

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE  
MANAGEMENT

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March 6, 2018  
Start: 10:16 a.m.  
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HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Committee Rm.  
16<sup>th</sup> Fl.

B E F O R E: ANTONIO REYNOSO  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Fernando Cabrera  
Chaim M. Deutsch  
Rafael L. Espinal, Jr.  
Paul A. Vallone

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

Corinne Schiff, Deputy Commissioner  
Environmental Health  
NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Kathryn Garcia, Commissioner  
City of New York Department of Sanitation, DSNY

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE  
2 MANAGEMENT

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4 [sound check, pause] [gavel]

5 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Good morning. I am  
6 Council Member Antonio Reynoso, the Chair of the  
7 Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management.  
8 [coughs] Thank you for attending today's hearing.  
9 I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome all the new  
10 Council members of the committee and look forward to  
11 working over the next four years together. Today, we  
12 will be discussing a package of bills aimed to  
13 mitigate the impact that rats have on the residents  
14 of NYC. Nearly all New Yorkers have sighted rats in  
15 school playgrounds, parks, community gardens, subway  
16 stations, construction sites and sidewalks, but we  
17 know that some communities are more affected than  
18 others. Examining the way that we dispose of garbage  
19 and food waste in particular is of particular  
20 concern. The package includes eight bills: Proposed  
21 Intro No. 203-A sponsored by Council Member Matteo, a  
22 Local Law to amend the Administrative Code of the  
23 City of New York in relation to increasing penalties  
24 for littering. Another preconsidered intro with no  
25 number yet sponsored by Council Member Miller, a  
Local Law to amend the Administrative Code in the  
City of New York in relation to unlawful dumping and

1 the improper placement of this kind of material.

2 Another preconsidered intro by Council Member Chin is

3 one that could also amend the Administrative Code of

4 the City of New York in relation to requiring the

5 cleaning of liquid generated by trash placed curbside

6 for collection, another preconsidered Intro by

7 Council Member Chin, would amend the Administrative

8 Code of the City of New York in relation to rat

9 mitigation zones. Another intro sponsored by Council

10 Member Cumbo, a law that would—in relation to organic

11 waste requirements applicable to food service

12 establishments—establishments, food manufacturers and

13 food wholesalers in rat mitigation zones and another

14 sponsored by Public Advocate Tish James, a law in

15 relation to abating rodents as a requirement for the

16 issuance of certain construction permits. Another

17 intro by me, a law that would amend the

18 Administrative Code of City of New York in relation

19 to rat mitigation progress in rat mitigation zones

20 and the last one, another bill by Matteo in relation

21 to evidence of all unlawful dumping. It's a lot of

22 bills related to rats. I look forward to hearing

23 testimony from the Administration about their current

24 work on that mitigation, and their thoughts on these

1 bills to control ordinance in New York City. I also  
2 anticipate valuable feedback from advocates and  
3 members of the public and would like to remind  
4 everyone that we will accept testimony for three days  
5 after this hearing. I will now turn it over to any  
6 of the sponsors who wish to make opening statements  
7 here, and seeing none, I'll turn it over to the  
8 Commissioner of the Department of Sanitation, the  
9 Kathryn Garcia.  
10

11 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: I'm actually going  
12 to let my colleagues from the Health Department do  
13 the deep dive first, and then I will take—I will take  
14 over.

15 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Okay, and we're  
16 just going to—yes, we're going to swear you in.

17 LEGAL COUNSEL: Would you please raise  
18 your right hand. Do you affirm to tell the truth,  
19 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in your  
20 testimony before today, and to answer Council Member  
21 questions honestly?

22 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Yes.

23 LEGAL COUNSEL: Thank you.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHIFF: Good morning  
25 Chairperson Reynoso and members of the Committee on

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE  
MANAGEMENT

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1 Sanitation and Solid Waste Management. I'm Corinne  
2 Schiff, Deputy Commissioner for Environmental Health  
3 at the New York City Department of Health and Mental  
4 Hygiene. On behalf of Commissioner Bassett thank you  
5 for the opportunity to testify on the Mayor's  
6 Neighborhood Rat Reduction Initiative. In July 2017,  
7 Mayor de Blasio announced a \$32 million multi-agency  
8 effort to reduce the rat population in neighborhoods  
9 with the highest burden of rat activity. The  
10 initiative built on decades of rat control work at  
11 the Health Department, and relies on evidence based  
12 practices to target the most infested areas of the  
13 city. Rats thrive when they have ready access to  
14 food and water, a place to live and effective  
15 transportation routes. That means that reducing the  
16 rat population requires managing garbage, eliminating  
17 nesting areas and repairing cracks in holes inside  
18 lots and buildings. Safe targeted baiting is a final  
19 piece of an effective integrated pest management  
20 program known as IPM. Rats do not observe the  
21 property lines we've created or distinguished between  
22 public and private ownership, nor do they operate  
23 during business hours. We all know that rats come  
24 out at night. To be successful then everyone in the  
25

1 neighborhood must work together across our usual  
2 boundaries and in times and places that matter most  
3 to rats. The department's approach to rat control is  
4 multi-pronged and data driven. In our Rat Indexing  
5 Program inspectors walk block by block to check every  
6 property for signs of rats and conditions conducive  
7 to rats. We also inspect properties in response to  
8 complaints. When rat signs or rat conditions are  
9 observed, property owners receive Commissioner's  
10 orders requiring them to remediate, and if they fail  
11 to comply are issued violations subject to fines.  
12 Our licensed pest management professionals conducted  
13 exterminations, and in our Rodent Academy we offer  
14 free classes for property owners and managers to  
15 learn to IPM techniques. We publish guidance  
16 materials in multiple languages on rat reduction and  
17 prevention and we make inspection results available  
18 online on the rat information portal. Our inspection  
19 data enables the department to analyze which  
20 neighborhoods in the city carry the heaviest rat  
21 burdens. Using those data and knowing that that  
22 successfully combatting rats requires collaboration.  
23 In 2015, the department dramatically expanded its  
24 pilot Rat Reservoir program to bring enhanced rat  
25

1 control to 45 communities across the city. A rat  
2 reservoir is an area that provides an ideal eco  
3 system for rats. Even if a significant number of  
4 rats are eliminated, the rat population is quickly  
5 replenished making long lasting reduction especially  
6 challenging. In each rat reservoir our inspector  
7 conducts a detailed block-by-block survey of rat  
8 activity and conditions that can support rats, and a  
9 case manager trains building managers in IPM, works  
10 with business improvement districts to address litter  
11 and activate neighborhood businesses, works with  
12 sister agencies to address issues on private  
13 property, and provides technical assistance to  
14 property owners ordered to remediate. Where a  
15 property owner fails to comply with the  
16 Commissioner's order to conduct baiting, the  
17 department's pest management professionals will  
18 conduct those exterminations and bill the owner for  
19 the work. The Rat Reservoir Program has had  
20 excellent results. In just over two years, 10 of the  
21 45 rat reservoirs, more than 20% launched in 2015  
22 have graduated, and we've achieved an 80% reduction  
23 of rat signs and conditions conducive to rats in 15  
24 of the parks within the rat reservoirs. We continue  
25

1 to monitor areas that have been graduated to ensure  
2 that reductions in rat activity are maintained. We  
3 know that some areas of the city, though, need even  
4 more intensive support to address the underlying  
5 structural and behavioral conditions that support  
6 high rat populations. In July of 2017, the city  
7 launched the Neighborhood Rat Reduction Initiative,  
8 which expanded the areas of focus around 15  
9 reservoirs located in core areas of the Bronx,  
10 Brooklyn and Lower Manhattan. These three areas, the  
11 Grand Concourse in the Bronx, Bushwick and Bedford-  
12 Stuyvesant in Brooklyn and the East Villager, Lower  
13 East Side and Chinatown in Manhattan have higher  
14 rates of rat activity than other areas of the city.  
15 The Neighborhood Rat Reduction Initiative includes a  
16 renewed focus on reducing rat activity within NYCHA  
17 developments around schools and in parks in these  
18 designated areas, and has a broad focus on reducing  
19 rats' access to food. The Mayor's Neighborhood Rat  
20 Reduction Initiative brings together multiple city  
21 agencies to provide that concentrated effort. This  
22 portfolio of work includes improving garbage  
23 management through increased pickups, placement of  
24 rat proof and rat resistant waste containers in parks  
25

