dots and maybe you did and I
21 missed it but between that and the commercial save as
22 you throw equivalent because obviously we want the
23 businesses themselves to have strong incentives to
24 reduce their waste to be participating in commercial
25 organics, to be doing their recycling so I assume... I

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

62

1
2 hope we're looking at a system where the incentives
3 on businesses passed through their new zone
4 collection system will in the same way that some kind
5 of save as you throw type system well it seems like a
6 business is an even better place to put that in
7 place, they got a budget, they know their bottom
8 line, if they can save money by... and you know and
9 then they really can look upstream in a different way
10 so that if they can think about, you know what
11 changes they can make that make their customers less
12 likely to throw out cups or... you know whatever it
13 would be all the way... [cross-talk]

14 KATHRYN GARCIA: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: ...down through
16 participating. So, what... how are we thinking about
17 that... [cross-talk]

18 KATHRYN GARCIA: So, so... [cross-talk]

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: ...in the
20 commercial... [cross-talk]

21 KATHRYN GARCIA: ...because it's... because
22 the private sector has always paid for their waste in
23 some ways they have had an incentive to recycle
24 particularly paper, it's just been very opaque so
25 often times what will happen is the carter would

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

63

1
2 charge you a different amount as long as he's getting
3 the paper too but you know it's not clear like one of
4 the things that zone collection will be able to do is
5 make it very clear and make it very clear what the
6 charges are for refuse versus recycling and allow it
7 to be something that we can differentiate on and in,
8 in terms of looking upstream particularly one of the
9 things we did this summer was the food waste fair to
10 talk to businesses particularly restaurants about the
11 amount of food that gets wasted and there are very
12 clear, some real research about like here's how your
13 buying pattern is shaping up, here's how like, you
14 know you're think... you know if you're thinking about
15 inventory management think about it a little bit of a
16 different way and try and bring experts to them
17 because wasting less can also save them money very,
18 very particularly in that industry, really very
19 directly.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Alright and then
21 when you talk about the difference between for
22 businesses refuse and recycling and that being very
23 clear and being posted I, I mean... this is just where
24 I need some more help. Obviously, I understand that
25 if your carter, you know is, is paying the tipping

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

64

1
2 fee and, and not paying because in fact they're
3 getting some modest amount for the recyclable
4 commodities there's a difference there but how, how
5 do I know that... how does it get passed back to me as
6 a business and how do I know it and what can we... and...
7 you know again you're just educating me here, I don't
8 know whether that's different in our current system
9 then we're just going to... I hope that the franchise...
10 [cross-talk]

11 KATHRYN GARCIA: So, in... [cross-talk]

12 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: ...system can do
13 more to help all of us help businesses save money by
14 doing the kinds of things we're talking about.

15 KATHRYN GARCIA: So, there are a couple
16 things, if you're a big business you're pretty
17 sophisticated, you know where the paper rates are,
18 you know where those commodity markets are, we're
19 getting about 35 dollars a ton right now, I'm going
20 to tell you if you're a producer of a lot of paper in
21 your waste stream you know that you're having
22 conversations with your carter right now today
23 because those, those dollar figures are up higher
24 than they've been in a long time. If you're a small
25 you have no clue and so that is really what we're

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

65

1

2 trying to make it is to make sure that all businesses
3 have the ability to look at this across and see what
4 the actual costs are and whether or not we can make
5 sure that they are incentivizing the right behaviors
6 in those broader contracts we anticipate putting
7 together within this program.

8

COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Okay and then Mr.
9 Chair I don't know whether you're going to talk to
10 the... do the BIC separately...

11

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: So, we, we are, I
12 think it's, it's the monitoring and enforcement is a
13 big part of it so we will have conversations with BIC
14 but BIC is not going to speak today so it would have
15 to be something we do offline, today only DSNY is.

16

COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Okay and I mean
17 obviously we're only six weeks into the new system
18 but it would be great when... you know when we're ready
19 to get a... you know some information on how that's
20 going, both how it's going so far for the issues you
21 and I care about and also what it's starting to teach
22 us that we need to learn for collection.

23

KATHRYN GARCIA: Yeah... no, certainly we
24 can also provide you an interim of like, you know

25

what we've been doing on inspections, what violations

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

66

1 we've written, you know we keep track of all of that
2 and all of the numbers going through the transfer
3 stations on what we see quarter by quarter in terms
4 of refuse, MGP, paper, and then what we're finding
5 from the new folks who are required to report to us.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Alright and then
8 just my last question is just on multi-family
9 building composting, you know that is one of the more
10 challenging areas of the organics program, it's just
11 a lot easier in a one or a two-family home and I know
12 one challenge for all of us is getting it taken up
13 into the multi-family stock and I wonder what you can
14 tell us about how that's... how that's going and what
15 else we can do to move forward?

16 KATHRYN GARCIA: You know we continue to
17 have interest in it, you can enroll your apartment
18 building today if you are in an organics district, if
19 you're in Manhattan, if you're in the Bronx and we
20 have some very large complexes that have enrolled
21 such as Stuyvesant Town Peter Cooper Village and
22 they've been very happy with the program. I think
23 we're getting four or five tons a week from them of
24 organic material so it's, it's significant and we
25 know that we want... but we, we also want to make sure

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

67

1
2 that we're working with buildings individually
3 because instead of when we just work with residences
4 the owner... we work with the owner and the owner sort
5 of does it or doesn't do it but here we could have a
6 renter who does the right thing but then if your
7 porter or super doesn't then it's not going to work
8 and then everyone gets discouraged so we want to make
9 sure that we're hitting all of those pieces moving
10 forward.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Super and I
12 haven't checked on your... on your website or your
13 social media recently but it might be useful I know
14 as I'm talking to multi-family building both the
15 residents and owners to have some cases like that to
16 point to, make a little video about how well it's
17 going in Stuy Town or something that just lets us say
18 look at this they're doing it, it's working... [cross-
19 talk]

20 KATHRYN GARCIA: We, we, we... [cross-talk]

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: ...sanitation will
22 help you... [cross-talk]

23 KATHRYN GARCIA: ...can... we can send you
24 the link to the you-tube video.

25

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

68

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Outstanding,
3 alright, I look forward to that. Thanks very much,
4 let's keep pushing.

5 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you Council
6 Member Lander, we also have been joined by Council
7 Member Venessa Gibson from the Bronx. So, engagement
8 I think is extremely important of course in educating
9 the public on how to do all this work eventually to
10 get us to zero waste. So, there is a, a couple of
11 things, the Mayor's Zero Waste Steering Committee, I
12 don't know anything about it just would like to know
13 what is it that they do, how often do they meet and
14 what do... and what reports do they have or minutes
15 that we can get it to, to the progress that they're
16 making I guess?

17 KATHRYN GARCIA: Alright, I think this is
18 really coming out of the OneNYC Program and so... you
19 know we've had conversations with them and also a lot
20 of linkages because of the 80 by 50 crossover but you
21 know that has not been the driver, they've been
22 extremely helpful about doing... for example the waste
23 challenge that we did a year or two years ago now
24 where we challenged businesses to really reduce their
25 waste but we don't think of that as the driver so

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

69

1
2 we're doing a lot on social media, literally person
3 to person interactions around all of these programs
4 we've been doing in neighborhoods that have the
5 organics program going back and doing... if we don't
6 see your brown bin out you get a little frowny banana
7 postcard which tends to actually generate usually
8 participation the next time we go out and look but if
9 you're participating then you get a smiley one with
10 a, a zero by 30 re-usable bag, making sure that we're
11 in the local papers whether or not that's the
12 Brooklyn Eagle or the Staten Island or... we think that
13 those are very important for the way that our
14 outreach is done and while of course we always do the
15 big articles like the New York Times or the Daily
16 News sort of folks in their neighborhood want to feel
17 like they're connected to other folks in their
18 neighborhood and that it's becoming the new norm
19 there. So, we're pushing on a lot of fronts and you
20 know we intend to keep doing that and welcome any
21 commentary about how our reaches and whether or not
22 we're getting into certain communities so we're going
23 to actually do something primarily in your... in your
24 district around the high holidays and around creating
25 here's a compostable package for, you know how to

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

70

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

have the compostable holiday and see if that generates interest.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: So... and I guess when I see... when I hear about a steering committee the conversations I have are... with the Manhattan and Brooklyn SWAB and advocates across the board I want to be involved in the solution... in getting to zero by 30 and, and maybe not being as, as involved or participating the way they would like to so I guess what opportunities are there for organizations on the outside that want to be a partner with DSNY to help achieve this goal and if there isn't something that's, that's... something they can touch or something that they can feel that is actually... where they're actually contributing is the steering committee an opportunity maybe to make it a more... I don't want to say serious but make it something that we can get outside stakeholders involved in helping us achieve our, our goals?

KATHRYN GARCIA: So, I mean I, I don't think it's appropriate for that particular one, that's really an interagency push but I do think that there are always opportunities like you know we are actively involved in both the Brooklyn and Manhattan

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

71

1
2 SWAB, people often speak to those particular groups,
3 we would like them to be even more use helpful in
4 terms of getting the message out, what more can they
5 do, where can they leverage any contacts that they
6 have so, you know we're not... you know we, we spend a
7 lot of time with a bunch of different organizations
8 and groups whether or not it's our... the compost
9 project where we meet very often with all of those
10 particular community gardeners or BIC reuse or
11 Gowanus, we think that that's extremely important
12 that they have been sort of the storm troopers for
13 trying and experimenting with new things. So, we're
14 very welcoming to people who want to work with us and
15 want to be part of the process and move forward so,
16 you know we're always happy to talk to you.

17 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: So, I'm going to
18 actually see if we can work with some stakeholders,
19 the city council following this hearing see how we
20 think we might be able to be helpful in helping you
21 achieve your goal, we want to be partners and.. while,
22 you know many... some of us are not as optimistic as
23 others regarding on whether or not we can get there
24 by 2030. I think we all agree we all want to be

25

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

72

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

partners in trying to get as close to that as possible.

KATHRYN GARCIA: And, and it is... there is no way I'm doing this by myself. I am not getting there all by myself, I need the council to be supportive, I need the advocates to help us get legislation passed, to get communities on board with what we're doing so this is not something where the administration wants to go it alone, we really do welcome your support and participation.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: So, I just want... I want to again encourage these measurable goals would be helpful to us in, in, in sounding the alarm as to where we are and where we should be and possibly getting more people involved on the outside looking in again but if there's nothing that we can present to the general public about how far we've gone or how far we need to go it makes it seem like you, you are taking this on, on... taking this task on, on your own, you're not allowing us to be a part of the solution by holding it close to your chest as to whether or not we can actually get there.

KATHRYN GARCIA: So, so I actually have a question for you, so you know one of the things we've

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

73

1
2 sort of been playing with and I haven't figured out
3 whether or not I think it makes things better or
4 makes things worse is making it be more transparent
5 to residents where their community is in the ranking
6 like does it help someone in your community let you
7 know that yeah, you all are doing about half what
8 Brad's community is doing and as like... you know there
9 are some places that'll tell me the research suggests
10 that that actually motivates people because they're
11 highly competitive, I'm just not sure if people find
12 it insulting so, you know it, it's, it's one of the
13 things that like, you know I would actually love to
14 have folks who are the elected representatives give
15 me some feedback on... because I don't actually know
16 what I... what I think about that yet.

17 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Go ahead Brad.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Well Mr. Chairman
19 I think one thing that is an interesting challenge
20 here and an opportunity also like people in your
21 district have a real vested interested in reducing
22 waste because they know it moves through their
23 neighborhood and that helps overcome the sense that
24 oh you know recycling is some crunchy elite parks
25 lobe thing and you know what, what things we can do

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

74

1
2 together I don't know that I think where we are at
3 the moment... I mean there's no harm in publishing the
4 rankings but I don't think intra-neighborhood
5 competition at the moment where we are is what's
6 going to motivate people, this kind of goes to that..
7 I guess what I was sort of saying before like I hope
8 that your consultant will not only be somebody who,
9 you know can sort of do the math on tonnage and knows
10 things about waste handling but is looking at some
11 cutting-edge stuff in the behavioral side of
12 economics, what are the things that across all the
13 demographic differences we have in New York City can
14 do best as possible to motivate people to join in
15 making these changes.

16 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Yeah and I... and I
17 agree with Council Member Brad Lander, I don't... I
18 don't think... well I believe that we have certain,
19 certain social economic issues that differ by
20 community and certain circumstances that differ by
21 community that make it so that some folks have... do a
22 better job at achieving the diversion rates than
23 others so while I hear what you're saying and trying
24 to just figure out a way to motivate people which... it
25 should be part of the conversation because I think on

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

75

1
2 an individual basis if I'm able to show my community
3 how far away they are from let's say the citywide
4 average and so forth I think it could be helpful if I
5 do that individually but if we're just setting... you
6 know I, I know what it's going to look like if you
7 give me the whole list, I think I could... I could... I
8 could tell you what it's going to look like
9 neighborhood by neighborhood give or take and I don't
10 think we need that just yet, I think we could be... we
11 could figure out a plan together that gets us to
12 motivating folks and not necessarily... I think... I
13 think we get the point. Yeah, so I know it's hard,
14 it's very difficult for you but for but individually
15 please give it to me because I have members of the
16 community here and organizations from the community
17 here like outreach that care deeply about getting
18 trucks off the streets and showing them, those
19 numbers might motivate them to start working more
20 internally like handle our business here, let's see
21 where we can go from there so absolutely I think
22 there's a conversation to be had but thank you for
23 that comment. I just have a couple more questions
24 because then I want to allow for other folks to come
25 in and, and testify as well. I know you work with

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

76

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

NYCHA and the Department of Education but are you working with any other agencies like DEP and so forth that can help us... that are helping us achieve this goal as well?