1 and on sidewalks, placing new trash compactors in  
2 NYCHA developments, and improving school garbage  
3 management. Under the initiative a stoppage team is  
4 repairing cracks and holes to make it harder for rats  
5 to emerge above ground and concrete rat paths will  
6 cover dirt basement floors in NYCHA to eliminate  
7 nesting areas. Multi-agency inspections in buildings  
8 with significant rat activity are holding private  
9 property owners accountable, and targeted  
10 exterminations in parks and other city-owned  
11 infrastructure will help eliminate rats. We were  
12 excited to announce just yesterday that the Health  
13 Department is launching dry ice extermination in  
14 Parks, a method that promises to be extremely  
15 effective at killing rats quickly and painlessly  
16 while also avoiding secondary effects on wild life  
17 such as hawks. We are confident that this  
18 comprehensive effort to address neighborhoods  
19 burdened by high rat activity will achieve long-term  
20 improvements, but we can only truly succeed if  
21 everyone works together. This suite of legislation  
22 to be introduced will support key parts of the  
23 program and it's fundamental to its success. We want  
24 to thank the Council for being a critical partner in  
25

1 this exciting initiative. Thank you again for the  
2 opportunity to testify. I would be happy to take  
3 questions. Commissioner Garcia will first address  
4 the legislation under consideration today.  
5

6 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Good morning Chair  
7 Reynoso and members of this City Council Committee on  
8 Sanitation and Solid Waste Management and welcome  
9 back from paternity leave. I am Kathryn Garcia,  
10 Commissioner of the New York City Department of  
11 Sanitation, and I'm thrilled to have a lot of new  
12 committee members. I think we'll be able to do some  
13 exciting things over the next four years. Thank you  
14 for this opportunity to testify on the city's efforts  
15 to fight rats through the Mayor's Neighborhood Rat  
16 Reduction Initiative, including the package of bills  
17 under consideration today. As Deputy Commissioner  
18 Schiff laid out. This initiative targets three areas  
19 of the city with the highest prevalence of rat  
20 activity including the Grand Concourse in the Bronx,  
21 Chinatown, East Village, the Lower East Side in  
22 Manhattan and Bushwick Bedford-Stuyvesant in  
23 Brooklyn. This interagency initiative aims to reduce  
24 rat activity by up to 70% in the targeted zones by  
25 minimizing food sources and available habitats. DSNY

1 is proud to join with our sister agencies to step out  
2 the fight against rats in New York City. I think this  
3 may be one thing all New Yorkers agree on is the  
4 dislike of rats. This approach is unique because we  
5 are focused not only on eliminating rats through  
6 extermination, which the Health Department and other  
7 agencies will continue to do, but we are also  
8 deploying a broad set of strategies to eliminate  
9 conditions that allow rats to thrive. The best way  
10 to eliminate rats is to deprive them of food  
11 including garbage in homes, and litter on New York  
12 City Streets. To this end, earlier this month DSNY  
13 completed replacing all remaining open wire mesh  
14 litter baskets in these zones with rat resistant  
15 steel cans or compacting solar trash cans, which  
16 should meaningfully reduce rats' access to food  
17 sources compared to the current wire baskets. DSNY  
18 has also increased the litter basket service and  
19 residential service in the most critical areas within  
20 the targeted areas. Additionally, DSNY is part of a  
21 multi-agency initiative that is targeting private  
22 buildings along side DOHMH, Department of Buildings  
23 and HPD to identify conditions that contribute to rat  
24 infestation, order owners to make repairs and issue  
25

1 violations when warranted. DSNY, DOHMH and the  
2 Mayor's Office have also worked to develop  
3 comprehensive strategies to reduce rodent activity on  
4 city property in partnership with the Parks  
5 Department, the Department of Education and the New  
6 York Housing Authority. In addition, DSNY is focused  
7 on outreach and enforcement to promote waste  
8 management best practices including separating  
9 organic waste. Just yesterday we launched our first  
10 Bronx cohort of large apartment buildings  
11 participating in organics collection including more  
12 than 150 building in the Bronx Rat Mitigation zone.  
13 The proposed legislation considered by the committee  
14 today will help the city achieve these goals and will  
15 promote a healthier, safer, cleaner New York for all.  
16 I would like to briefly discuss the legislation under  
17 consideration by the Committee today. The first  
18 piece of legislation sponsored by the Chair, amends  
19 Title 17 of the Administrative Code to require the  
20 Health Department to submit an annual report on the  
21 progress of rodent mitigation in rat  
22 mitigation zones designated by the Health Department.  
23 The Administration supports this proposal and looks  
24 forward to working with the Council to identify the  
25

1 appropriate timing and content for such reports.

2 Council Member Chin has sponsored legis-legislation

3 that would amend Section 16-120 of the Administrative

4 Code to require buildings with nine or more dwelling

5 units located at any rat mitigation zone to place

6 their refuse and recyclables out for DSNY collection

7 after 4:00 a.m. on the scheduled day of pickup.

8 Currently, DSNY rules allow refuse and recycling to

9 be placed out for collection no earlier than 4:00

10 p.m. the day prior to collection. However, this

11 means that waste can be set up for more than 12 hours

12 overnight, exposed to the elements and offering a

13 plentiful food source to rats. As Deputy

14 Commissioner Schiff mentioned, rats are most active

15 at night. The Department supports this bill, which

16 would greatly reduce the time that garbage is placed

17 out for collection on city sidewalks and reduce

18 access to one of the greatest food sources for rats

19 in the identified districts. The third piece of

20 legislation sponsored by Council Member Cumbo

21 requires all food service establishments, food

22 manufacturers and food wholesalers located in a rate

23 mitigation zone regardless of square footage to

24 source separate and recycle organic waste in

25

1  
2 accordance with DSNY's rules relating to the  
3 recycling of commercial organic waste. This would be  
4 in addition to those entities already designated by  
5 rule pursuant to Local Law 146 of 2013. Such  
6 requirements include that all organic waste be placed  
7 in containers and have a lid and latch, lock or other  
8 fastening or sealing mechanism or cord that keeps the  
9 lids closed and is resistant to tampering by rodents  
10 or other wild life. The department supports this  
11 bill. The next piece of legislation Intro 203-A  
12 would increase the fines for repeat violators of the  
13 city's littering law found in Section 16-1181-A of  
14 the Administrative Code. This Council Member Matteo  
15 sponsored legislation would increase the minimum  
16 penalties for a second, third and subsequent offense  
17 within that 12-month period. While DSNY supports the  
18 intent of this legislation to increase penalties for  
19 persistent litterers, unfortunately such repeat  
20 violations are difficult for our agent and officers  
21 to issue and personally serve. The department look  
22 forward to working with the City Council to improve  
23 the efficacy of our Littering Law. The next bill  
24 under consideration by the committee today also  
25 sponsored by Council Member Chin would require food

1 service establishments to hose down the sidewalks and  
2 curbs when liquids leak onto the sidewalks from waste  
3 that has been collected. The law currently requires  
4 that commercial establish clean the sidewalk in the  
5 area extending 18 inches into the street of all  
6 debris at two designated times during the day.

7 Additionally, DSNY can issue violations for spillage  
8 conditions at any time, i.e. when the garbage is sort  
9 of strewn around on the sidewalk. However, this  
10 legislation would place an affirmative requirement on  
11 the food establishment to clean the sidewalk in  
12 accordance with the parameters set forth in the  
13 legislation. The administration looks forward to  
14 working with the City Council to ensure that our  
15 sidewalks remain clean without causing any issues  
16 with our sewer system. Public Advocate James is the  
17 sponsor the next bill under consideration today,  
18 which provides that no new building or alteration  
19 permit shall be issued or renewed for a site located  
20 in a rat mitigation zone designated by the Department  
21 of Health and Mental Hygiene unless the applicant  
22 demonstrates to the Department of Buildings that  
23 rodent abatement measures acceptable to the Health  
24 Department have been taken at such site. While  
25

1 demolition companies are already required to hire  
2 licensed exterminators to perform pre-demolition  
3 extermination, the Administration is open to working  
4 with the Council and our Public Advocate to address  
5 the issues related to rat activity in and around  
6 construction sites. Now we will turn to the topic of  
7 illegal dumping and improper disposal, which are  
8 important topics for DSNY. Section 16-119 of the  
9 Administrative Code currently prohibits any persons  
10 to dump any amount of material that is transported in  
11 a motor vehicle to be dumped in any public or  
12 privately area. Over the past few years DSNY  
13 enforcement personnel have observed an increase in  
14 the incidents of illegal dumping throughout the city.  
15 In order for DSNY to issue a violation, DSNY must  
16 actually observe the material being unloaded from a  
17 dump truck or other vehicle being illegally. DSNY  
18 believes that increasing the criminal and civil  
19 penalties imposed for the act of illegal dumping will  
20 significantly help deter this unscrupulous activity  
21 by individuals wishing to avoid payment of proper  
22 disposal costs for their unwanted material. In  
23 addition under Section 16.128 of the Administrative  
24 Code, DSNY has the authority to issue summonses  
25

1 [coughs] to persons who dispose of their household or  
2 commercial refuse in public litter baskets. This  
3 provision also contains a rebuttable presumption that  
4 any name or other identifying information indicated  
5 among the contents improperly disposed of is of the  
6 person responsible for the unlawful placing of such  
7 material in the public receptacle. This allows DSNY  
8 to issue violations to such persons without having to  
9 directly observe the violation occurring. However,  
10 DSNY can currently only issue these violations when a  
11 person improperly disposes of his or her refuse  
12 directly into the litter basket, but not the area  
13 surrounding or along side the litter basket. The  
14 expansion of the rebuttable presumption to cover  
15 household or commercial refuse improperly placed in  
16 other publicly or privately owned areas will give  
17 DSNY another important tool to combat this quality of  
18 life issue. This piece of legislation will enhance  
19 DSNY's goal of curbing illegal dumping and improper  
20 disposal in New York City as well as reduce the  
21 potential food sources for rats. Thank you for this  
22 opportunity to testify. My colleagues and I will now  
23 be happy to answer your questions.  
24

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you,  
3 Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner. I just want to  
4 acknowledge we've been joined by Council Member  
5 Cabrera, Council Member Deutsch and the Public  
6 Advocate Letitia James. I'll ask you a couple of  
7 questions, and then I'll offer my colleagues to ask  
8 questions. Is the city concerned that this will push  
9 rats in neighborhoods just outside the mitigation  
10 zone? Is that a concern?

11 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: I mean I'm certain  
12 that the Health Department will be watching that, but  
13 the whole idea here is that we are going go get rid  
14 of them, not send them to a new neighborhood. I  
15 don't know if you have anything to add.

16 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: No, that sounds  
17 good. I don't have know anything more iconic than  
18 the New York City rat outside of like the Statue of  
19 Liberty. Those are just things that-that's just  
20 things we--things we know, but it's not because we  
21 like them they they're--

22 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: [interposing]  
23 Right.

24 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: --that--that we know  
25 that they're New York, but they are very New York.

1 Is the city on target to meet its goal of a 70%  
2 reduction of rat activity by the end of 2018 in the  
3 three areas identified in the Mayor's \$32 million Rat  
4 Mitigation Plan?  
5

6 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: I mean we—we have  
7 just really begun this work. So, we are tracking all  
8 of the metrics. So, we feel that we are on target to  
9 really that number down to the 70%, and as you heard  
10 before, the Health Department has been very  
11 successful when they have done targeted work in rat  
12 reservoirs of graduating them out of the program.  
13 So, we are hopeful that we can graduate these  
14 neighborhoods out of the program.

15 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Okay, and just of  
16 our own--

17 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: [interposing] And  
18 we will be reporting to you.

19 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Yeah, that's the  
20 reporting document, and let us know if we're making  
21 any progress on that. I think that's very important  
22 that we don't need to wait for committee hearings to  
23 know the progress that we're making in those zones.  
24 So, I'm excited about that.  
25

1  
2                   COMMISSIONER GARCIA: I would encourage  
3 you if you if you really want to go deep on rats is  
4 the Health Department has a whole web portal with  
5 maps and you can drill down to your block in your  
6 neighborhood and find out how many buildings have  
7 failed their inspections or commercial  
8 establishments.

9                   CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Like restaurants?

10                  COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Like restaurants.

11                  CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Okay.

12                  COMMISSIONER GARCIA: So, I was like oh,  
13 maybe that's why the restaurant not too far from my  
14 house closed recently. So, there's a lot of  
15 information there that I think, you know, just have  
16 time your hands.

17                  CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Okay. Well, from  
18 my own personal experience being—having a couple of  
19 buildings in the right mitigation zone as well or I  
20 want to say the—the plan that was put forth that like  
21 six months ago I want to say.

22                  COMMISSIONER GARCIA: I think it was in  
23 July. I'm not--

24                  CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Okay.  
25

1  
2                   COMMISSIONER GARCIA:  --I don't totally  
3 remember.  I think like it was summer time.

4                   CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO:  It's been great  
5 progress in Highland Houses and Bushwick Houses when  
6 it comes to how we've addressed those issues.  So, if  
7 that is being expanded anywhere I-I-I think the New  
8 York City is going to be very happy with how we're-  
9 we're addressing this rat issue.  I do have a couple  
10 more questions because I really want to allow for my  
11 colleagues to-to ask some questions.  How would be  
12 the public be educated about rat mitigation measures  
13 that they can take?  Is there going to be a public  
14 education campaign?

15                   COMMISSIONER GARCIA:  So, beyond the Rat  
16 Academy that the Health Department holds on a regular  
17 basis across the city, which is in high demand, they  
18 are doing and adverting campaign in those districts  
19 to help educate people and, of course, if some of  
20 this legislation passed, there will be additional  
21 outreach to tell people about what their  
22 responsibilities are.

23                   CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO:  So, can we expand  
24 on it?  A lot of folks don't know what the--the Rat  
25

1 Academy is. You don't—you don't come out a rat from  
2 the Academy? So--

3  
4 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: I'm going to let  
5 the Health Department answer exactly what is in the  
6 Rat Academy.

7 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Okay.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHIFF: Sure. Thank  
9 you for that question. We know you've been a  
10 supporter of the Rat Academy. I've taken it myself.  
11 It's really a terrific class. We offer them at least  
12 monthly sometimes more than—more than monthly.  
13 We're—we're very interested in working with Council  
14 Members to sponsor them in your district. They're  
15 free. They are for property managers and they really  
16 teach the—the ins and outs of—of integrative pest  
17 management and how to properly manage trash. We are  
18 also holding them for—for tenant leaders. So, we'd be  
19 happy to follow up with you to—to sponsor additional  
20 Rat Academies in—in any of your Council districts.

21 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: The first one I saw  
22 was in Chinatown that I went to Chinatown to see and  
23 it was unbelievable. It was—it was packed in there.  
24 I didn't think people would be that interested, but  
25 obviously they are. So, now I just want to allow for

1  
2 my colleagues to ask some questions. I want to  
3 actually first acknowledge that we've been joined by  
4 Council Member Rafael Espinal, and also I want to  
5 know if the Public Advocate had a statement to make  
6 given that she is a sponsor of one of the pieces of  
7 legislation.

8 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: [off mic] I'm  
9 just referring to the members of the Council.

10 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Okay, beautiful.  
11 Thank you. Thank you, Public Advocate. So, allow  
12 for Council Member Cabrera from the Bronx.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Thank you so  
14 much, Mr. Chair and thank you so much that you only  
15 asked two questions and allowed us to come in early.  
16 I really appreciate it also. It shows the  
17 leadership. So-

18 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: [interposing] This  
19 is the fun committee.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: I-I-that's why  
21 I'm-I'm in. Commissioner, I was a little curious as  
22 to your response when the-when [laughs] when the  
23 Chair asked you the fear that we have that if rats  
24 don't find food because of the great work that you're  
25 doing in a particular area that we hope they don't

1 move to another area, but the reality is, you know,  
2 just like it was mentioned earlier that they're  
3 looking for water, they're looking for food, and so  
4 they're going to look some place else just like  
5 humans. So, how-how do we track that? Is there a  
6 way to track if there's movement? Do you have-do you  
7 have like a tracker that shows increased activity in  
8 certain areas as a result of your efforts and you  
9 know the area?

11 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: I'm going to let  
12 the Health Department answer that because I mean I  
13 actually think that what they're doing on tracking  
14 and indexing and how very data focused they are,  
15 would actually allow you to see if we thought that  
16 there was something changing radically across a  
17 district line.

18 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: That's good.

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHIFF: Thank you.  
20 Yes, we-so we have a lot of data collection. We also  
21 just want to make-make sure that everyone is aware  
22 that, you know, in addition to the-to the zones, we-  
23 that doesn't mean we abandon the rest of our work.  
24 The department conducts, you know, 100,000 rat  
25 inspections every year. We do indexing. We've done

1 indexing in a substantial percentage of the city.