KATHRYN GARCIA: So, those are the biggest programs are NYCHA and, and DOE because obviously those are the most retail for us. We... all agencies are required to have recycling plans in place and then in terms of DEP obviously they are partner on the compost side because they are taking food slurry into the Newtown Creek Digesters.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: And what about the MTA, the great MTA and the work that they're doing?

KATHRYN GARCIA: We're thrilled that they're putting out an anti-litter message whether or not it's just for helping with track fires for them as long as people are hearing please stop throwing things on the ground it's important. We don't directly manage their waste material so that has been less of a coordinated effort but, you know we are always looking for partners to continue to make sure that we're pushing forward on the overall goal of, of reducing waste.

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

77

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Well those are... those are the questions that I have for now, I know we're going to have some great testimony coming up in a... in a couple of panels, I hope that we can have DSNY stay here as long as possible but we have panels in support and... well all panels are in support of zero by 30 I guarantee you that but how we get there I think is where we differ so would love for you to stay as long as possible but thank you for your testimony... [cross-talk]

KATHRYN GARCIA: Okay... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...Commissioner.

KATHRYN GARCIA: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Alright. So, I'd like to call up our next panel Annabel Short, Justin Wood, Melissa Iachan, Justin Wood, and Eric Goldstein. So, hello panel. I was just talking to my council here, it's just... it's so much work that needs to be done, we're trying to go through it one at a time and it's just within each subject matter we could go on for days and again I hope that we can continue to figure out a way to work together to attempt to achieve this but now I don't know in which order we're going to speak but I am guessing you guys

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

78

1 have that figured out. Alright, alright. Alright, go...
2
3 no.

4 ANNABEL SHORT: Is it now?

5 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Now it is, thank
6 you.

7 ANNABEL SHORT: Okay. So, my name is
8 Annabel Short of ALIGN, the Alliance for a Greater
9 New York. Thank you, Committee Chair Reynoso and
10 members of the Sanitation Committee, for the
11 opportunity to testify on behalf of the Transform
12 Don't Trash Coalition. TDT campaigns for economic
13 racial and environmental justice in the private waste
14 industry in New York City. The core members of the
15 coalition are ALIGN, NYC Environmental Justice
16 Alliance, Teamsters, Joint Council 16, NYLPI and NRDC
17 many of whom you're going to hear from during this
18 hearing. The current commercial waste system in New
19 York City is broken as you've been hearing and is
20 impeding progress towards the cities ambitious goal
21 of zero waste in landfill by 2030. As many of you
22 know we currently have a system in which
23 approximately 90 companies licensed by the business
24 integrity commission collect waste from stores,
25 restaurants and other businesses throughout the city

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

79

1
2 running inefficient overlapping routes. This means
3 that during any given night you can see six or seven
4 different trucks collecting garbage from the same
5 block then crisscrossing over to the other side of
6 the city to dump the garbage at waste transfer
7 stations... transfer stations generating far more
8 traffic and emissions than is necessary. At the same
9 time oversight accountability and transparency are
10 sorely lacking. The inefficient system combined with
11 the lack of oversight leads to many problems. For
12 example, based on industry self-reported figures are
13 likely to be higher than the reality. The commercial
14 recycling rate is only 22 percent compared to a
15 national average of around 35 percent and far higher
16 figures in some cities. Carters have failed to adhere
17 to the city's longstanding and new recycling rules
18 and as you will hear today from our coalition
19 partners many continue to refuse to recycle source
20 separated materials with absolutely no repercussions.
21 So, in this environment the city's zero waste goal is
22 doomed to fail. The system has also contributed to
23 severely reduced air quality and increased asthma
24 rates in low income communities of color, it has
25 created a race to the bottom resulting in low wages

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

80

1
2 and dangerous work environments for workers as well
3 as fluctuating and non-transparent rates for
4 customers particularly small businesses that have far
5 less bargaining power than large ones. Luckily as
6 we've heard the Mayor and Commissioner Garcia have
7 already committed to making important changes. Our
8 coalition continues to applaud Mayor De Blasio's
9 commitment made in August 2016 to introduce the
10 commercial waste zoning system, done right this has
11 the potential to dramatically increase the diversion
12 of waste in landfills, create thousands of good jobs,
13 reduce the burden on communities, reduce emissions,
14 improve working conditions and make our streets
15 safer. In other cities, we've seen how commercial
16 zoning can transform waste collection for the better,
17 Los Angeles recently rolled out its groundbreaking
18 RecycLA Program and London has now introduced the
19 idea. Doing this well will be one of the powerful
20 ways that New York City can demonstrate its
21 leadership within the context of the devastating
22 rollbacks and environmental protections that we're
23 seeing from the federal government. The long-term
24 nature of the contract under the zoning system will
25 incentivize investments in infrastructure that are

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

81

1
2 essential to significantly drive up recycling rates
3 and make faster progress towards zero waste.
4 Transform don't Trash has projected that by
5 increasing its total diversion rate ie commercial and
6 residential to 70 percent NYC could rapidly create
7 3,300 new local jobs in processing recyclables and
8 organic waste. In addition to the temporary
9 construction jobs needed to build and upgrade
10 recycling infrastructure these thousands of new jobs
11 could in turn increase opportunities for women and
12 minority owned business enterprises. From these brief
13 remarks, I hope it's clear that our city's zero waste
14 goals cannot be achieved under this status quo. We
15 have a major opportunity ahead of us to transform
16 this industry for the benefit of all New Yorkers. The
17 TDT Coalition looks forward to working productively
18 with the Sanitation Committee, other Council Members
19 and the administration to turn this opportunity into
20 a reality. Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you. You want
22 to stop right there...

23 MELISSA IACHAN: No, I'll... [cross-talk]

24 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Okay, nope, right.

25

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

82

1
2 MELISSA IACHAN: Thank you. Good
3 afternoon, my name is Melissa Iachan and I am a
4 Senior Staff Attorney in the Environmental Justice
5 Program at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest.
6 I am here today with my colleagues Justin Wood, the
7 Director of Organizing and Strategic Research at
8 NYLPI. NYLPI is a core member of the transform don't
9 trash NYC Coalition. Thank you to Chair Reynoso and
10 the Sanitation Committee which sort of was here at
11 some point for holding another timely oversight
12 hearing on the critical issue of waste reduction in
13 our city. As the city has acknowledged there are
14 simply no way we can meet our greenhouse gas
15 reduction targets without dramatically reducing the
16 amount of waste we send to landfills and
17 incinerators. I want to begin on a positive note by
18 thanking DSNY Commissioner Garcia and her staff and
19 the city council for all of the positive changes we
20 are seeing in our city's approach to waste
21 management. The adoption of ambitious zero waste
22 goals for both the residential and commercial waste
23 streams, the return of NGP Recycling on the
24 residential side and the expansion of organic waste
25 recycling on the residential side should be

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

83

1
2 recognized as critical first steps that must now be
3 aggressively multiplied to approach zero waste by
4 2030. We also want to applaud the innovative move
5 DSNY and the Mayor are making to reform the
6 commercial putrescible waste factor, which produces
7 as much or more waste than the residential sector but
8 has historically operated with far less city
9 oversight, monitoring and accountability.
10 Specifically, we wanted to highlight two great
11 initiatives, first the Mayor and DSNY's plan to
12 implement a zoned commercial waste collection system
13 has enormous potential to increase diversion if the
14 new system is set up to properly incentivize business
15 owners and private waste haulers to recycle far more
16 waste and to invest in the processing capacity our
17 city needs to approach zero waste being sent to
18 landfills. Second the city's adoption of new
19 commercial recycling rules and the possible expansion
20 of mandatory food waste recycling rules are a step in
21 the right direction. Given the huge amount of waste
22 generated by our commercial sector a third of which
23 is estimated to be organic food waste recycling and
24 composting cannot be treated as optional, voluntary
25 activities if we are to move the needle on diversion

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

84

1
2 at all let alone get to zero waste. However, the
3 adoption of new rules will not be announced to reform
4 a commercial waste system that remains fundamentally
5 build around trucking massive amounts of waste
6 through land based transfer stations who do very
7 little recycling by haulers who have very little
8 experience or desire to expand recycling and
9 composting services. I now want to draw the council's
10 attention to troubling evidence that even in the wake
11 of the positive developments by the city the private
12 waste industry including many companies that take
13 great pains to portray themselves as green are simply
14 continuing to ignore the city's recycling rules. The
15 following video is an example of what happens to
16 recyclables and sore separated compost at a business
17 that does appear to be doing the right thing
18 carefully putting their food waste in compostable
19 bags and separating their dry recyclables and
20 cardboard from refuse and after the video my
21 colleague Justin Wood will continue our testimony.

22 [video playing]

23 MELISSA IACHAN: And the cardboard...

24 JUSTIN WOOD: There goes that high valued
25 cardboard...

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

85

1
2 JUSTIN WOOD: Okay, I think we get the
3 picture. So, thank you Chair Reynoso and to the
4 Sanitation Committee. My name is Justin Wood and I'm
5 also at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest.
6 Unfortunately, this kind of video that an ally of our
7 coalition took just one week ago, here we are six
8 weeks into and really 20 years into, right,
9 commercial recycling rules aren't new, they've been
10 on the books since the 90's when Commissioner Sexton
11 whose here and other fought for them. Unfortunately,
12 this isn't an isolated incident, on any given night
13 we have been able to observe similar behavior where
14 commercial haulers are throwing recyclables often
15 they're in clear bags or, or clearly.. you know
16 cardboard bundles are still being comingled in the
17 same trucks as black bag putrescible waste. So, in
18 addition to the video, I mean here's a couple
19 pictures... clear MGP and cardboard recyclables that
20 were thrown in the same truck, I think this is in
21 your district Chair Reynoso, I think this was in
22 North Brooklyn taken in 2017 and here's the same
23 thing in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, clear MGP and
24 recyclable containers even some cardboard in the same
25 trucks as putrescible and those are two of the

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

86

1
2 largest BIC licensees in the city, I don't think I
3 need to name them today because this is an industry
4 wide problem in New York City but suffice it to say,
5 say that they are two of BIC's largest licensees and
6 that they both own substantial transfer station
7 infrastructure in addition to substantial hauling
8 fleets. While the private waste industry is clearly
9 the problem here we're also seeing a disparity in
10 enforcement between the generator side where DSNY is
11 handling enforcement and the carters themselves which
12 are regulated by the business integrity commission
13 which we did not hear from today. In 2016, we saw
14 that DSNY launched a major education and enforcement
15 campaign to educate business owners and employees on
16 how to properly separate recyclables and organics and
17 as of August 1st Sanitation Police were to begin
18 issuing violations to businesses that violate these
19 rules. It's crystal clear in these rules that
20 recyclable paper, cardboard, glass, metal and plastic
21 are not to be comingled with putrescible and non-
22 recyclable waste as we seen in these examples.
23 According to the publicly available information in
24 the office... the OATH, commonly called the OATH
25 Database over 290 violations issued by sanitation are

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

87

1
2 in that database since August 1st. In contrast, as of
3 last week the Business Integrity Commission which
4 regulates the commercial waste industry had not
5 issued a single recycling violation in the same
6 database. Similarly, we have a lack of data and
7 monitoring in the commercial waste system to
8 determine how much waste is actually recycled by the
9 more than 90 private companies actively collecting
10 and processing this waste stream. For now, all we
11 have to go on and we may have heard from DSNY today,
12 I'll, I'll veer off my written testimony here that
13 there are some improvements in that data collection
14 but really what we have to go on is self-reported
15 summaries of tonnages sent to landfills,
16 incinerators, and recyclers by private transfer
17 stations and MRFs in, in, in and near the city. The
18 reports we've seen and these are again publicly
19 available through the state DEC are often unclear,
20 incomplete, and sometimes contain basic arithmetic
21 errors so it's hard to piece together what exactly is
22 happening in that commercial waste industry. So, you
23 heard a couple different estimates, these are still
24 estimates, the disappointing estimate of 22 percent
25 that we came up with was from adding up the materials

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

88

1
2 being sent to landfill, incinerators, and recyclers
3 by all of the commercial transfer stations and MRF's
4 within the five boroughs that are reporting to DEC.
5 Obviously regardless of whether that number is 22
6 percent, 15 percent, 30 something percent, it's far
7 lower than city's like Seattle, San Jose, San
8 Francisco that are leading on reporting on commercial
9 and residential diversion which have... which have
10 diversion rates higher than 60 percent, sometimes
11 higher than 70 percent. Commercial waste facilities
12 many of which are owned by the same corporations that
13 collect commercial waste are also... appear to simply
14 landfill materials that they don't find profitable to
15 recycle. So, for example although we're seeing less
16 glass containers being used there is still plenty of
17 glass being generated by restaurants, food industry
18 in particular and a lot of the commercial recyclers
19 and transfer stations simply report recycling zero
20 glass to the DEC so again that's publicly available,
21 they seem to just skirt the law where they don't find
22 a way to make a profit on it. So, I see that my time
23 is ending, I just want to end by stressing that this
24 is a contrast to the public sector whereas Melissa
25 highlighted the city has a very successful and

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

89

1
2 hopefully growing program to recycle all of these
3 materials regardless of short term profitability
4 including MGP and paper through a long time... long
5 term contract with Sims, thank you very much.