2 So, the—the mitigation zones, the—the intense work

3 will happen there, but that doesn't mean that our

4 work across the rest the city will—will stop. We

5 respond to all 311 complaints about—about rats and we

6 do very—we have a very robust data collection and we

7 will be monitoring exactly that.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: So, we don't

9 know yet, right? It's too early?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHIFF: We—we don't

11 think—we don't think that a concentrated effort in

12 these zones so that as Commissioner Garcia said our

13 goal is not to move rats, our goal is to exterminate

14 rats, and to eliminate the conditions that allow for

15 rat activity.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Now, one of the

17 concerns that some of my constituents especially

18 homeowners have expressed is that they no longer want

19 to call in when they see an increased population of

20 rats due to let's say construction next to them

21 because when somebody shows up to—to ticket and they

22 see rats in their property, they end up getting a

23 fine. Is there any way that, you know, for example if

24 I were to call in and say I'm trying to be helpful

1 here as a result of, you know, whenever there's a  
2 disturbance in a property that have been abandoned  
3 the rats start moving. And I've seen it first hand,  
4 and we have on Sedgwick Avenue, I mean these hug rats  
5 that come across the property. As a matter of fact,  
6 a resident was telling me about it, and she was  
7 telling about it, you know, Mickey Mouse came by and  
8 said hello. Yes, we are here. So, is there—is there  
9 a judgment call that is made when the inspectors come  
10 in?  
11

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHIFF: So, when our  
13 inspectors are out conducting an inspection, they are  
14 looking for signs of rat activity and also the  
15 conditions that are—that are creating that rat  
16 activity. It might be maybe we can follow up with you  
17 about our Rat Academy. That might be, you know, as I  
18 said it really—it really has to be everyone in the  
19 community working together because that rat does not  
20 observe that property line.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Right.

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHIFF: And so, it  
23 may be that we should follow up and—and consider  
24 holding a Rat Academy so that we can help the—the  
25 community members in that area work together.

1

COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Okay.

3

COMMISSIONER GARCIA: What I also want to  
4 add is, and you can correct me if I'm wrong. When a—  
5 when—when a health inspector goes out initially, they  
6 give you a warning basically, and then you need to  
7 mitigate the problem.

8

COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Got you.

9

COMMISSIONER GARCIA: And it's only after  
10 you mitigate—that you fail to mitigate the problem  
11 that there's fines involved. Am I correct about  
12 that?

13

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHIFF: That's

14

right. Thanks for that clarification.

15

COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: That's helpful.

16

COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Yeah, but and the  
17 other thing to think about is that in general, just  
18 from my deep education into the rat world now, you  
19 know, rats don't travel very far from where they're  
20 born.

21

COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Hm.

22

COMMISSIONER GARCIA: So, if we can sort  
23 of contain them and exterminate them, they don't tend  
24 to go off on large journeys, which is why I think  
25 even the New York Times said when they did the DNA

1 coding of the rat population, they were actually  
2 distinct and you could tell the difference between  
3 uptown and downtown.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: That's  
5 interesting.

6 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: They don't actually  
7 usually tend to travel very, very far in their quest  
8 of food or water. Not that they can't, but they  
9 don't tend to.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: So, I'm going to  
11 close with this last question because I want to  
12 follow the lead of the Chair, and not asking a lot of  
13 questions and that is in regards to technology, is  
14 there new technology that you see on the horizon that  
15 you see in our municipalities around the world? Have  
16 we considered breeding more hawks? Is that something  
17 that the Parks Department perhaps had looked at,  
18 something creative because they love to eat rats?  
19 Is-is that-?

20 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: So, I mean I can  
21 defer to the Health Department, but the--the city as  
22 a whole is really focused on anything that anyone is  
23 doing, which is where using the carbon dioxide, the  
24 dry ice as an extermination technique came from, both  
25

1  
2 experiments here and in Chicago that were very, very  
3 effective and in part they're very effective because  
4 they don't kill the hawk. Because when you use great  
5 poisons if they eat a rat then they end up dying as  
6 well, and hawks are great predators--

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Yes.

8 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: --and they are  
9 expanding in their habitat in New York City, but we  
10 can have the Parks Department follow up with you on  
11 their population estimates. But the thing that's  
12 true about rats, which has been true about rats for  
13 hundreds and hundreds of years it's--it's about basic  
14 sanitation. If you get rid of the food and the water  
15 and the ability for them to borough and their ability  
16 to feel safe--I mean one of the reasons they crawl  
17 along buildings is they don't--they--they're designed  
18 to know that there could be a threat form the air.  
19 So, if you remove those opportunities, you can get  
20 real control.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Got you. Thank  
22 you so much, and thank you for all the work that you  
23 do. Mr. Chair, thank you for the time.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you, Council Member Cabrera and I will open it to Council Member Chaim Deutsch from Brooklyn.

COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Thank you. Yes.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: We don't have rats in Brooklyn.

COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: It's the best borough, yeah. [background comments] So, thank you all for coming and this is really a very important hearing. We're all joining forces. So, I know when it comes to the rat population, you know, the last time I tried to kill a rat with a--with a ratchet, it didn't work. So, sometime we'll getting together. So, the question here is for the Commissioner. How many districts throughout New York City currently have organics collection?

COMMISSIONER GARCIA: I believe we are at 22 districts that currently have organics collection, and so for in the areas that are the focus of these particular designations by the Health Department, many of them are not in curbside areas yet, which is why like that one of the areas of the Bronx that's focused on this is where we've actually had had buildings voluntarily join the program.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: And so how many—  
3 how many trucks were redirected from regular trash  
4 pickup or recycling to pick up organics?

5 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: So, it depends on  
6 what the district is that you are in in your  
7 district, almost none because we have changed how we  
8 are doing your collections, and so on one day of the  
9 week you are picked up by the rear loader as you were  
10 before, and on the second portion of the week it's a  
11 split body. So, half refuse have organics, but we  
12 can get you a full documentation of all of the  
13 numbers and where we are in terms of that program.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: So, you're  
15 saying all of the trucks and did you have to bring  
16 them additional trucks or--?

17 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: [interposing] In  
18 certain neighborhoods where we're using both rear  
19 loaders we are—we have additional trucks. In some  
20 areas we reduced the refuse number, and balanced that  
21 against the organics number, but it really is  
22 district by district, and the approach is different  
23 for each one depending on how much refuse they  
24 produced.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: So, those  
3 organic trucks that you're saying you—you didn't  
4 eliminate any trucks. So, those organic trucks that  
5 are picking up organics that usually pick up their  
6 recycling. So, those are the same trucks they use--

7 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: [interposing] So,  
8 we--

9 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: --and so you  
10 don't have any additional trucks that you brought in  
11 just for organics?

12 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: So, in certain  
13 districts there are more trucks that are for  
14 organics. It depends on what the approach was in  
15 terms of how we are rolling out the program, and it  
16 varies in different districts, but we'd be happy to  
17 sit down with you and have an in-depth conversation  
18 about exactly where we were, and where there are more  
19 trucks or less trucks. So that we can make sure that  
20 you have a detailed understanding of that.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Okay, do you  
22 insist to pay for this year's fiscal year to purchase  
23 new mechanical equipment?

24 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Oh, we will  
25 definitely be purchasing new mechanical equipment

1 because we actually worked very hard to with the last  
2 committee to ensure that we had a steady buy of both  
3 rear-loader and dual bin equipment. So, at this  
4 point we feel really good about where we are in terms  
5 of the fleet numbers. It was one thing that took us a  
6 long time to get resolved with OMB and the committee  
7 and—and we're really pretty happy about where we are  
8 at the moment.  
9

10 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Okay, the city,  
11 you—they did mention in their testimony that the city  
12 spent \$32 million to reduce rat pop—the rat  
13 population in 2017. So, I know that's, you know, we  
14 talk about trash collection on the holidays, for  
15 example the holidays come out on a Monday. So, if  
16 someone has trash collection on a Monday, then they  
17 have to keep it out until the following week, and if  
18 someone has recycling on a Monday, then you have to  
19 keep it in until the following week, but if there's a  
20 holiday, two Mondays [coughs] two—two consecutive  
21 weeks, then you have to wait one or two weeks.

22 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: So, so like  
23 there's—there's some specific issues about Monday—  
24 Monday holidays. So, on Mondays if our collection is  
25 on Monday and Thursday, because if your collection is

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MANAGEMENT

35

1 Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, it's going to be  
2 different, but if you are by a Monday, Thursday,  
3 which I am, you put your—your refuse or your  
4 recycling out with the refuse out after 4:00 and we  
5 attempt to get as much of it as we can with the staff  
6 that we have. We do not have the ability with our  
7 current staffing to do 100% of all of Monday and all  
8 of Tuesday on Tuesday. We just don't have enough  
9 people. If it is double backed holidays, on Mondays  
10 for recycling on the second recycling we always go  
11 after that first since they haven't had a collection  
12 to make sure that we get it, but in terms of if  
13 you're Monday and Thursday and we miss you on a  
14 Tuesday, we'll get you on a Thursday. If you're in a  
15 rat district, you're usually Monday, Tuesday,  
16 Wednesday, Friday, or Monday, Tuesday, Thursday,  
17 Saturday. So, you—if it's a Monday holiday, you're  
18 getting picked up the next day anyway. That is the  
19 additional collection, and in terms of the amount of  
20 funding that was provided for this particular  
21 endeavor, it's about \$3 million for the Department of  
22 Sanitation. The additional money is primarily for  
23 the New York Housing Authority for capital  
24 construction work that they need to do to make it so  
25

1 that they can mitigate the rat challenges and then,  
2 of course, additional funding for the Health  
3 Department for inspectors, and then for the Parks  
4 Department for additional collections to ensure we're  
5 not having overflowing litter baskets in parks, and  
6 obviously the investment in steel and the big belly  
7 baskets.  
8

9 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: So, I  
10 personally—I have Monday collection.