6 ERIC GOLDSTEIN: Good afternoon Council
7 Member, Chairman Reynoso. I'm Eric Goldstein with the
8 Natural Resources Defense Council. As you know one of
9 NRDC's high priority goals for New York has been to
10 transform city waste policy from primary reliance on
11 landfilling and incineration to one where recycling,
12 waste prevention, composting, and equitable handling
13 of waste become cornerstones of city policy in the
14 21st century. The focus of today's hearing is on New
15 York City's zero waste to landfills goal which NRDC
16 strongly supports. Mayor De Blasio and the Sanitation
17 Commissioner Garcia have been exactly right to set
18 these ambitious goals and I must say that the, the
19 Commissioner's testimony today is some of the most
20 encouraging we've heard here in the council over
21 almost 30 years of testimony on recycling issues from
22 various Sanitation Commissioners. Sceptics argue that
23 a zero-waste policy is over ambitious if not
24 unachievable and therefore we shouldn't set such
25 forward looking goals but the naysayers are wrong,

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

90

1
2 these waste goals are being adopted by progressive
3 and even not so progressive municipalities across the
4 country and beyond, among them San Francisco, San
5 Diego, Oakland, Portland, Austin, Dallas,
6 Minneapolis, and Washington D.C. to name a couple
7 that have adopted zero waste policies. Will New York
8 City achieve these zero waste goals by 2030, maybe
9 yes maybe no but we'll certainly get closer to the
10 goal if we aim for it and follow through with
11 ambitious policy directives than if we don't. The
12 zero waste goal is aspirational, it opens the door
13 for new ideas and different approaches to be tried
14 and it's a symbol that can inspire the public to
15 adopting new lifestyles that are more sustainable but
16 it's not going to happen automatically and that means
17 that the council and the city and all of us who are
18 stakeholders are going to have to act aggressively
19 and by the way our definition of zero waste doesn't
20 involve sending any wastes to incinerators or any
21 newfangled combination of waste burning facilities
22 which are expensive pollution generating and wasteful
23 of natural resources. There is one other important
24 benefit to achieving and even just striving for the
25 zero waste to landfills goal and that's jobs

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

91

1
2 creation. According to the local... the institute for
3 local self-reliance recycling and composting
4 operations generate five to ten more jobs per ton of
5 waste than do incinerators or landfills. A
6 consultant... an independent consultant at Tellus
7 Institute found in California that more than 100,000
8 jobs could be created in that state if they were to
9 reach an average of 75 percent recycling and
10 composting. These findings are consistent with a
11 study that was done years ago in New York City where
12 NYU concluded that as many as 4,000 jobs could be
13 created with the major expansion of recycling and the
14 New York Lawyers for the Public Interest have also
15 forecasted new jobs when the commercial sector is
16 reformed. I... in our testimony we set forth a dozen
17 recommendations which I don't have time to read here
18 but I will quickly try to mention them all to bring
19 us closer towards these goals. The first is that the
20 council encouraged the De Blasio administration to
21 analyze the potential for jobs creation from a
22 comprehensive expansion of recycling, composting, re-
23 use, and commercial waste reform, sounds like that's
24 a job for the economic development corporation.
25 Second, we recommend the council continue to support

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

92

1
2 the citywide organics collection program the
3 Commissioner is implementing, there's probably not a
4 single more important program for getting to zero
5 waste. Third we recommend the council take steps to
6 mandate that multi-family buildings with ten or more
7 units participate in the city's existing refashion
8 New York City textile recycling program. Fourth we
9 recommend that the council collect that as the
10 department's organics collection go citywide, the
11 council support the department's plans to switch over
12 to single stream recycling. Fifth we recommend that
13 the council take steps to provide additional funding
14 to support enhanced recycling and education on how
15 and what to recycle at elementary schools throughout
16 the city. Sixth we recommend that the city council
17 intervene to help provide recycling services for the
18 more than 400,000 NYCHA residents by advancing a
19 NYCHA Youth Jobs Program to jumpstart stalled
20 recycling at NYCHA. Seventh we recommend that the
21 city council encourage the testing of financial
22 incentives to advance greater recycling and reduced
23 waste generations, that's the save as you throw
24 experiment that the department is contemplating.
25 Eighth we recommend that the council help facilitate

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

93

1
2 adjustments to sanitation department truck rates...
3 truck collections rates and schedules so that the
4 truck routes can take advantage of the fact that we
5 are now having more recycling and composting
6 collections and that as was testified to earlier can
7 pave the way for reducing the number of regular trash
8 collections. Just three more notes that I will add
9 here. We recommend the council direct the department
10 of citywide administrative services and consultation
11 with sanitation to analyze the potential for
12 increasing city purchases of products made with
13 recycled content, we've got to close the loop. Tenth
14 we recommend that the council take steps to encourage
15 more responsible disposal of problematic wastes such
16 as electronic waste, household waste, and unused
17 prescription and nonprescription drugs and the, the
18 last two are equally important even though they're at
19 the bottom of the list but we encourage the council
20 to consider various kinds of legislation that will
21 actually reduce the amount of waste generated in the
22 first place including dealing with plastic bags, with
23 polystyrene foam and by advancing creation of
24 neighborhood swap shops and other ways in which New
25 Yorkers can exchange what is unused or unwanted for

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

94

1
2 them but is still a useful commodity. And then last
3 but not least just to close the loop on this panel's
4 testimony, we support the council working with the
5 Sanitation Department to advance legislation to adopt
6 a new zone system for commercial waste handling.
7 We'll never get to zero waste unless we dramatically
8 transform the way in which the overwhelming bulk of
9 city waste which is commercial waste is dealt with in
10 a more rational manner. And so, we thank you for your
11 attention, we can't thank you enough for your
12 leadership, we know that if every council member
13 cared about these issues as much as you did the
14 council would be zooming forward, working with the
15 department to achieve these ambitious goals and we
16 want to do everything we can to support you.

17 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you for your
18 testimony, I really appreciate this, I, I just think
19 it's very important, important that we have
20 information of course visual is always a help and
21 work that was... I didn't think they were going to take
22 the cardboard, that was a surprise, I was like...
23 they'll leave the cardboard, I know that they'll
24 leave it and they just threw it in there as well and
25 that's concerning because there's value in that, a

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

95

1
2 lot of value in that and.. and for that company I just
3 don't understand the business sense it makes and
4 that's... it's, it's troubling so I'm... I was happy to
5 hear from the Commissioner that we are going to look
6 into enforcement in a... in a... in a more effective way
7 because I know it's happening, I... it's not that... I
8 see trucks all the time doing it so I'm not... I'm not
9 surprised, I hope that just seeing this video makes
10 it so that they can get a violation because the truck
11 is obviously there, the name of the company is
12 obviously there and it obviously happened so maybe
13 there's a way to give them a call and say hey stop
14 your nonsense, that would be helpful. I want to talk
15 about two things and I, I didn't bring this up with
16 the Commissioner and I apologize, the single stream
17 how, how you would envision single stream working, a
18 lot of folks are concerned about the contamination of
19 the paper which is probably the most valuable
20 commodity that comes out of recycling and whether or
21 not you think that that's an issue at all, that would
22 help... that would help me personally, it's the one
23 thing that I don't know where to put when I have to
24 recycle in my house, it's like where do I throw this
25 paper so can you just speak to the single stream and

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

96

1
2 how that would work, how... anyone or... of course and it
3 sounded like you are very aligned the Department of
4 Sanitation here in most of recommendations that were..
5 you were pushing but I guarantee no one here works
6 for DSNY, I, I guarantee it, they just are on the
7 same page when it comes to the work that we're doing
8 here.

9 ERIC GOLDSTEIN: We, we have been
10 historically skeptical of single stream for exactly
11 the reason you note, the possibility of
12 contamination. Equipment over the years however has
13 improved, sorting equipment at facilities. In fact,
14 the Commissioner and her team or number of us on her
15 team... a number of us as... visited a modern MRF on Long
16 Island and they and others have reported to NRDC that
17 their ability to sort has now improved to such a
18 degree that they are able to separate out the... one of
19 the main problems had been the glass particles which
20 interfuse with paper recycling and the end product of
21 this MRF and others like it from reports we're
22 getting from California are that the, the
23 contamination is less of a problem now due to the
24 effectiveness of the new technology. Remember we're
25 talking about single stream recycling and not mixed

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

97

1
2 waste collection so this is not sorting out the whole
3 kettle of every type of waste which we don't believe...
4 and would lead to high contamination rates, this is
5 just adding in the metals, glass and plastic and the
6 paper.

7 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you for that
8 clarification, yes, single stream does not mean throw
9 everything in the trash can and it will be recycled
10 sometime in like... in a... in a unicorn factory... [cross-
11 talk)

12 ERIC GOLDSTEIN: That's in fact what the
13 MTA is doing and we're very skeptical of that for
14 exactly that reason.

15 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: You, you have one,
16 one more thing I want to get to, it, it speaks to the
17 waste prevention rule, I, I heard that when you enter
18 the organics program you tend to... once you figure out
19 that most of your garbage is probably organics then
20 you tend to just be motivated to buy less let's say
21 food that you would traditionally throw out and just...
22 when, when it comes to the food waste war, can you
23 speak to that and the value of, of education through
24 participation, a program like the organics program?

25

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

98

1
2 ERIC GOLDSTEIN: Well I'm happy to say
3 this, 40 percent... I'm not happy to report these
4 statistics but 40 percent of the food that's produced
5 in America is wasted and getting a, a... and that is
6 also in addition to the fact that we have so many
7 people who are in need of food, food is the major
8 contributor to emissions of methane from landfills.
9 Landfills are the third largest source of methane
10 emissions in the United States, a very potent global
11 warming gas. So, there are a dozen different reasons
12 why reducing the amount of waste makes sense. Also
13 for every ton that we have to dispose of it's costing
14 more and more as the Commissioner testified earlier
15 today. One of the benefits of a zero waste policy and
16 the educational efforts that can go with that is that
17 the public is given a greater understanding of the
18 fact that they can save money and they can save the
19 environment by reducing the amount of waste that they
20 generate in the first place but this is something
21 that the Sanitation Department can't do alone, the
22 legislation... enabling legislation is needed for
23 almost every possible waste reduction effort you
24 would look at, although there is a lot of educational
25 work that needs to be done to make the public aware

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

99

1
2 of why this is an important issue and why they can
3 benefit both economically and from an environmental
4 standpoint.

5 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you for that
6 information, go ahead.

7 JUSTIN WOOD: Just to add briefly, one,
8 one of the things we'd like to see I think and, and
9 could be a real source of innovation in the zone
10 system is for the haulers that are going to be
11 responsible for districts to also have some incentive
12 to, to fund or participate or encourage their
13 customers to participate in waste reduction
14 particularly on the food side. So, I think there's
15 some beginnings of this in Los Angeles that we want
16 to look into but, you know what do food donation
17 programs need in terms of infrastructure, what do
18 they need in terms of outreach, what will make it
19 cost effective for a restaurant or food producer to
20 donate food or re-use... or reduce food waste and what
21 would align the incentives of the waste haulers with
22 that is something we're, we're excited to look into.

23 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Well, well thank
24 you for that and I just want to say the progress we
25 make in the commercial waste industry seems to come

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

100

1
2 from reports and legislation being thrust upon them
3 before that it's usually like a boy who cried wolf
4 from my side, they don't believe anything I say
5 until... we don't have a study or a report, which
6 usually confirms a lot of our concerns related to
7 truck miles traveled is one example and then safety
8 being another example and now hopefully seeing this
9 we won't need to get to a point where they don't
10 partner with us in a zoning system which I think is
11 going to be very important. Obviously, I think we
12 have numbers of 20 and 30 percent reduction... or
13 diversion rates if we have a zoned collection system,
14 that's a significant number and obviously a very
15 important part of the foundation of getting to zero
16 waste. So, I just hope that when that panel comes in
17 that we were talking about being on the same page
18 that the waste collection... the zone system is
19 valuable and just hopefully working together to make
20 that happen. And I really appreciate your testimony
21 here today. Actually, Council Member Ben Kallos has
22 questions, so Council Member Kallos.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you for
24 your testimony. The first question is, do you believe
25

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

101

1
2 that zero waste is possible for the city of New York
3 by 2030, do you believe that we're on track?

4 ERIC GOLDSTEIN: As I indicated earlier
5 I'm sorry that, that you missed this piece of our
6 testimony but we're very glad you're here Council
7 Member Kallos. We are strongly supportive of the
8 goal, we think it's possible to reach the goal, we
9 think that even if the goal is not reached it's
10 critical that we retain the goal and work towards the
11 goal and that if we don't have the goal then we
12 certainly won't reach the goal.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: And just because
14 I asked the Commissioner about it you alluded to it
15 in your response to Council Member Reynoso, what is
16 the story with the MTA single stream bins that have
17 the label on it that says don't worry throw
18 everything in we'll sort it for you later?

19 ERIC GOLDSTEIN: We think that's a huge
20 mistake, it's misleading to the public and from all
21 the reports we've seen from around the country mixed
22 waste collection with post-consumer separation for
23 recyclables leads to high rates of contamination.
24 Just think about it, you're tossing in a coffee cut
25 and a Dunkin Donuts bag and that's being mixed with

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

102

1
2 potentially good paper that can be recycled, it's,
3 it's a... it's a foolish way of proceeding, it also
4 confuses the public because you don't want to have
5 different rules for when they're in the subways and
6 when they're at home, it's a terrible policy, we have
7 sought unsuccessfully to convince the MTA of that but
8 maybe they'd be more receptive to comments from you.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: In your series of
10 recommendations number nine relates to the Department
11 of Citywide Administrative Services which I oversee
12 as the chair of governmental operations do you have
13 draft legislation and would you be interested in
14 working together on where the department of citywide
15 administrative services currently is and how far we
16 can go in terms of city procurement?

17 ERIC GOLDSTEIN: Well we don't have draft
18 legislation, we'd be happy to work with you on that.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: For all the
20 council member staffers who are watching dibs. Now
21 with regards to the, the 12 recommendations Chair
22 Reynoso and I work together most of the time when
23 we're not fighting at this committee through a small
24 group of folks about 18 strong called the Progressive
25 Caucus and generally what happens when we have a

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

103

1
2 large list of bills like this like the Stand for
3 Tenant Safety is... the Chair was actually instrumental
4 in working with his Legislative Director Lacey to
5 make sure we, we passed them along. I guess one big
6 question is a little bit for the Chair about which
7 ones of these are you interested in because I'm
8 interested in a bunch of them and for those at the
9 table if we were to try to put together this package
10 of 12 plus maybe some other bills for the Progressive
11 Caucus how much effort would you be willing to put
12 into getting this passed?

13 ERIC GOLDSTEIN: Well speaking for NRDC
14 this is really a summary, even though it's six pages
15 of a priority list for the next four years so
16 obviously it doesn't make sense to move all of these
17 pieces at one time, there are some pieces for example
18 a phase in of organics that the... we believe the
19 council should be moving consistently with the
20 department in the scheduling and time table. The, the
21 idea... it... what... on that point in particular San
22 Francisco, Seattle, Portland they all started with
23 voluntary programs and then at some point the years
24 after they worked out the implementation kinks and
25 voluntary became citywide they made it a mandatory

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

104

1
2 program, we think it makes sense to ultimately
3 convert to that, we're not suggesting that the
4 council advance legislation today to do that, the
5 department needs time to implement what is a, a
6 comprehensive program and it, it makes sense to do
7 that right and take time. So, this really sits out a
8 list of, of priorities for the next four years. We'd
9 be happy to sit down with the Progressive Caucus and
10 work out a time table for some of these things but I
11 think the most important thing is to recognize that
12 with... this... even with Rachel Carson as the
13 Commissioner of Sanitation it would be impossible to
14 achieve zero waste without cooperation by the council
15 and we hope that the council will be supportive not
16 only of the commissioner's objectives but that... even
17 the... those of us who are in the environmental
18 community and representing constituencies around the
19 city that will be a part of the way... a part of the
20 solution in, in prodding the council onto action.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: I, I, I will
22 follow our leader and look forward to working with
23 you. Be careful what you wish for.

24 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Lacey has submitted
25 every single legislative thought that we've gathered

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

105

1 here today so unfortunately you have access to none
2 of those pieces of legislation Council Member Kallos,
3 I do, now I'm joking but I agree on two things. I
4 just like the fact that consistently we have answered
5 on whether or not we can achieve zero by 30 the right
6 way, which is the goal in itself is ambitious and
7 we're all in to think creatively on how exactly we
8 get there. So, I, I appreciate the consistency across
9 the board here from the advocates and the
10 administration and, and... I just appreciate it but
11 thank you for your time, this is great, thank you for
12 your testimony and I think we're going to hear from
13 the labor side but thank you again.

15 ERIC GOLDSTEIN: Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: I'm going to call
17 Sean Campbell, Ben Weinstein, Priya and Mary.
18 Alright, Sean you want to go ahead and start it sir?

19 SEAN CAMPBELL: Sure. Good afternoon. My
20 name is Sean Campbell, I'm the President and
21 Principal Officer of Teamsters Local 813 representing
22 Private Sanitation here in New York City and is the
23 largest sanitation union throughout America. Thank
24 you, Council Member Reynoso, for holding this hearing
25 and for being a champion for sanitation workers in

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

106

1
2 your time as Committee Chair. We'd also like to thank
3 Council Member Kallos for the introduction of Intro
4 1573 and Commissioner Garcia for her leadership in
5 New York City's 2013 waste goal. We are in full
6 support of New York City's zero waste by 2030 goal.
7 As the men and women who handle our city's trash we
8 feel the environmental and other impacts more than
9 anyone. The greenest waste facilities in the city,
10 the Department of Sanitation, new marine transfer
11 stations and the Sims Plant and Sunset Park are both
12 Teamster shops with the best labor conditions, pay
13 and benefits. We have championed for years for a
14 commercial waste zone system to create jobs and
15 dramatically improve jobs in the private sanitation
16 industry where exploitation of workers is rampant.
17 The commercial, commercial waste zone system if
18 structured correctly will require good wages and
19 strong safety programs. Commercial waste zones will
20 also allow the city to finally set diversion goals
21 for commercial carters which can create a lot of
22 good, green jobs for working New Yorkers. Transform
23 don't trash New York City recently found that cities
24 with high diversion rates have 60 percent more
25 recycling jobs in New York City. We calculate that if

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

107

1
2 New York City were to raise its recycling rate to 70
3 percent we would create 3,300 local jobs but the
4 devil is in the details and we need a strong policy
5 that holds companies accountable. I can tell you that
6 many sanitation companies still are not recycling a
7 single can or bottle more than a year after the new
8 recycling regulations went into effect. At companies...
9 at companies that do recycle private sanitation
10 workers say we need strong worker protections along
11 with diversion goals. Right now, companies often do
12 not hire new workers to collect metal, glass and
13 plastics, they are giving these additional duties to
14 existing workers on the top of their existing work
15 load, this results in severe overworked employees who
16 are more susceptible to injury and falling asleep at
17 the wheel. New York City can and must reach zero
18 waste goals, our members look forward to being
19 partners in the zero-waste future. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you Sean,
21 thank you.

22 PRIYA MULGAONKAR: Good afternoon, my
23 name is Priya Mulgaonkar I'm here to testify on
24 behalf of the New York City Environmental Justice
25 Alliance. Founded in 1991 NYC-EJA is a non-profit

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

108

1
2 citywide membership network linking grassroots
3 organizations from low income neighborhoods and
4 communities of color in their struggle for
5 environmental justice. NYC-EJA has led efforts for
6 comprehensive policy reforms to address solid waste
7 and the impacts of dozens of transfer stations on a
8 handful of low income communities of color throughout
9 New York City. New York City creates roughly 35,000
10 tons of garbage every day, garbage trucks needlessly
11 travel thousands of miles polluting our air with
12 diesel fuel, clogging our streets and diminishing our
13 quality of life. These impacts are greatest in those
14 few low income and communities of color where truck
15 dependent transfer stations are clustered and along
16 the truck routes used to haul garbage. Not
17 surprisingly these same communities deal with many
18 sources of pollution and the negative health
19 consequences thereof such as asthma, heart disease
20 and cancer Because a number of NYC-EJA's member
21 organizations come from communities overburdened by
22 garbage we advocate for strong zero waste policies
23 that minimize the impacts of truck traffic and trash
24 in our neighborhoods. One year ago, we released a
25 report with the Transform Don't Trash Coalition that

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

109

1 outlined the specific air quality concerns... concerns
2 of overburdened communities in the South Bronx, North
3 Brooklyn and South Brooklyn. Our volunteers counted
4 waste trucks and collected data on particulate matter
5 associated with diesel exhaust and asthma. Volunteers
6 in the South Bronx at one particularly bad street
7 corner counted 304 commercial trucks per hour, about
8 half of which were commercial waste trucks that's one
9 commercial waste truck every 24 seconds. The South
10 Bronx also reported between two times and seven times
11 greater the average PM 2.5 pollution for that area.
12 As the city moves forward with its zero waste goals
13 and its new zoned system for commercial waste the
14 Mayor's OneNYC commitment to equity must direct
15 implementation. We need to advance the long-awaited
16 shift from an unjust polluting truck based system to
17 a cleaner, fairer, zero waste system that fully
18 capitalizes on the new DSNY run marine transfer
19 facilities and more equitably distributes the
20 necessary burden of solid waste management.
21 Commercial waste zoning provides a key opportunity to
22 design a truly zero waste system that is more
23 efficient and equitable distributing the impacts of
24 waste across all the boroughs not just in low income
25

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

110

1
2 communities of color. Exclusive collection zones are
3 critical to reducing excessive vehicle miles traveled
4 by trucks and for achieving high diversion rates in
5 an efficient low-cost way. By creating rational
6 commercial districts haulers can better facilitate
7 separate collection of recyclables, compostable
8 material and garbage without adding to the citywide
9 vehicle miles traveled by collection trucks. Indeed
10 the 2016 DSNY study of the commercial carting
11 industry's route found that every neighborhood would
12 likely see a decrease in truck traffic and related
13 emissions with the greatest VMT reductions occurring
14 in EJ communities in the Bronx and along the BQE and
15 LIE. DSNY should consider using a high standard RFP
16 process for its commercial waste zones to ensure that
17 contracts are awarded to haulers with the strongest
18 proposals for waste diversion, lowering emissions and
19 reduce... reduction of negative community impacts. The
20 city should also consider both the locations and
21 community impacts of private truck based transfer
22 stations that, that will be used by commercial
23 haulers when awarding the contracts under a zoned
24 system. Each facility could be scored based on
25 criteria such as indoor truck cuing, strict anti-

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

111

1
2 idling policies and record of compliance with safety
3 and environmental regulations. Thank you for this
4 opportunity to testify, we look forward to continued
5 work to, to working with you towards the
6 complimentary goals of equity and zero waste.

7 BEN WEINSTEIN: Hello, I am Ben
8 Weinstein, I'm a member of a Grassroots Organization
9 called Clean Up North Brooklyn, we're a group of
10 families, small business owners and artists fighting
11 for cleaner air quality in Bushwick. Thank you for
12 inviting us to this hearing, thank you Councilman
13 Reynoso for continuing to be an advocate for
14 environmental justice and waste equity in our
15 community. Clean Up North Brooklyn is strongly in
16 favor of the 80 by 50, zero by 30 and the new
17 organics collection program moving NYC to a more
18 sustainable city. However, we come today with some
19 words of caution. Too often when environmentalists
20 talk about sustainability the issue of environmental
21 racism is not addressed or included in the vision for
22 attaining sustainability. As you all may know North
23 Brooklyn is home to many families, schools,
24 playgrounds and sadly 19 waste transfer stations
25 handling over 40 percent of the city's waste as well

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

112

1
2 South Bronx, Southwest Queens, predominantly low-
3 income community of colors have suffered for decades
4 by this waste station clustering. Our communities are
5 saddled with dangerous truck traffic, unbearable
6 stench, so much idling from short and long haulers
7 that it has led to generation of children with, with
8 chronic respiratory problems. As the organics program
9 expands these three communities will shoulder the
10 impacts of processing more food waste. more food
11 waste means more trucks, more traffic, more idling,
12 more diesel fume particulate matter and ultimately
13 more asthma. Getting to zero waste is a unique
14 opportunity for the city to build waste
15 infrastructure in an equitable fashion and help
16 reverse the tide of environmental racism that plagues
17 communities in the outer boroughs. In particular we
18 recommend better enforcement of private haulers and
19 waste transfer stations. Our community's
20 environmental report Profits Before Safety identified
21 1,200 violations of city and state law in plain sight
22 from a local waste transfer station during one week,
23 however zero citations were issued by any city or
24 state agency. As DSNY and the city of New, New York
25 hammer out the rules of moving towards zero waste

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

113

1
2 they should ask themselves do we want to repeat the
3 same mistakes made with the closing of Fresh Kills,
4 will these same three communities be forced to
5 shoulder the environmental burden of moving towards
6 zero waste, to put it more bluntly is the zero waste
7 campaign meant to help New Yorkers overall while
8 devastating certain poor communities with diesel
9 fumes, stench and methane gas emissions. Please look
10 carefully at the closing of Fresh Kills and the
11 subsequent clustering of waste stations while
12 everybody wants to send zero waste to landfills by
13 2030 the burden of getting to zero waste should be
14 distributed equitably to all New Yorkers. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you for your
16 testimony, I do want to say that in every piece of
17 legislation moving forward regarding getting to zero
18 waste like even waste... the zoning system that I'm
19 going to be very intent or, or deliberate on making
20 sure that that trash gets sent equitably throughout
21 the city and not in our district. We also have Intro
22 495, which the Mayor has now supported, publicly
23 supported which is going to allow for us to
24 practically cap the, the waste that's coming into our
25 district and now allow for any new waste to come in

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

114

1
2 the way it did with the organics program once that
3 was expanded and the contracts that the city of New
4 York gave to Five-Star. You just heard today that the
5 Mayor... the Commissioner mentioned that they no longer
6 have the organics contract in Five Star and they have
7 actually no DSNY trucks coming into the Brooklyn
8 transfer station which is right next to your... to
9 where you live because that's now going to Hamilton.
10 So, that's a step in the right direction that we see
11 from the Department of Sanitation which they
12 committed to and I'm committed to making sure that
13 that mean... we stay that way and that we continue to
14 do that type of work.