11 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: I have Monday  
12 protection.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Yes. So, I—the  
14 Department of Sanitation tells me to put out the  
15 trash if the holiday falls on a Monday, which it  
16 does--

17 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: [interposing] I'm  
18 for that.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: --to put it at--  
20 after 4:00. So, you place it at 4:00--

21 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Uh-hm.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: --it is then  
23 picked up the following day.

24 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: It does—with that  
25 we usually get to about 70% picked up.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: So, 70%--70%  
3 gets picked up?

4 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Uh-hm.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: That was part of  
6 the 30% that didn't get picked up. So, you have  
7 entire neighborhoods the trash is sitting outside.  
8 That's regular trash.

9 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Uh-hm.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: That's if they  
11 get to it and that's if there's--if you don't have a  
12 snow storm in between. So, if you have a snowstorm  
13 it stays out even longer. So, that's with your  
14 regular trash. Now, with the recycling people have  
15 no room to keep the recycling in their house. So,  
16 they do place it outside, and they do not--they do not  
17 get issued--issued summonses because--

18 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: [interposing] No,  
19 they're not issued.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Yes, they don't  
21 issue summonses. So, now you have the recycling  
22 outside on a Monday. Then it sits out and then  
23 there's not a holiday the following Monday. So, it  
24 sits out even longer. So, now you have, the  
25 recycling and it looks like--

1  
2                   COMMISSIONER GARCIA: [interposing] We-  
3 we-we chase all of the-all of the second recycling.

4                   COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: [interposing]  
5 The second. Alright. So you have now the trash  
6 sitting outside. You have the recycling sitting  
7 outside. So, we need to figure out how to close that  
8 gap by letting us know how much funding is needed  
9 because you are spending \$32 million, \$32 million.  
10 So, if you take some of that-some of that \$32 million  
11 and put into Sanitation for mechanical equipment, for  
12 manpower, and making sure that that trash, that  
13 Monday's trash that you're placing after 4:00, gets  
14 picked up the following day. That the Monday's  
15 recycling you're putting out you shouldn't have to  
16 wait the following week. It should be picked up  
17 right away. So we need to figure out how we can work  
18 together to make sure that the Department of  
19 Sanitation has the proper funding for mechanical  
20 equipment, for manpower to make sure that our trash  
21 does not be left-our trash is not left out and it  
22 gets picked up in a-in a proper-in a proper fashion-  
23 in a timely fashion.

24  
25

1  
2                   COMMISSIONER GARCIA: [interposing] No  
3 we're—we were going to—we're happy—we're going to  
4 provide you with that budget number.

5                   COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: [interposing]  
6 But every—but every, yeah but every year—every year  
7 we're sitting here and we're talking about it, but  
8 people are furious. You know this is the bread and  
9 butter of our quality of life is our trash being  
10 picked up. You know, we're discussing different  
11 initiatives throughout the Council, throughout the  
12 administration about doing good things. This is—this  
13 is—this affects all of our quality of life, and if  
14 you don't have a rat area, right, this is just prone  
15 to that. You have rats, you have raccoons, you have  
16 possums. They're all in my back yard and so it's not  
17 just rats. When the trash sits outside, you know,  
18 it's just defeats the whole purpose of—of the  
19 hearings that we're sitting here today talking about,  
20 you know, issuing summonses and giving people  
21 additional summonses and highering the fines, but we  
22 as the city, we must do our part first, set an  
23 example and then we could say okay, now you guys do  
24 your part, but we need to figure out a way this  
25 fiscal year, this budget season to figure out how we

1 can close the gap, and this is something that I'm  
2 going to be pushing really hard with our chair, but  
3 we need to figure out—we need to know a number of how  
4 much money. Because I know in 2009, the funding for  
5 Sanitation was reduced, and we never put it back.  
6 So, we need to make sure that that funding is put  
7 back. We have enough mechanical equipment for—for the  
8 organics, for the trash, for the recycling, for  
9 picking up for the overtime. Our men and women of  
10 the Sanitation, you know, I am one of the biggest  
11 supporters. I have personally—my district has funded  
12 for mechanical equipment, two salt spreaders and two  
13 street sweepers for Sanitation. I'll do anything for  
14 our men and women of the Department of San—of  
15 Sanitation, but we need to work together. We need to  
16 close this gap. It must be done. We cannot wait  
17 another year. So thank you.

19 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: So, and we—we will  
20 provide the number. It's going to be a lot because  
21 you're asking me to serge staff, and so, therefore,  
22 we will provide that number to the Council and to  
23 your—and to make sure that you know what it is, and  
24 then it will be a question of whether or not this

1 stays the priority for the Council and for the  
2 Administration.  
3

4 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: And we would—we  
6 would diver deeper into those concerns during our  
7 budget hearings, as well.

8 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: I think that's next  
9 week.

10 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Next week. So,  
11 there you go. Next week we'll be—we'll be getting  
12 that number hopefully--

13 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: [interposing] Yeah,  
14 we're working on it.

15 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: --to see how we can  
16 address those issues and--and just so to follow up  
17 even though, you know, I just want to get back to the  
18 rats, the--in the Chaim Deutsch's district--

19 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Uh-hm.

20 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: --in front of his  
21 house--

22 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Uh-hm.

23 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: --trash gets picked  
24 up once a week. Is it--  
25

1  
2                   COMMISSIONER GARCIA: [interposing] No,  
3 no Monday/Thursday. He's a Monday/Thursday with a  
4 Monday--

5                   CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: [interposing] if he  
6 can get out Monday, it gets picked up Thursday?

7                   COMMISSIONER GARCIA: It's picked up  
8 Tuesday, and then he puts out Wednesday--No, he--on  
9 Monday--he puts out Sunday. It gets picked up Monday.  
10 Puts out Wednesday. He gets picked up Thursday, but  
11 when it's a holiday in there so in this particular  
12 winter, which is not actually common, Christmas, New  
13 Years, Lincoln and Presidents were all on Mondays,  
14 and obviously Martin Luther King, but Christmas, New  
15 Years and Lincoln's are usually actually often not on  
16 a Monday. They shift around to other days of the  
17 week. So, there was a particular--Mondays had, you  
18 know, a lot of business. (sic)

19                   CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: [interposing] But  
20 if it didn't get picked up Monday, it got picked up  
21 Thursday.

22                   COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Right. You would  
23 always get picked up Thursday as long as it didn't  
24 snow, but usually what we do is if you put it out on  
25 the holiday on Monday, we will put people on overtime

1  
2 as many as we can beyond our regular shift to try and  
3 get as much of the Monday material as well as getting  
4 the Tuesday, but the reason why is we didn't have  
5 enough people to actually reach 100% of the routes,  
6 and so that is why he did not get collected. We try  
7 and move around who's the—who' the 70% who's the 30%  
8 in different sections so that not everyone ends up in  
9 that situation all the time, and then it is different  
10 in the areas that are the Tri areas because usually  
11 we're just going to come on the Wednesday and not try  
12 and get the Tuesday and then the Wednesday.

13 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Okay. So, I know  
14 because mentioned waiting a whole week to get it.

15 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: So, on recycling,  
16 if you were a Monday recycling we will not chase the  
17 recycling the first time. If there are two holidays  
18 in a row, we will chase the second time. We will go  
19 after it and chase it the second time.

20 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Okay. Alright,  
21 thank you for that. Now back to the—the—the rat  
22 issue. So, the violations are currently issued  
23 annually for unlawful dumping. Do we know how many  
24 violations are issued?

25

1  
2 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Oh, for legal  
3 dumping or for--? Yeah, hold on.

4 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: That's for the--  
5 [background comments]--illegal dumping yes.

6 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Yes. So this year  
7 for the operator of the vehicle we've issued 83. For  
8 the owner we've issued 57, and then one person--you  
9 can submit an affidavit as a member of the public if  
10 you see it and so one person has submitted and  
11 affidavit, and we're written a ticket off their  
12 affidavit, and then--

13 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Is it--is it  
14 effective at the moment? I'm hearing--

15 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: [interposing] So,  
16 I--

17 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: --so the things  
18 that I get about public dumping--

19 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: [interposing] So  
20 there's--

21 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: --it's not  
22 necessarily for my district, but citywide are a lot--

23 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Yeah.