15 BEN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: You're welcome and
17 then the safety portion, I want to be clear that
18 outside of an RFP style system in which we move RFP
19 styled... I'm sorry, zoning system... the only way we
20 could really push significant safety standards for
21 the workers that we have in the city of New York, a
22 permanent system would be very difficult to make that
23 happen, we have a permanent system now that doesn't
24 allow us to really ask for more than what we're
25 getting so again it's another plus to why we need to

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

115

1
2 make sure that this, this zoning system gets kicked
3 off the right way. So, I'm very excited about the
4 support that the Teamsters have for that system and
5 agree with you that that is the future and, and also
6 an expansion of workforce over the amount of new
7 recyclable material and infrastructure that would
8 need to be built to handle that recyclable material.
9 So, thank you guys for your testimony, I really
10 appreciate it. Sean?

11 SEAN CAMPBELL: Commissioner... I'm sorry..
12 [cross-talk]

13 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Chair... [cross-talk]

14 SEAN CAMPBELL: Chairman, if, if I may
15 one observation I'd like to make and a
16 recommendation, you know when you have a fire you
17 don't call a Sanitation worker, when you rob a bank
18 you don't call a fire fighter, I believe that in
19 order for a lot of this to work is that the
20 Department of Sanitation needs to really oversee this
21 entire thing, I think that the BIC really doesn't
22 understand sanitation and you know that's just my
23 recommendation and I believe that if sanitation comes
24 in and does the enforcement I think that a lot of
25 this would work a lot better.

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

116

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Okay, noted, I'll be bringing that up to BIC, a lot of... the waste... the waste industry might agree with you on that one 100 percent but like we also have testimony here that there had been about 200 and something violations since August 1st regarding the new organics program within the commercial industry and that BIC has yet to put one, one, one fine to any of those businesses while again the Department of Sanitation has about 290 violations so it's a reflection of the enforcement that's being done by one agency and not the other. So, I'll be mindful of it but I do want to say that BIC's role is a little different than sanitation.

SEAN CAMPBELL: No, I, I, I understand and that's noted but... and I think maybe even that may be wrong because there are summonses being given it's just not to the right people, a lot of times they're given to my members, the guys who are going out there who are trying to do their job and are forced by their employer to as you see in the video throw everything in.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: And obviously that's not the drivers fault, it's the company asking

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

117

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

him to do it, very mind.. I'll, I'll be mindful of that and make sure that we catch up with the BIC Commissioner on what's happening there but thank you again for your testimony as usual, I really appreciate it, thank you.. [cross-talk]

SEAN CAMPBELL: Thank you..

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you. Now we'd like to call up David Biderman, Sarah Martin, Claire Meslin [sp?], Alireza Vaziri, Vaziri and Vandra.. I can't see that, sorry.. Thorburn maybe. Alright, Mr. Biderman would you like to start, welcome, all the way from Washington D.C. we, we welcome you back, it's nice to see you here every once in a while and thank you for making the trip.

DAVID BIDERMAN: Thank you Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: And check if the mic is on David, I don't think it's on.. [cross-talk]

DAVID BIDERMAN: I hope so..

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Alright.

DAVID BIDERMAN: Good afternoon Chairman Reynoso, Councilman Kallos, member.. distinguished guests. My name is David Biderman, I'm the Executive Director and CEO of the Solid Waste Association of North America known as SWANA. With more than 9,000

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

118

1
2 members we're the largest association in the world
3 for waste and recycling professionals and our growing
4 New York chapter has more than 350 members and our
5 New York City members include people who work at the
6 Department of Sanitation, private sector recycling
7 facilities and many waste and recycling collection
8 companies. SWANA is pleased to testify today about
9 zero waste, an important policy issue that will
10 require engagement from legislators like the city
11 council, regulators like DSNY, the industry,
12 environmental advocates, and the general population
13 of New York City for the city to be successful in
14 achieving its zero-waste goal. Earlier this year
15 SWANA and the California Resource Recovery
16 Association rolled out the very first zero waste
17 certification course through municipal managers and
18 waste industry representatives. From developing the
19 principles and practices that are included in our new
20 course we know that zero waste has many definitions.
21 To some zero means no wasted resources, that means
22 zero, to others zero means no waste to landfills,
23 zero might mean zero or it might mean a reduction of
24 80 to 90 percent by a given target year and of course
25 the target years differ depending on municipality.

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

119

1
2 Dozens of municipalities and counties in the United
3 States have zero waste plans or goals and most of
4 them have different definitions and different target
5 years. SWANA supports all of these diverse efforts as
6 all of them reduce greenhouse gases and because local
7 decision making and a commitment to progress are
8 important principles that support successful zero
9 waste initiatives. SWANA fully supports DSNY's zero
10 waste plans which calls for zero waste to landfills
11 by 2030 but we have to acknowledge the difficulty. As
12 no major East coast city diverts even half of their
13 waste from disposal at the present time and there is
14 not sufficient infrastructure in or near New York
15 City to manage the array of materials that are
16 currently being generated. One the challenges and
17 also a benefit of zero waste is that it does not rely
18 solely on the development of new processing capacity.
19 Now the waste stream consists of a wide variety of
20 components generated from a diverse variety of
21 sources. This is particularly true in New York City
22 where 8.5 million New Yorkers generate nearly 12,000
23 tons of waste every single day with a similar amount
24 generated by stores, offices, factories and other
25 businesses. It would be an incredible, historic and

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

120

1
2 to use a line that someone else said earlier,
3 ambitious accomplishment to greatly reduce landfill
4 disposal of the millions of tons of waste collected
5 annually by the Department of Sanitation. Achieving
6 the city's zero waste by 2030 goal means asking all
7 New Yorkers to change their consumption habits, which
8 is much more difficult than passing laws or
9 developing catchy zero waste slogans. The road to
10 zero waste also has to engage manufacturers to change
11 their understanding of a product's end of life and to
12 revisit product packaging. New York City is one of
13 the very few cities with a stature and scale to
14 engage on that level. In addition to increasing
15 recycling New Yorkers should look for opportunities
16 to donate or share usable items. Zero waste also
17 means encouraging the use and recovery of food to
18 feed people or use for energy recovery and developing
19 new technologies to process and use material diverted
20 from disposal and, and... use material diverted from
21 disposal. When food waste is at the 40 to 50 percent
22 level that it is in the United States much of it
23 occurs before it ever gets to a bin or a container,
24 there's a lot of work that we all can do together to
25 reduce the amount of wasted food and improve the

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

121

1
2 livelihoods of the neediest among us. It, it also may
3 require from a zero-waste perspective to be
4 successful to increase enforcement, regulation, and
5 costs which we've heard a little bit about today.
6 Those are not necessarily popular with residents or
7 the business community which is why it's important
8 for the council to lead in this area. In conclusion
9 zero waste is a lofty goal but SWANA with its
10 national perspective appreciates the opportunity to
11 testify today and supports the Department of
12 Sanitation's zero waste efforts. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you David,
14 appreciate it. Sarah?

15 SARAH MARTIN: Oh sorry, should I start
16 over? Okay, good afternoon. My name is Sarah Martin
17 and I'm the Co-chair of the Morningside Heights West
18 Harlem Sanitation Coalition. Our organization is
19 delighted that New York City is working toward the
20 great goal of zero waste... but okay, we're most
21 concerned however about the New York City Housing
22 Authority, that's the largest land owner in the city.
23 As a 57-year resident of public housing I have the
24 honor to work with the Sanitation Coalition in
25 developing a most successful recycling program of

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

122

1
2 Grant Houses in West Harlem. Unfortunately, I saw the
3 unraveling of the program because some neglect by all
4 levels of management from the Chair and the
5 caretakers to Grant... at Grant Houses and... well, all
6 of the above. Now Grant Houses works at recycling at
7 30 percent of... at our, our program, this is well
8 above the city average. Alright, there are several
9 principles that we have followed which made our
10 program effective. One, the ownership must belong to
11 the residents, they, they need to run it and feel it
12 is theirs to, to... for it to succeed. The second one
13 is the resident leadership of the program must see
14 that every person in the development gets a recycling
15 education. Our organization went floor by floor,
16 building by building, hands on workshop, everybody
17 got word of it and wanted to, to participate, to be a
18 great part of it. For recycling to be successful the
19 recycling leaders must have the cooperation of all
20 levels of management and especially the Department
21 of, of, of Sanitation. We know that the funds are
22 short but recycling must be a priority of public
23 housing in order to succeed. If our principles are
24 used and put in place properly moving to zero waste
25 will be possible.

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

123

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you for that Sarah and I know that if we all did half the work that Grant Houses did we would be in a much better place so I thank you for your efforts and your leadership and Grant Houses for the work that you've done and setting forth an example as to what everyone else should be doing in NYCHA developments and again you set forth the model as to how we should be working there.

SARAH MARTIN: Thanks...

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you. Now Sara from the Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board as well.

SARAH CURRIE-HALPERN: Hello, better... Hi, Sarah Currie-Halpern, I'm Chair of the Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board. I am testifying for both the Manhattan and Brooklyn SWABs. This testimony represents the work of a zero-waste oversight hearing task force formed this summer by members of both SWABs and other stakeholders and citizen activists. Task force members also wrote three policy briefs being distributed to, to you today. These papers are on waste management topics that the city needs to consider in light of New York's growing population

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

124

1
2 and continued economic vibrancy. Given the
3 administration's zero waste goals they are topics of
4 vital concern. The Manhattan and Brooklyn SWABs are
5 greatly encouraged by the city's goal to send zero
6 waste to landfills by 2030. However, diverting waste
7 from landfills while laudable is not a true measure
8 of achieving zero waste, we therefore urge the city
9 to adopt the zero-waste international alliance's
10 definition which states zero waste is achieving 90
11 percent diversion from landfills as well as
12 incinerators and the environment. Incineration should
13 not be included in the city's plan to achieve zero by
14 30. Given the city's current 25-year contract to
15 supply at least 10,000 tons of waste per week for
16 incineration the city's is contractually blocked from
17 being able to achieve its zero waste goals under
18 ZWIA's globally accepted standard definition of zero
19 waste. How will the city meet the challenge of
20 adapting to a more sustainable definition of zero
21 waste while at the same time honoring the city's
22 existing contracts and planning for the contracts of
23 tomorrow. The zero-waste hierarchy is a useful tool
24 to guide new projects and aid in decision making when
25 awarding contracts. Through funding programs that

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

125

1 support and promote the more favorable, favorable
2 methods near the top of the hierarchy including waste
3 prevention, reuse, composting, and recycling rather
4 than less desirable methods of incineration and
5 landfills we will be better suited to achieve true
6 zero waste while creating a healthy city and region.
7 We ask that the SWABs and other community
8 stakeholders be involved in these long-range planning
9 discussions and we encourage the council to get
10 involved too. The Manhattan and Brooklyn SWABs
11 strongly support the reduce, reuse and recycle
12 programs highlighted in OneNYC. With the amount of
13 waste New York City has, has produced growing since
14 2015 zero waste commitment the city needs to develop
15 initiatives specifically aimed at reducing waste
16 generation and begin setting metrics for waste
17 reduction. One great example of this is GreenNYC's
18 Stop Junk Mail Campaign which has eliminated 20
19 million pounds of paper waste since its inception.
20 More creative programs like this which help improve
21 quality of life while reducing waste are needed only
22 then will we be able to start progressing towards
23 reducing waste and measuring this progress. Council
24 Member Kallos's Intro 1573 echoes the
25

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

126

1 administration's current goals but could go further.
2 The city already has policies and programs to foster
3 recycling, reuse, and composting. We ask the council
4 to work with the Department of Sanitation and the
5 Mayor's Office and develop legislation that codifies
6 waste reduction, reuse and composting metrics, sets
7 measurable targets and requires regular reporting to
8 the public on these metrics. We see a need for more
9 robust quantification of waste metrics so that we can
10 accurately gauge progress and create targeted
11 solutions that will help us achieve true waste by
12 2030. Intro 1573 states a 100 percent diversion from
13 landfill goal, which we the members of the SWABs
14 advise to be reduced to the more internationally
15 accepted rate of 90 percent, not everything in our
16 waste stream can be reused or recycled safely and it
17 is dangerous economic policy to require recycling at
18 any cost when often markets do not exist for many
19 recycled materials, 90 percent diversion is more
20 universally held and attainable goal recognizing that
21 recycling is a necessary component of the zero waste
22 plan it is also very resource intensive. We also
23 recommend adding a more practical waste reduction
24 target to this legislation such as reduce the amount
25

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

127

1
2 of waste disposed by 75 percent by 2030 from a 2005
3 baseline. Other cities with aggressive zero waste
4 plans such as San Francisco and Austin have robust
5 incentive programs and large enforcement teams
6 issuing penalties for lack of compliance, helping
7 them move the needle. Programs like Save as you Throw
8 and introduced in New York City will presumably offer
9 residents incentives to reduce waste and divert more
10 but incentives and programs to engage residents and
11 businesses should not stop there. The Department of
12 Sanitation also needs to make regular increases and a
13 enforcement team in order to hold all businesses and
14 residents accountable to our recycling and organics
15 rules and laws. We think city council would agree
16 that increasing recycling organics collection
17 capacity will not on its own get people to separate
18 recyclables and organics from their trash, changing
19 personal behavior has always been a public policy
20 challenge; seat belts, condoms, even the position our
21 babies sleep in all needed aggressive outreach
22 campaigns to educate the public. The Manhattan and
23 Brooklyn SWABs see the behavior change needed for New
24 Yorkers to reduce, reuse and recycle as something
25 that can be successfully influenced through an

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

128

1 ongoing awareness campaign and educational program.
2 I'll just finish with one other thought, we would
3 also like to see the city expand the zero-waste
4 steering committee or create a new zero waste task
5 force that includes not only employees of city
6 agencies and Mayor's Office working on the zero-waste
7 program and policies but also people from a broad
8 range of backgrounds who play a part in helping the
9 city achieve zero waste. This task force should be
10 transparent and collaborative reporting publicly on
11 the city's progress towards zero waste while
12 developing creative solutions to the difficult
13 hurdles we will face while trying to reach these
14 goals. In, in summation I'd just like to thank
15 Council for the... this oversight hearing and the
16 opportunity to have a robust discussion on what it
17 will take to, to get the city to zero waste by 2030.
18 Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you for your
21 testimony, Vandra, do you want to go ahead?

22 VANDRA THORBURN: Thank you very much.
23 Good afternoon. My name is Vandra Thorburn and I
24 appreciate the opportunity to testify before this
25 committee today regarding the Intro 1573 and just to

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

129

1 including the threat that reaching zero waste by 2030
2 might not happen. I, I agree with everybody else it...
3 whether it doesn't happen or not we should be the... we
4 should be marching towards it anyway. So, I'm the
5 founder of Vokashi Kitchen Waste Solution, a unique
6 composting service in New York City that is now eight
7 years old. Through this compost collection service, I
8 have demonstrated the viability of using an
9 alternative low-tech solution to the zillions of
10 paper bags involved in organic waste collections. We
11 have shown the profound efficacy of the five-gallon
12 bucket and introduced the Japanese method of
13 composting food scraps as the cleanest, safest and
14 most environmentally friendly and cost-effective way
15 of managing incidental food waste. We collect food
16 scraps from households, offices, small businesses
17 with kitchenettes and pantries and compost at public
18 and private gardens. I have testified many times
19 before this committee to get support for community
20 based small and medium sized composting facilities,
21 today I am again pleading for the support for the
22 growth of the micro haulers in the waste sector and
23 for encouraging the, the growth of these community
24 based initiatives that I think help get us to zero
25

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

130

1 waste. For far too long the waste sector has been
2 monopolized by large government agencies and
3 corporate waste management enterprises and as you
4 know in the comptrollers 2016 report card on MWBE
5 participation and city agency procurements BIC got an
6 F and DSNY got an F, we need contracts between the
7 city and haulers to focus on the significant
8 opportunity to boost MWBE participation in this
9 industry that has very high barriers to entry and
10 participation and I urge this committee to look at
11 actually the requirements in the Los Angeles RecycLA
12 and how beneficial that's been to local MWBE
13 enterprises. The last year the Mayor's official 80
14 times 50 plan was released the waste section
15 suggested there might be some light at the end of the
16 tunnel, the report wrote references, the private
17 carting study and the commitment of that to, to... with
18 a broad range of stakeholders including the
19 businesses and the private carting industry and the
20 Environmental Justice advocates to develop a plan for
21 the commercial waste reform and I'm here to... and
22 basically I'd like to just end here by urging you and
23 the waste hauling community to really encourage the
24 growth of small industrial solutions. As they say
25

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

131

1
2 it's a thousand points of light that are needed so
3 much as we... the... I think the greatest way of
4 encouraging participation is to get more people
5 participating and a front line of that is to make
6 sure that there are community based businesses, thank
7 you.

8 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Alright, thank you
9 for your testimony, Claire

10 CLAIRE MESLIN: Hello, my name's Claire
11 Meslin and I'm an Architect leading the process of
12 developing the AIA New York, that's the American
13 Institute of Architects zero waste design guidelines.
14 This has been a yearlong process, we, we got a grant
15 from the Rockefeller Foundation and we, we're about
16 to launch the design guidelines which help architects
17 and designers change buildings to better separate our
18 waste. We visited over 50 buildings, we've had five
19 workshops with staff from DSNY, city planning,
20 Department of Transportation and other city agencies
21 along with developers, building managers and porters,
22 architects, designers and more. It's clear that the
23 way our buildings are set up here in this dense city
24 and the way we set out our waste for collection play
25 a crucial role in getting to zero waste. We heard

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

132

1
2 Brad Lander say that multi-family buildings have
3 unique challenges in separating organics, we've seen
4 in other cities like San Francisco and Milon they've
5 actually ended up shutting down chutes so they can
6 have organics collection in the same place as trash
7 collection but in New York City chutes are required
8 by code and there's a whole lot more of them and so
9 we don't know if that is the right solution here but
10 clearly more work needs to be done so organics
11 diversion can be much higher. These guidelines will
12 be launched as I said October 18th and then the grant
13 funding is complete apart from the exhibition at the
14 center for architecture next summer. The guidelines
15 contain many strategies that designers and building
16 managers can use immediately but also contain many
17 other ideas that need to be piloted, evaluated, and
18 will require code changes or policy changes to
19 implement. Further research needs to be done to
20 provide evidence to determine how best to implement
21 the strategies for managing waste and which codes or
22 policies need to be changed. In high density
23 neighborhoods with small sidewalks the best solutions
24 may be on the street rather than the sidewalk or may
25 include permanent shed waste collection

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

133

1
2 infrastructure, planning at the neighborhood scale is
3 required to develop many of these solutions. The
4 momentum building during development of guidelines
5 have been powerful and we've been impressed to see
6 the level of engagement and collaboration between
7 agencies and other stakeholders. This process should
8 continue in an ongoing process to determine how the
9 design of our buildings and sidewalks need to be
10 modified to enable our city to achieve zero waste.
11 achieving zero waste will not be easy and I recommend
12 that the city sets up a working group of
13 representatives from multiple agencies and the
14 private sector so architects, developers, urban
15 planners, and building operators to continue the work
16 of implementing the suggestions of zero waste design
17 guidelines. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you and
19 Alireza?

20 ALIREZA VAZIRI: Hello. My name is
21 Alireza Vaziri and I'm the Co-founder of Roho
22 Compost, we are a food waste non-profit in New York
23 City, to date we have composted over a half a million
24 pounds of food waste and have donated over 1,500
25 pounds of edible food to local shelters and food

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

134

1 banks in New York City. In our work, we have
2 discovered many forms of corruption throughout the
3 waste hauling business. One of the most alarming
4 issues is private waste haulers inflating the amount
5 of waste they pick up from their clients, the amount
6 of waste in pounds or in volume from their
7 restaurants, supermarkets or businesses that they
8 pick up from. The Business Integrity Commission has
9 mandated maximum rates a private hauler can charge
10 per weight for value... or of... or volume of waste. This
11 system allows BIC to regulate how much waste is being
12 charged to have its... how much a business is being
13 charged to have its garbage removed however to our...
14 to our knowledge BIC does not have guidelines or
15 mandates on how a waste hauler weighs its customers
16 trash. In many case... cases I have noticed to our own
17 conducted waste audits that a hauler will provide...
18 will provide low rates per pound of yard... per pound
19 or, or yard of waste inflating a business's overall
20 waste numbers. In these instances, a business owner
21 thinks that they're getting a great deal because
22 they're getting a low... a low rate per pound or per
23 volume however they're overall waste numbers are
24 inflated, this allows the, the business... the, the
25

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

135

1
2 garbage hauler to make up... make up the... make up their
3 margins and make more money. This type of practice
4 increases... this type of practice creates difficulties
5 competing in the waste, waste industry and puts the
6 onerous on the business owner to monitor its garbage
7 haul when in reality a business owner has a million
8 other things to do. I'm seeking more involvement from
9 BIC and others to create regulations that provide
10 more transparent forms of weighing trash, recyclables
11 and food waste. Technology exists that can assist
12 businesses and haulers with these measures and
13 efforts. At Roho we, we weight each tote and bag
14 individually providing accurate numbers for our
15 businesses. As a business owner, the amount of waste
16 you produce should fluctuate from season to season,
17 some months you are busy, some months you are slow,
18 this is not happening. In my opinion in order to
19 achieve zero waste we must provide financial
20 incentives for businesses to compost and recycle and
21 to even donate food. This includes placing a price
22 for landfilling, recycling, food donation and
23 composting with each stage of programming at a lower
24 rate so we would have a lower rate for landfilling, a
25 low... a, a higher... a higher rate for landfilling, a

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

136

1
2 lower rate for recycling, a lower rate for composting
3 and a low rate for food donation. Finally, I'd like
4 to raise the issue of transparency involving,
5 involving composting to go ware this includes
6 utensils, cups and plates. Many businesses believe
7 that these products are being composted yet it... yet
8 it has still been... it, it is still unknown where
9 these to go materials are actually being composted.
10 In some instances, these to go ware compostable are
11 being comingled with other forms of trash like
12 recyclables and glass. We believe that these, these
13 compostable to go ware is being landfilled and
14 businesses are being lied to, pay more money for
15 compostable to go ware. I support and applaud these..
16 I support... I support and applaud this committee's
17 efforts and we hope that you can continue in, in
18 helping us as a city achieve our goals of reaching
19 zero waste by 2030, thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you for your
21 testimony, to the panel I just want to say several
22 folks spoke to some way that they could get more
23 involved in the Department of Sanitation through some
24 type of committee or task force and I really want to
25 look into that to see if we could.. we could have that

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

137

1
2 discussion and also speaking to food donations and,
3 and food waste in general and how that can be a part...
4 a part of this, I don't think we, we talked about it
5 too much when the DSNY was here but I know that they
6 have a robust food waste initiative and operation
7 that working towards so that we can handle the
8 garbage before it even gets to our plate and really
9 try to change habits of the consumer and deal with it
10 in the front end not the back end. So, I really
11 appreciate your time and your testimony today and
12 thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you. We have
13 Mary Cleaver, sorry... Rolando Guzman, Greg Todd, and
14 Alessandro Ciari. Alright, so this is our second to
15 last panel so... I'd like to call... I'm sorry, so... you
16 want to start from left to right, Rolando go first
17 and then or... from your right to left... [cross-talk]

18 GREG TODD: Chair Reynoso, if I may ask
19 to go first I have an appointment I have to... [cross-
20 talk]

21 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Absolutely, I
22 apologize, sorry... [cross-talk]

23 GREG TODD: Thank... [cross-talk]

24 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...sorry, go ahead.
25

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

138

1
2 GREG TODD: Not a problem, thank you for
3 that consideration. Good afternoon Chairman Reynoso.
4 My name is Greg Todd, I'm a Member of the Brooklyn
5 Solid Waste Advisory Board and a Chair of the
6 Organics Committee and as we know the Mayor has set a
7 goal of zero waste to landfills by 2030. While this
8 is certainly an awesome goal I find it very difficult
9 to believe we're going to get there given the current
10 level of outreach from the Sanitation Department and
11 the Mayor's Pro-Real Estate Development Policies. Two
12 months ago, a Deputy Commissioner from Sanitation
13 made a very well put presentation about the zero-
14 waste program to the Brooklyn Solid Waste Advisory
15 Board yet when I asked him if we could get a copy to
16 take out to the community the speaker said it
17 wouldn't be possible as the subject might change. I
18 would really like to get a copy of that presentation,
19 I think it's very important that we collaborate with
20 Sanitation as volunteers to help them get the word
21 out. BSWAB said itself the goal of reaching out to
22 every one of the 18 community boards in Brooklyn to
23 tell them about zero waste, to do that we need a
24 clean, short, and compelling presentation from
25 Sanitation Department. I'm here to ask for that

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

139

1 presentation. A goal I am proposing with the Organics
2 Committee and SWAB is to create a medium scale
3 composting center in each of our 18 community boards
4 in Brooklyn. At the present we have just two, the Red
5 Hook Composting Center and the soon to be renovated
6 Gowanus Conservancy site both in CB-6. Citywide we
7 have just the Earth Matter site and Governor's Island
8 and the big reuse site under the Queensboro Koch
9 Bridge. By putting similar sites in each of the 18
10 community boards we can achieve a number of goals.
11 Number one give tangible evidence that organics soon
12 to be collected citywide are actually being
13 composted. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many
14 residents and even sanitation workers still believe
15 these materials are simply going into landfills. One
16 way to counteract this belief is to have a community
17 based composting or anaerobic digester that residents
18 can see sanitation trucks going into and that could
19 be visited by community groups, school science
20 classes, merchant's associations and other interested
21 parties. Two, create real proof waste is actually a
22 resource that it can be beneficially reused. As we
23 say in Brooklyn seeing is believing. An actual
24 facility in our community will say far more than an
25

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

140

1
2 infinite number of power points that we're actually
3 reusing this compost. And finally provide some green
4 jobs for composters, community gardeners, and other
5 greenies. While there is much hype about green jobs
6 and the circular economy having compost and anaerobic
7 digesters that can handle five tons of organic a day
8 which is what we're defining as medium scale in each
9 of our 18 communities will actually build a
10 foundation around the hype. I just want to cut short
11 the rest of my comments and simply say we need to
12 make sure we have land in our communities to do this
13 composting and I would ask that the Mayor's Office of
14 Sustainability attempt to identify and put a freeze
15 on potential N1 sites in our neighborhoods so that we
16 have locations for these proposed medium scale
17 composting facilities. Thank you very much for your
18 time.