24 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: --or everyone is  
25 talking about it, and the numbers that you have?

2                   COMMISSIONER GARCIA: So, illegal dumping  
3 is a very technical specific part-portion of the  
4 statute. It requires you to be using a motor  
5 vehicle, and it requires us to see you using the  
6 motor vehicle do the dumping. So, it's a hard ticket  
7 to write. In order to have someone write and  
8 affidavit saying they saw this car used to dump  
9 material. Improper disposal is when someone takes  
10 their household waste and sets it next to a litter  
11 basket, or a street vendor sets all the material next  
12 to a litter basket. I need to see you do that right  
13 now in order to write those tickets. So, it happens  
14 a lot and it's sort of-it's sort of like speeding.  
15 People think that they're not going to get caught.  
16 The reason that we want to make the change is if you  
17 have like your mail in there or something in there or  
18 a box in there that has the address, we can then  
19 write the ticket to that address. So, we don't have  
20 to physically see the actual violation occur. It's  
21 presumed that it's yours if all of your refuse is in  
22 that bag.

23                   CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Alright, that's  
24 good, to-that's good to know. I want to allow for  
25 Council Member Margaret Chin who also is a sponsor of

1 one of the bills that we're discussing today. So,  
2 Council Member Chin.

3  
4 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Actually, two of  
5 the bills.

6 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Two of the bills.  
7 Yes, there are.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Well, good morning.  
9 Thank you, thank Chair Reynoso for holding this very  
10 important hearing on rat mitigation. New York City  
11 may have some of the most fearless rodents in the  
12 country. You know online videos of rats running on  
13 the subway platform or grabbing a quick bite.

14 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: [interposing]  
15 That's right.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Like a good quick  
17 bite. However, when rats are able to find  
18 sustainable homes in our parks and in our streets,  
19 they become a serious hazard to our health and  
20 quality of life especially in largely mixed  
21 commercial and residential areas such as Lower  
22 Manhattan. It's alarming to see, to find families of  
23 rats finding a variety of dining options by scurrying  
24 from garbage piles to streaks of grease on sidewalks.  
25 Last year I joined Mayor de Blasio to announce a

1 pilot program to place high capacity big bell trash  
2 cans in areas with a high number of rats. This is  
3 just one part of the solution. To achieve lasting  
4 results our city, our businesses, building owners and  
5 residents must all do their part to rid our city of  
6 rats, and that is why I've introduced legislation to  
7 require buildings within a rat mitigation zone that  
8 has nine units or more, which are required to have a  
9 super to only take out its garbage between the hours  
10 of 4:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. I also introduced  
11 legislation to require businesses in the spring and  
12 summer season to clean the grease and other garbage  
13 juice off of a sidewalk before they open. These  
14 simple solutions can deprive rats of further  
15 opportunity to freeload off our garbage. Once again,  
16 I wanted to thank Chair Reynoso for hearing this  
17 important topic, and I also want to thank Nicole  
18 Benny for her work in drafting these bills, and I  
19 look forward to having conversations about how we can  
20 reduce the rat population.

22 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: I know, everyone—no  
23 one seems to be supporting the rats today.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: No. [laughs]

25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: There's no rats in  
3 here.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: But thank you—I  
5 mean like the garbage piles up because everyone  
6 brings out the garbage so early, and most of the  
7 garbage are food garbage.

8 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Uh-hm.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Right, until we get  
10 to this whole organic likewise.

11 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: [interposing] We're  
12 getting there.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: I mean every  
14 garbage bag is full of food, and it's just there for  
15 ten hours or more every day, and so that's why we're  
16 trying to this pilot--

17 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Uh-hm.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: --to see if we  
19 could limit it to early morning so that the garbage  
20 will only sit there for maybe two hours before they  
21 get picked up.

22 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Yep.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: So, hopefully that  
24 will help. Thank you.

25 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Yep.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Can--can we like go  
3 through the details of what that looks like, the two-  
4 hour pickup? They set it out and they should be  
5 picked up within two hours rather than--

6 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: [interposing] No,  
7 no, the--it's--it's that it will be--that it will be  
8 picked up on the shift starting at 6:00 a.m. and so  
9 it's just so that we limit--so, it's not out there for  
10 the 12 hours before 4:00 a.m. So, instead of being  
11 out a minimum of 14 hours, we're now minimizing that  
12 to two and partly this is really based off what the  
13 Health Department tells us about when rats are happy  
14 and out there, and so they're--they're going to go  
15 have a midnight snack if they can.

16 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: That's good to  
17 know. Thank you Council Member Chin, and I'd like to  
18 call on Public Advocate Tish James.

19 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you, Mr.  
20 Chair and thank your staff and the Committee staff  
21 and I also want to thank my colleagues in government,  
22 the City Council Members for this comprehensive  
23 package. I will be brief because I've been all over  
24 the city from Brighton Beach to Prospect Heights to  
25 the Upper East Side and Long island City and to Union

1 Square, and I hear stories about rats gone wild. And  
2 so obviously it's a major issue, and I have personal  
3 experience. I'm sure you can recall as a former City  
4 Council Member representing the Atlantic Yards  
5 Project when that was first undergoing construction  
6 rats were all over Downtown Brooklyn, and we worked  
7 with the developer who provided the residents in my  
8 district all steel cans, and he did some rodent  
9 mitigation all throughout Downtown Brooklyn as a  
10 result of the rat infestation. But research shows  
11 that in addition to the obvious issues that lead to  
12 rat infestations one of the biggest causes of rat  
13 sighting complaints in our city, again based upon my  
14 experience is the ongoing construction and  
15 demolitions and renovations that are happening in our  
16 city, and when construction commences the process  
17 often disturbs existing rat dens, and it leads to  
18 hundreds of rats at a time trying to locate to other  
19 existing structures. And so, construction companies  
20 must be responsible for rat abatement before and  
21 during the construction process ensuring that  
22 business, homes and parks remain rat free so that  
23 residents can continue to live and work safely, and  
24 so I recognize that there has already been steps  
25

1 taken by the city, but clearly that is not enough,  
2 which is why there's a package of legislation, which  
3 has been proposed by the City Council as well as  
4 myself, will hopefully reduce the rat population in  
5 our city. So, let me just get to my questions.  
6 First of all, for the Department of Health, is rat is  
7 Rick Simeon here?  
8

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHIFF: He's not  
10 here. He's out combatting rats.

11 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Okay, he is the  
12 rat expert in the city, and I hope everyone knows his  
13 name. Rat-Rick Simeon is the resident expert on  
14 rats. We have walked the streets in Downtown  
15 Brooklyn each and every block. He has educated me  
16 about rats. Before we had rat academies, I was a  
17 student of Rick Simeon, and I can say I had more than  
18 enough certificates from Rick, and I know all about  
19 rodent infestations in the city of New York, and it  
20 disgusts me, but he certainly is an expert, and he  
21 should get all of the credit. So, my first question  
22 and that is although I'm happy about the proposed  
23 target areas, my question is, is when-what-what is  
24 the possibility of expanding these targets-targeted  
25 areas to include Upper West Side, Fort Greene, the

1  
2 Rockaways, parts of the South Bronx, Prospects  
3 Heights and the list goes on and on and on. When can  
4 we expand or on the additional mitigation zones in  
5 the City of New York?

6           COMMISSIONER GARCIA: So, I think that  
7 the way that the legislation is crafted is it allows  
8 the Health Department to develop a set of rules in  
9 terms of looking at what the metrics are in each of  
10 those particular neighborhoods. One of the things I  
11 would like to suggest, though, is in terms of the  
12 intensive focus is like, you know, before we try and  
13 expand it to a new district is it working in these?  
14 Have we got the right mix of solutions? But I think  
15 that obviously the way that the legislation is  
16 crafted hopefully allows people to graduate out of  
17 their mitigation zone, but can also allow someone to  
18 be nominated to be in a rat mitigation zone, and that  
19 will go through the rulemaking process. So, there  
20 will be public input into exactly what the Health  
21 Department should be considering beyond what they  
22 already are in terms of the indexing and the 311  
23 complaints and their inspections, and all of the  
24 findings that they have about Parks, Buildings the

1  
2 Housing Authority, anything else that they can seem  
3 to get their hands on in terms of data.

4 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And so how long  
5 will you—how long will this look-back period be  
6 before you can expand the number of zones?