19 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you Greg.

20 ROLANDO GUZMAN: Good afternoon Council
21 Member Reynoso. My name is Rolando Guzman and I'm
22 here on behalf of the organization United for Trash
23 Reduction and Garbage Equity Outreach. We are a
24 coalition of local community organizations in North
25 Brooklyn that we advocate and we organize community

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

141

1
2 members especially the Latino and African American
3 community members around environmental justice issues
4 especially waste reduction, garbage equity and truck
5 traffic safety. As you know very well North Brooklyn
6 along with other... two communities in New York City
7 process how much New York City garbage. This is
8 another example of the historic racial and economic
9 discrimination almost... towards communities of color
10 and low-income families. We are here though
11 supporting this goal to reduce waste to zero by 2030,
12 we believe this is now not only achievable this is
13 the right thing to do for our communities and also,
14 it's the best thing to do to stop global warming in
15 the world. Also, we applaud and we celebrate the
16 commitment of the current administration when it
17 comes to waste reduction. We also believe that the
18 city can do several things right now to ensure that
19 we are walking or going towards the right way for
20 waste reduction and ensure garbage equity. And the
21 first thing that we recommend is to ensure that
22 there's garbage equity. So, we are urging again city
23 council to pass Intro 495 that is going to produce
24 relief to communities like ours and Greenpoint and
25 Bushwick but also, it's going to ensure that other

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

142

1
2 communities in New York City don't get upper... over
3 burdened with a high concentration of waste transfer
4 stations in their community. The other item that we
5 believe the city can be doing right now is increase,
6 increase the number of materials that can be
7 recycled. New York City when it comes to recycle I
8 think many people brought it up before we are so
9 behind in other large cities and also small
10 municipalities throughout the country and that... I
11 don't think that's totally acceptable. We believe the
12 organic collection is a great pilot and we believe
13 that the city should be increasing that. Also, we
14 believe that the city should do more enforcement,
15 they should do enforcement especially to the private
16 carting companies. What you saw on that video is
17 something that we've been blowing the horn for a long
18 time in North Brooklyn and especially with
19 restaurants and bars, it's kind of ironic that a bar
20 would produce so many beer bottles and everything
21 goes to the same truck, goes to the same transfer
22 station, ends up in the same landfill. Something just
23 to add though we are doing research with local
24 businesses and they believe that carting companies
25 are recycling and some of them are actually paying

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

143

1
2 extra thinking that they are recycling so this is an
3 issue not only about environmental justice but also a
4 consumer protection that some of these people are
5 paying for a service that they're not getting. We
6 also believe that the city can do a better job when
7 it comes to enforcing those trucks, you know very
8 well in North Brooklyn we have several cyclists of
9 getting killed in regular basis sadly enough by truck
10 carting companies. The city should do a better
11 enforcement when it comes to truck enforcement and
12 also the city should enforce or ask that those trucks
13 are cleaner. We have the... one of the highest
14 concentrations of asthma in New York city and that is
15 due especially thanks to these collection trucks. We
16 also believe that the banning the plastic bag is only
17 right and only necessary for the city and it's great
18 that the Governor is putting together this task force
19 but I don't think we should be waiting on that and I
20 think the city council has the responsibility to all
21 the communities that are getting affected with this
22 burden to address that issue. The other issue that we
23 really want to stress is that there's this zero-waste
24 steering committee it has to have a meaningful and
25 through participation of local community

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

144

1
2 organizations not only from advocates or
3 intellectuals but at the same time grassroots
4 organizations in those communities to be part of
5 this. We believe those are steps that the city can be
6 doing right now 2030 is way ahead of us but those are
7 the steps that the city can be taking right now and
8 it's going to ensure that we get to a place where we
9 have zero waste and also more waste equity in the
10 city of New York, thank you so much.

11 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you Rolando,
12 Mary?

13 MARY CLEAVER: Thank you. Good afternoon
14 and thank you Committee Chairman Reynoso and others
15 in attendance for your time today. I'm Mary Cleaver,
16 Owner of the Cleaver Company and the Green Table. We
17 are catering and event planning business dedicated to
18 creating and producing high quality events while
19 striving to improve the food supply. We also have a
20 farm to table restaurant called the Green Table and
21 operate two kiosks at the Battery known as table
22 green during the six warmer months of the year. For
23 more than 35 years we've been committed to creating a
24 healthy sustainable local food and farm economy, we
25 care about where our food comes from sourcing it...

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

145

1
2 seasonal ingredients from responsible, local farmers
3 and producers but we also care about where about
4 where it goes. We train our kitchen and our off-
5 premise catering staff to always separate waste and
6 to recycle any compostable and landfill waste. Our
7 primary strategy on waste is not to create it in the
8 first place. Through the years we've been outspoken
9 advocates for handling commercial waste in a
10 responsible manner that is good for the environment.
11 We push to begin commercial composting in the Chelsea
12 Market where our commissary is located and where many
13 other food businesses are tenants. We
14 enthusiastically joined the Mayor's food waste
15 challenge in the spring of 2013 and we were here
16 before city council to support the 2013 commercial
17 food waste law. We welcome Commissioner Garcia and
18 DSNY's recent and gratefully ambitious initiatives to
19 help move the whole city closer towards the vision of
20 zero waste to landfill by 2030 this includes the
21 application and enforcement of recycling laws to
22 businesses commercial and mixed-use buildings as well
23 as residential units so that all businesses are
24 required to responsibly and systematically separate
25 their waste. However, it is concerning that while

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

146

1 stores and restaurants across the city are now
2 diligently separating their waste streams there
3 continues to be a lack of transparency around where
4 this waste is taken and the extent to which it is
5 actually being recycled and composted. We just don't
6 know what happens to the recyclables and other
7 compostable materials we conscientiously separate and
8 return from events we produce around the city after
9 it is taken from the loading dock by our hauling
10 company. A year ago, the Chelsea Market did
11 proactively consolidate the buildings waste to one
12 loading dock and installed the bio digester so we now
13 separate it into four streams; organic waste,
14 vegetable scraps... scraps acceptable to the bio
15 digester, industrial composting such as meat and
16 chicken bones, fish carcasses, citrus, paper towels
17 and compostable serve ware, recyclables and landfill.
18 We had to insist on the recycling as it was not
19 common practice and I'm happy to say that it is in
20 full effect but more often than not the bio digester
21 is non-functioning, this means that although we
22 continue to separate accordingly in our kitchen on
23 the dock we must consolidate these composting streams
24 once again with all compostable matter going into the
25

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

147

1 industrial compostable bin. To the best of my
2 knowledge this is then taken... hauled to the New Town
3 Creek waste water digester egg in Greenpoint. The
4 second problem for customers is that the pricing
5 system lacks transparency and consistency, it is very
6 difficult to know if you are getting a fair rate for
7 waste hauling and often businesses along the same
8 street pay different rates to the same hauler. As
9 part of the consortium of Chelsea Market we now pay
10 slightly less than we did as a single business pickup
11 but as we plan our move from Chelsea after 21 years
12 to an affordable space in one of the outer boroughs
13 we do not know what to expect or how to negotiate
14 waste pickup at our next location. As Commissioner
15 Garcia reported the system also operates differently
16 for large and small businesses, while large
17 businesses are able to negotiate their contracts with
18 carters and adjust prices on the basis of how much
19 waste they generate, small businesses have far less
20 bargaining power. Studies have found that over 60
21 percent of New York City's small businesses do not
22 have a written contract with their waste hauler which
23 leave them at the haulers whim with respect to price
24 increases while 90 percent pay a flat rate for waste
25

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

148

1
2 collection disconnected from the amount of waste they
3 generate. Additionally, there is a lack of
4 infrastructure for compost in the city and its
5 environment. As far as I know since the potentially
6 composting facility was shut down by the state of
7 Delaware in 2015 there is now only one commercial
8 composting facility available to some of the New York
9 City haulers. We would like to see far greater
10 investment in this infrastructure which in turn will
11 bring the creation of good green jobs. There are many
12 farms particularly dairy farms in neighboring
13 counties who have no succession plan or cannot afford
14 to stay in business. It seems to me that we could
15 help the regional farm and food economy by creating
16 organic composting facilities on nearby farms to help
17 families keep the land in some form of agricultural
18 use. We are hopeful that the reforms underway will
19 provide a major opportunity to address the problems
20 with New York City's commercial waste system across
21 the board by enabling a robust transparent composting
22 recycling system fair consistent and transparent
23 pricing for all businesses of all sizes and the
24 creation of green jobs. Thank you so much for your
25 time.

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

149

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Alessandro?

ALESSANDRO CIARI: Hello Committee Chair,
thank you so much for having me and thank you so much
for holding the zero-waste hearing, it's really
important to have this in order to push forward the
discussion in New York City. Thank you so much. What
I have... I come from the Manhattan SWAB and also the
Brooklyn SWAB, I volunteer for both and what I have
here is an... DP... a, a policy brief focused on the EPS
of the polystyrene ban and also focusing on 1480 and
also 1596 and what this also serves as is a letter
showing the support of different businesses in New
York City for the ban on polystyrene. The undersigned
food service establishments and other businesses have
joined together to strongly oppose Intro 1480, a bill
that would designate poly... expanded polystyrene
commonly known as Styrofoam as recyclable. The
restaurant and business communities have voiced
instead to support Intro 1596, a bill to restrict the
sale and use of EPS foam food containers in New York
City. A ban of EPS is the only solution to stem the
tide of the major public health problems of EPS use
disposal and contamination. The New York City
Department of Sanitation recently concluded that the

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

150

1
2 recycling... that recycling polystyrene foam in New
3 York City cannot be accomplished in an economically
4 feasible and environmentally effective manner. In
5 addition, the extensive, extensive shipment and
6 collection of EPS disproportionately impacts low
7 income and communities of color where truck dependent
8 transfer stations are clustered and along the truck
9 routes used to haul garbage. The... to achieve waste
10 equity and environmental justice New York City needs
11 strong policies to minimize the impact of traffic and
12 pollution in these neighborhoods like you had
13 mentioned before New York City is facing extremely
14 terrible rates of asthma and this is one of the ways
15 to help stem that issue... to help fix that. It is
16 highly attainable for food service establishments to
17 use alternatives to EPS containers as there are many
18 alternatives to EPS that can be recycled properly
19 such as paper products, cardboard, and reusable
20 plastic containers. After the previous 2013 city
21 council proceedings to ban EPS in New York City many
22 food service establishments have already... have
23 already removed these products from their food
24 packaging order inventory in order to serve current
25 consumer demands and to stay ahead of the law. One of

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

151

1 the first questions that I get from everybody..
2 anybody regarding this ban is hasn't it already been
3 banned yet, so there already is a shift going away
4 from Styrofoam in New York City without a doubt. In
5 order to have an equitable transition to an EPS ban.
6 Intro 1596 details how certain businesses can apply
7 for a renewable financial hardship waiver this will..
8 this will provide ample time for those to find
9 alternatives to EPS products at an affordable.. at an
10 affordable cost. Now according to trash free waters,
11 Maryland who evaluates the effect of.. the impact of
12 the EPS ban in, in the Washington D.C. area every
13 business has been able to find an affordable
14 alternative and not one business has applied for a
15 waiver, not one. With the progress already made in
16 New York City and the rest of the country already
17 there should be no concern for making a successful
18 transition. The undersigned businesses in the rest of
19 the packet that I gave you stand up to the plastics
20 foam lobby to defend the true interests of New York
21 City. The purpose of banning EPS is to contribute to
22 one of the goals of OneNYC which is for New York City
23 to reach zero waste by 2030. If we are to step
24 forward with more sustainable materials we will be
25

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

152

1
2 taking a step forward in being a healthy and more
3 lasting society and in addition to this, this letter
4 which have 68 businesses signed on a majority of
5 which are small businesses, local businesses that are
6 from different boroughs all over New York City;
7 Queens, Upper Manhattan, Lower Manhattan, Brooklyn as
8 well they've, they've shown a lot of support for this
9 and shown that they've already started to use other
10 alternatives. And currently we need... and we also have
11 another sign on letter that we've already submitted
12 in the past of 50 different organizations that also
13 support the ban on Styrofoam and we have already
14 surpassed what the plastics foam lobby had already
15 submitted as supporting restaurants, we have
16 surpassed that support. And currently there are 13
17 sponsors for city council... of city council for 1596
18 for the ban and there are currently 16 sponsors for
19 the city council for 1480, the one that we are
20 opposing and we really look forward to that changing
21 and working with more members of city council to make
22 sure that this is going to be banned in the near
23 future, thank you very much for your time.

24 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you very
25 much, as we all know achieving zero waste is going

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

153

1
2 to... we're going to have to really think about how we
3 do polystyrene and also plastic bags, those are going
4 to be big parts of this and I appreciate your
5 testimony, thank you so much for your testimony to
6 the panel and now for our last panel here we have
7 Jacquelyn Ottman, Maggie Clark and Adriana Espinoza.
8 Alright. From your right to left, there you go.

9 ADRIANA ESPINOZA: Good afternoon. My
10 name is Adriana Espinoza, I'm the Manager... [cross-
11 talk]

12 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Is the button on?

13 ADRIANA ESPINOZA: Yep.

14 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Can you just bring...
15 [cross-talk]

16 ADRIANA ESPINOZA: Can you hear me...
17 [cross-talk]

18 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...it closer to
19 yourself, yes, thank you.

20 ADRIANA ESPINOZA: Sure, sure. Better?
21 Okay, my name is Adriana Espinoza, I'm the Manager of
22 the New York City Program at the New York League
23 Conservation Voters. We'd like to thank Chair Reynoso
24 and members of the Sanitation Committee for holding
25 this important hearing on reaching our city's goal of

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

154

1 zero waste to landfills by 2030. This, this goal will
2 require work from all New Yorkers, collaboration of
3 city officials, private industry and buy in from the
4 general public. As of fiscal year 2017, curbside
5 recycling rate, rates are approximately 17.5 percent
6 while this an increase from 2005 it's moving far too
7 slowly to reach the 2030 benchmark of 90 percent.
8 More aggressive actions are necessary to keep us on
9 track. The New York League of Conservation Voters
10 suggests the focus on the following areas. First,
11 invest in public education to improve the low target
12 diversion rates for recyclables and organic waste the
13 city must invest heavily in massive public education
14 campaigns. Current marketing for Vision Zero should
15 serve as a template. This outreach should teach New
16 Yorkers how to properly sort recycle.. recyclables and
17 organics but focusing solely on how is not enough.
18 The campaign should explain why these changes are
19 necessary and make a direct connection to the city's
20 sustainability goals. In addition to traditional
21 marketing, marketing the city should expand its
22 targeted outreach. In particular maintenance staff in
23 large buildings should be seen as key ambassadors,
24 sustainability training for this sector could have an
25

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

155

1
2 exponential impact on diversion rates. Finally, child
3 and use engagement is key, the earlier we can instill
4 the importance of ecofriendly behavior the more
5 likely that they are to carry it into adulthood.
6 Next, triggering behavior change, diverting organic
7 waste from landfills is a critical component of zero
8 by 30 as organics represent 31 percent of residential
9 waste stream. To date however participation rates are
10 strikingly low and city blocks sprinkled with a dozen
11 of half empty brown bins seems to be like a
12 remarkably inefficient way to collect the waste. the
13 prospect of disposing of organics through our sinks
14 should be fully explored as an easier process that
15 could lead to much higher participation rates and
16 lower emissions and curbside pickup. In 2015 NYLCB's
17 education fund released a series of policy
18 recommendations for an effective organic waste
19 program. These recommendations asked to city to
20 maximize the use of anaerobic digestion at DEP's
21 wastewater treatment plants. We urge the Department
22 of Sanitation to work with DEP to make provisions for
23 a high quality organic waste similar to the capacity
24 at New Town Creek and other wastewater treatment
25 plants that could accommodate such material. There

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

156

1
2 are also two programs currently being studied that
3 have great potential for reducing waste into
4 landfills and emissions from truck traffic, first its
5 pursuing franchise zones for commercial waste carters
6 that will result in significantly reduced truck
7 traffic and their associated emissions and a volume
8 based Save as you Throw pricing system would provide
9 an economic incentive for generating less waste and
10 recycling more in stimulating demand. Making
11 substantial progress on diversion rates is futile
12 without regional processing capacity and demand for
13 processed recyclables and, and compost. More focus is
14 needed on developing capacity and incentivizing the
15 private sector to invest in practices like anaerobic
16 digestion at their existing facilities. The city can
17 lead by example in this respect by investing in their
18 anaerobic digestion, bio gas produced from this could
19 be used to fuel the Department of Sanitation's fleet
20 therefore reducing diesel emissions around the city.
21 With the expansion of the city's organics program
22 there will be an abundance of compost and bio gas
23 available. The city should plan ahead for this with
24 policies that can align the demands with supply. A
25 low carbon fuel standard is just one example that can

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

157

1 further the demand for bio gas. I'd like to thank
2 Chair Reynoso and the entire Committee on Sanitation
3 and Solid Waste Management for your leadership and I
4 look forward to working with you all closely moving
5 forward, thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you for your
8 testimony, I appreciate it.

9 MAGGIE CLARKE: I'm Maggie Clarke, PHD,
10 founder of Zero Waste New York and also on the
11 National Recycling Coalition's Disaster Debris
12 Mitigation Committee and Chair of the Waste
13 Prevention Committee of the Manhattan SWAB. By the
14 way since Council Member Kallos was interested in, in
15 new ideas the Waste Prevention Committee has a long
16 list of ideas for which prevention legislation, I
17 hope you're interested too, good. And I thank you
18 also for having this zero-waste hearing and I hope
19 you'll follow up with DSNY on their metrics to see
20 how we are progressing program by program as we move
21 through time. In the past, I'm, I'm going to speak to
22 you about something that nobody else covers. In the
23 past disasters have always meant unplanned,
24 uncoordinated and hasty reactions to natural and
25 manmade disasters resulting in huge amounts of

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

158

1
2 misallocated resources but it doesn't have to be that
3 way. Zero waste principles applied before a disaster
4 strikes and after can massively reduce wasted
5 resources and save lives. So, what can we do towards
6 zero waste disasters? First, we have to respect that
7 flood zones are areas that will with certainty be
8 flooded, create storm debris and possibly of life.
9 The three steps to zero waste in disasters are
10 prevent generation of disaster debris, maximize
11 reuse, recycling and composting after disasters, and
12 minimize disposal and export of waste after
13 disasters. So, why do we want to reduce waste from
14 hurricanes and flooding just to be more specific,
15 we're in that season now? Flooding is getting worse
16 not only because of climate change but the existence
17 of buildings and streets in the flood plain prevents
18 infiltration of the water and makes water go higher
19 and farther. The cost in dollars and lives is higher
20 with every new disaster because we are building more
21 and more in flood zones, we must stop building in the
22 flood zones. How do we prevent waste in disasters,
23 prevention is the most effective way to manage a
24 disaster, we need to be prepared before it happens.
25 New York needs to create a plan to stop building more

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

159

1
2 structures in the flood plains, we need a law in
3 zoning that supports this. Many localities have such
4 legislation including Jacksonville, Sacramento, and
5 Los Angeles according to the American Planning
6 Association. Then we need to stop rebuilding in flood
7 zones after disasters, instead we should institute
8 programs that cover the entire 100-year flood zone
9 that enforces a government buyout of damaged
10 properties rather than the spotty voluntary buyouts
11 that occurred in a few places like Staten Island
12 after Sandy, it's insane to keep rebuilding. Finally,
13 we need to create a plan to reuse, recycle and
14 compost as much as possible so we're ready when the
15 next storm hits, we need to educate the public to
16 have separate debris piles at the curb to enable
17 recycling and composting as much waste as possible;
18 vegetative debris, metal, hazardous waste,
19 electronics are a few. The city needs to have
20 preplanned contracts to go into effect to collect the
21 separate resource streams and bring them to market.
22 For what is left the city should not engage in the
23 highly polluting open burning as was done at Floyd
24 Bennett Field after Sandy. I have more information
25 for you in the two references that I put there in the

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

160

1
2 written copy. I hope the council can ask DSNY for
3 data on what percentage of disaster waste is reused,
4 recycled and composted and to set up educational
5 contractual and infrastructure programs to address
6 this. And finally, just to respond to what I heard
7 earlier today, to reach zero waste we must strive for
8 100 percent participation as well as 100 percent
9 targeting. DSNY reports that they spend about 53
10 cents per capita on education, I did the math, they
11 don't see that they're in competition with the
12 advertising industry that spends billions to get
13 people to buy more and more all the time. DSNY needs
14 to work seriously towards 100 percent participation
15 not 53 cents per person, that's not even... what is
16 that... the cost of a postage stamp. So, thank you
17 again and I, I hope that this will be the first of
18 many zero waste hearings.

19 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: It will... it will
20 be, thank you for this information. We're going to
21 try to get into more detail in the future as to what
22 parts of zero waste we want to pay attention to and
23 really hammer home and we'll see what that looks like
24 in the... in the coming months but thank you for your
25 testimony.

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

161

JACQUELYN OTTMAN: Good afternoon

Chairman Reynoso and distinguished guests. My name is Jacki Ottman, I'm an expert in the area of Green Marketing. My 40 years of experience includes over a decade working at New York City advertising agencies. The Department of Sanitation has in place many laudable programs to make it easy for residents to divert a host of recyclable items from the waste stream however infrastructure alone cannot guarantee compliance and neither can the stick of enforcement. As you Chairman and others have stated today New York City's 8.5 million residents and millions of tourists and visitors must be motivated to recycle and take other steps to reduce waste. Only a massive advertising marketing and outreach campaign can reinforce the why and how necessary to make reduce, reuse and recycle a core value of our consumption culture. Planning for such a campaign must begin with an updated understanding of what New Yorkers know and feel about the city's recycling program. Surprisingly if not shockingly no large-scale market research has been conducted since 2005 to track New Yorkers recycling related awareness, attitudes, understanding, and habits. In the interim much has

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

162

1
2 changed, many more items are now being collected for
3 recycling including organics. Four hundred thousand
4 NYCHA residents and employees of large firms have
5 access to recycling but little relevant education and
6 a new generation of recyclers has grown up without
7 the social force of a public campaign. Meanwhile and
8 I want to really underscore this, attitudes have
9 changed some with the potential to seriously
10 undermine our efforts to get to zero waste. Recently
11 published market research shows that skepticism runs
12 highest especially among millennials that whatever is
13 collected for recycling will actually be recycled.
14 Research also shows that recycling can actually
15 encourage consumers to waste, want to feel less
16 guilty about buying bottled water, easy just remind
17 yourself that bottle is recyclable, there's hope. We
18 here in New York City have what it takes to develop a
19 compelling marketing and outreach campaign and for a
20 fraction of the 400 million dollars we spend each
21 year to export our waste. Our advertising and media
22 community is capable of tapping into New Yorkers
23 pride that ours is the greatest city in the world.
24 The long running, I love New York campaign is proof,
25 the creativity in environmental passions of today's

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

163

1
2 millennials can be enlisted to create viral bound
3 videos, hashtags, imagery and more that can make the
4 daily and unseemly aspects of sorting our waste cool.
5 Three other opportunities to outreach cost
6 effectively also exists. Local businesses thanks to
7 changes in commercial recycling laws local employers
8 have a new role to play in engaging their employees
9 in proper recycling and waste reduction practices.
10 Opportunities may exist to leverage their training
11 budgets to require compulsory recycling education for
12 large New York City employers with results in
13 learning transferred into homes and families. Local
14 schools, waste education could be integrated into
15 STEM education with the goal of instilling in
16 students a sense for the issues involved in wasting
17 food as well as other resources including water.
18 Waste reduction and recycling and reuse should be
19 explicitly linked to carbon balance and climate
20 change lessons. Real estate sector, lease agreements
21 requiring acknowledgment of recycling laws could be
22 become mandatory. An opportunity may also exist to
23 make recycling education mandatory for property
24 managers, landlords, co-op and condo boards and
25 building superintendents. Who should be responsible,

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID

WASTE MANAGEMENT

164

1
2 we believe the Mayor's Office of Sustainability's,
3 GreenNYC group would be ideally suited to overseeing
4 such a campaign. It can all start by convening a high
5 level zero waste marketing advertising, advertised,
6 advisory board including senior executives both
7 active and retired of major firms capable of helping
8 us tap into the best talent in the city. For the
9 record, I'm submitting this testimony with more
10 details and ideas attached. Thanks for allowing me to
11 submit this testimony, thank you for having this
12 hearing.

13 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you so much,
14 this is... that was the last piece of testimony here,
15 thank you so much for this hearing, you guys are
16 amazing and now this meeting is adjourned.

17 [gavel]

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

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

September 23, 2017