7 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: I know that we have  
8 a specific timeframe on it, and I think that we still  
9 need to go through the rule making process, and it  
10 might be something that we'd like to define within  
11 the rule making process. The one thing that is also  
12 true in this group of bills is that Chair Reynoso has  
13 specifically asked around making sure that it is  
14 documented who is moving in and out of mitigation  
15 zones as part of the reporting, and as part of those  
16 metrics.

17 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: One of the—I live  
18 along the G-Line, and one of the issues is along MTA  
19 lines, and so rats come up from the subway system,  
20 and unfortunately burrow into some of our urban  
21 gardens. Two questions: Are we working in  
22 collaboration with the MTA and (2) what are we—is  
23 there a rat—rodent reduction plan for our urban  
24 gardeners?

1  
2                   COMMISSIONER GARCIA: So, I mean I think  
3 I'll speak to the urban property that is either owned  
4 by the city and I'm assuming you're talking about  
5 property that's owned by the--the pocket--the pocket  
6 gardens.

7                   PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Yes.

8                   COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Yes. Those we are  
9 going to be working very closely within the  
10 mitigation zones. They are already part of our  
11 thinking in terms of making sure that they are not  
12 creating a place where there is appropriate habitat  
13 for rats. In terms of the MTA, that's sort of an  
14 ongoing conversation around--and I know that rats come  
15 out of the subway.

16                  PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Yep.

17                  COMMISSIONER GARCIA: I mean if you ask  
18 the Parks Department their biggest challenges is  
19 there are parks that sit over subway stations.

20                  PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Yep.

21                  COMMISSIONER GARCIA: But we are--we are  
22 working collaboratively with those to try and  
23 identify and make sure that if there are rats within  
24 the subway system that they stay there. They're  
25 there. Trust me.

1 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Okay, yes.

2 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: But they at least  
3 stay down on the tracks.

4 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Right.

5 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: But I know that the  
6 pizza was very—was very—

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: [off mic] That was  
8 a pizza rat.

9 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Yes, I know.

10 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Not only parks  
11 along the subway line, but there's also residence  
12 along the subway line. In the evening when I come  
13 home, I'm often times welcomed by a family of  
14 rodents.

15 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: I mean so if  
16 there's a specific area you'd like us to look at, we  
17 can. I mean in terms of buildings, it's like rats  
18 don't go into the building unless there's a reason to  
19 go into the building and the Health Department can  
20 speak to that.

21 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: [interposing] All  
22 along the wall. They—they crawl along the wall of  
23 the—of the homes of the brownstones in Downtown  
24 Brooklyn, and right below—right near the A-Line, the  
25

1  
2 C-Line and the G-Line it's a major issue and rats—and  
3 Rick knows it well because he's been called out there  
4 on numerous occasions, and I thank him for that, and  
5 we're about to call him again because as this—as we  
6 anticipate the spring we have seen more and more  
7 rodents in Downtown Brooklyn.

8           COMMISSIONER GARCIA: My---I mean one  
9 thing that I'll say is that hopefully that the cold  
10 over the winter when we had nearly historic number of  
11 days in a row, over 32 while miserable for us usually  
12 keeps the rat population down and so hopefully there  
13 was a little bit less breeding occurring in the  
14 winter than we've seen in the past when we've had  
15 warmer winters recently.

16           PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: So, that—that's a  
17 great segue breeding. Is there birth control for  
18 rodents? [background comments/laughter]

19           DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHIFF: We do have a  
20 research arm of our pest control program. There is  
21 one company that is promoting a birth control. It's  
22 something we're—we're looking at. There's not a lot  
23 of data that shows that it's effective right now.

24           PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And dry ice  
25 basically from what—from what Rick has informed me

1 and educated me on, you basically put the dry ice in  
2 the borough. You basically suffocate the rodent by  
3 the release of carbon monoxide? Is that how it  
4 works.  
5

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHIFF: Carbon  
7 dioxide.

8 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Carbon dioxide.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHIFF: Yep.

10 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And so the quick-  
11 So is that dry ice only being offered in the  
12 designated zones if, in fact, you find boroughs in  
13 and around certain areas in the community—in certain  
14 communities, can you call the Department of Health  
15 and get dry ice?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHIFF: So, the—the  
17 dry ice isn't—isn't only for the mitigation zones,  
18 but it is a—it is we think going to be a very  
19 effective tool, but it's only appropriate in certain  
20 places. So, it's—it's effective in parks. We—we  
21 can't—we can't apply it within ten feet of a  
22 building--

23 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Uh-hm.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHIFF: --or an  
25 inhabited structure. So, it's something to use in

1 parks and we work closely with the Parks Department  
2 to identify those parks that have hawks or other  
3 birds of prey nesting there. It's operationally it's  
4 a--it's a challenging tool to use for a number of  
5 reasons. So, it's not that--Rick won't be able to put  
6 it anywhere--

8 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Right.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHIFF: --but in  
10 places where it's appropriate we think it's going to  
11 be very effective.

12 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Can it be used in  
13 our urban gardens?

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHIFF: I--I don't--  
15 [background comments, pause]

16 MALE SPEAKER: So, as long as they're  
17 away from it.

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHIFF: So, as long--  
19 I'm not sure that we're going to be using it in--in  
20 gardens and it may depend on exactly where that  
21 garden, but I will say that we work very closely with  
22 the Urban Garden Associations.

23 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Great.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHIFF: We have very  
25 good relationships with them. We provide a lot of

1 technical assistance to the--the gardening  
2 organizations and also to the gardeners themselves as  
3 you note--

4 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Yep.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHIFF: --having a  
6 community garden can be a place for rats--

7 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Yes.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHIFF: --but there  
9 are steps that gardeners can take to mitigate that.

10 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And is there a  
11 specific Rat Academy for urban gardeners?

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHIFF: We do have  
13 specific programs for urban gardeners.

14 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Okay, with  
15 respect to the--the trash containers, in the  
16 designated areas you're replacing them with steel  
17 cans. The compost containers are they rat, rodent  
18 proof?  
19

20 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Right, the--the  
21 organics containers that we have provided in the  
22 curbside program are rodent resistant, yes.

23 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: The brown ones?

24 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: The brown ones.

25 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Okay.

1  
2 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: They're much better  
3 than I would say your typical black bag--

4 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Yeah.

5 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: --which is one of  
6 the reasons why we are trying to move folks to  
7 participate in the program in these areas because the  
8 more food we get out of that black bag and into a  
9 container we think the cleaner it will be.

10 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And before I get  
11 into my legislation, there was a lot of discussion  
12 with respect to these mint garbage bags. Does mint  
13 basically like--[background comments] Yeah, propel?

14 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: We don't advocate  
15 for any particular bag.

16 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: It's not any  
17 particular bag, but--

18 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: I have no idea what  
19 mint does.

20 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: You have no idea  
21 what mint does. Has anyone studied mint at all?

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHIFF: We don't  
23 have any evidence that those are effective?

24 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Okay, with  
25 respect to the legislation that I've proposed, I know

1 that you have some concerns that have—that has been  
2 expressed in your testimony. Are there certain types  
3 of alterations such as foundation work that have a—  
4 that have a pronounced effect on rat mitigation?  
5

6 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: So, I mean I think  
7 that this will be a conversation we can have at more  
8 length with the Department of Buildings, but—so one  
9 of the things I'll say is I think that it's very  
10 broad the way the legislation is written and could  
11 be, you know, anything that would require a permit  
12 like, you know, I want a not foundation work, but I  
13 just want to do something within the building where  
14 there's no evidence that it-(1) that there are rats,  
15 there or (2) that it would cause a disturbance  
16 because primarily in construction when you're getting  
17 down into the foundation near the dirt, and so that's  
18 talking about demolition. And so, we think that a  
19 lot of it is covered in the current code maybe not  
20 being implemented in the way that has been completely  
21 effective, but at least in your eyes. So, I think  
22 that it's worth having a conversation so that we  
23 don't have the unintended consequence of I wanted to  
24 change out my closet and I had to put rat traps down  
25 and I don't have any rats. But make sure that we're

1 getting at when there is major disturbances such as  
2 Atlantic Yards, whatever they're calling it now.  
3 We're--the street was--the whole thing was in a hole  
4 for years and years and years--

5 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Yes I know.

6 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: --and obviously  
7 apparently it had a population we did not see for  
8 quite a long time.

9 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: But we saw it.

10 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Oh, we saw it.  
11 When it got--when it got disturbed it--it made itself  
12 very, very well known.

13 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Very well known.

14 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: And we definitely  
15 want to make sure if we are dealing with any  
16 situation like that where your--where there is a  
17 disturbance caused by construction that could make it  
18 so that you're having rats that had not been  
19 disturbed for years, and upsetting nests. That we  
20 want to definitely address. We just don't want to  
21 sort of cast is so broadly that we're capturing the  
22 person who's making like a not huge change in an  
23 apartment that doesn't actually have a rodent  
24 problem. So it can't be and isn't upsetting a  
25

1 foundation. So, I think that we're on the same page  
2 in terms of what the intent needs to be, and I think  
3 it's just going to be a question of fine tuning some  
4 of the language that we make sure that it doesn't  
5 sort of end up having—making everyone think we're  
6 more bureaucratic than we already are.

8 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And as we  
9 anticipate re-zonings in the City of New York is  
10 there any coordination in the anticipation of, you  
11 know, alterations and demolitions and construction  
12 work in—in designated—in anticipated rezoned areas?

13 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: So, these—this—I  
14 mean I think yours as well as most legislation is  
15 really primarily focused on the zones, but I think  
16 that any time you're going to have a disturbance of a  
17 foundation or where you're going to do digging, we  
18 need to be focused on that in terms of either an  
19 assessment has happened or there—or there's extermin-  
20 extermination happening.

21 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you.

22 [pause]

23 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: We're—we're going  
24 to get to a second round of questions before we get  
25 to the advocates from Council Members. I just wanted

1 to ask regarding the--the--the trash receptacles the  
2 big bellies, whether those are working, whether you  
3 see them as part of this plan, and ether or not we  
4 can expand them. Just really want to get--I guess we  
5 have enough time with them to know whether they're  
6 working and if you liked them or not.

8 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: So, so they are  
9 most effective where they have a Business Improvement  
10 District in charge of them. They are less effective  
11 when they can't get sort of the daily care because as  
12 we have discussed, we have the challenge of the iced  
13 coffee people who think they're a table, and in  
14 certain areas there is a lot of artistic activity  
15 that happens on them or stickers. So, we have found  
16 that they are most effective when like a BID is going  
17 to sort stay and take care of them at least once a  
18 day, and make sure they didn't get run over by a car  
19 or anything like that. They're expensive. They are  
20 primarily good at places like where we really, really  
21 want to see if we can contain everything. Are we  
22 seeing a huge difference? Do we really--are we going  
23 to get the metrics? We're going to be measuring  
24 everything, and if Council Member Chin comes in and  
25 says you've solved everything, you know, (1) the

1 Health Department will get like major gold stars.  
2 But you know, then we would think about whether or  
3 not it's—we've seen its true effectiveness. So, this  
4 is the first really broad deployment focused on its  
5 use as rodent mitigation. It's a primary selling  
6 point has been oh, you won't have to collect as often  
7 because it compacts, We have not found that just  
8 given the number of—this may be true in places where  
9 there are not as many pedestrians. There are just  
10 too many pedestrians in the city of New York to have  
11 that cost saving piece to it, but I think this is the  
12 first time we're really looking at it to see whether  
13 or not as rodent mitigation tool it is very  
14 effective. There were some small studies at the  
15 Parks Department that showed that like on big belly  
16 when they moved the big belly in instead of a wire  
17 basket that there was some improvement, but this is  
18 the first really broad application.

19  
20 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: So, my legislation  
21 is important and it's good to hear that it's going to  
22 be effective, and it could be effective in getting  
23 the reporting. We're going to go through one more  
24 round, and then get to the advocates. Council Member  
25 Cabrera followed by Council Member Deutsch and I

2 believe Council Member Margaret Chin also has some  
3 questions. So, Council Member Cabrera.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Thank you so  
5 much. You know, part of my life I lived in  
6 California, and--

7 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: [interposing] They  
8 have flying rats there, by the way, or rats that can  
9 climb.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: No way.

11 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Yes, they do.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Really?

13 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Yes.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: I don't remember  
15 those when I was over there.

16 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Just telling you  
17 that's what I--that's what I read.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Is that like  
19 Northern California or--?

20 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: No, it was Southern  
21 California.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Really.

23 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: In L.A.--

24 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: [interposing]  
25 Wow.

1  
2                   COMMISSIONER GARCIA:  --they have  
3 climbing rats.

4                   COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA:  Wow, I wonder  
5 where they came from.

6                   FEMALE SPEAKER:  Brooklyn.

7                   COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA:  [laughs]

8                   FEMALE SPEAKER:  Yeah, but who has the  
9 supply of them.  (sic)

10                  COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA:  So, you know,  
11 one of the things I notice and in other states.  I  
12 lived in Virginia as well, is just this culture where  
13 people don't throw garbage on the floor.  How-what  
14 can we do to change the culture?  Because to be  
15 honest with you it's one of my biggest pet peeves--

16                  COMMISSIONER GARCIA:  Uh-hm.

17                  COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA:  --how many lived  
18 her now for three decades.  Is-are there TV  
19 commercials that we could do, social media outreach?

20                  COMMISSIONER GARCIA:  I'm-I am completely  
21 on the same page with you.  I do not understand and-  
22 and it literally is not about income.  I was  
23 following in my little personal car behind an Audi  
24 like, I don't know, one of the fancy and I watched  
25 the-the family that literally they must have all had

1 ice cream, as they're driving through Brooklyn, they  
2 just throw it all out the window.  
3

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Yes, and you see  
5 that even when people are literally steps from a  
6 litter basket. They have to take five more steps and  
7 they would have been at the litter basket. I am very  
8 open. We have an ongoing social media campaign right  
9 now called Trash Talk, which is about littering,  
10 which we found actually at the West Fourth Street  
11 basketball courts. I was trying to do the inter-the  
12 interaction between basketball and-and littering, but  
13 I mean it-it is-I am not exactly sure how to bend the  
14 curve here. It's very, very frustrating but I would  
15 very much like to work with in terms of trying to  
16 figure out some way to have people not just throw  
17 things on the floor. I don't understand it, but I do  
18 watch people do it all the time. I'm wondering if we  
19 should start with young people. So, we could start  
20 with that next generation, and I had an experience  
21 where's there a few months ago I saw a young person  
22 who was just standing with another guy, and he took  
23 his soda and just threw it to the floor. I mean  
24 just-they have-and I had to stop. I wanted to say  
25 hey man, you know, the garbage can is just right

1 there, and he says oh, I'm sorry and he recognized  
2 because I was—I was in his school. He said I'm  
3 sorry. I said man this is our neighborhood. These—  
4 nobody, you know, nobody is going to take dare of our  
5 neighborhood if we don't care of our neighborhood.  
6 Maybe it's one by one, but maybe social media. I  
7 think that's where people are spending 4-1/2 hours of  
8 their time a day and more with young people. So,  
9 it's less than TV and it's—it's relatively  
10 inexpensive to boost a video, and just starting  
11 creating. I love the Plain Word the Trash Talk and--

12 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Uh-hm.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: --it's  
14 culturally relevant, you know, so, ore ideas like  
15 that, but in social media I think that's where we  
16 need to start, you know, tackling the young people.

17 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: We will definitely  
18 reach out to your office and—and have work just work  
19 with us on pushing and boosting this particular  
20 message that we have. It's very, very frustrating.  
21 I mean I—I do have to say when you speak to little  
22 children, though, because I was given an award for a  
23 poster contest on littering, and there, you know, it  
24 was a fifth grader who won, but there were pre-

1 schoolers there and I'm like, So I know you all are  
2 really good recyclers and you never litter and they  
3 go, oh, no, but my mommy-my mommy does. [laughter]  
4 And so it's across the board that we have this sort  
5 of cultural acceptance that, you know, litter is okay  
6 or somebody else is going to pick it up.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Uh-hm.

9 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: You know, somebody  
10 else out there is in charge of picking it up, and so  
11 this is-if-if you can think of it, and we have a-we  
12 have a campaign right now. We just haven't had a lot  
13 of funding to really promote but I'm-I would like to  
14 shared it with you so that you-if you think it's like  
15 would work in your community--

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: [interposing] I  
17 would love-I would love to see that--

18 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Okay.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: --and engage the  
20 schools and to have very close relationship with  
21 principals-and-and start, you know start there  
22 because kids, you know, they'll give that information  
23 just like we've done Health Drive, you know, eating  
24 healthy habits drive that we do with kids and that  
25 percolates up to the parents. I think the same thing

1 that we could here. I meant to ask you also what is-  
2 it is kind of a weird question, but what do we do  
3 with the dead rats? You know, once you collect them  
4 because that's a health issue I would imagine.

5  
6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHIFF: We don't-we  
7 don't collect the dead rats. They will decompose.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: So, if somebody  
9 were to come and say hey there is five rats, you  
10 would--?

11 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: [interposing] We-we  
12 would collect them.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Okay.

14 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: We collect-as we  
15 collected all dead animals on the public street.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: And-and then  
17 where do they go? Do we have like a pet cemetery or-  
18 -?

19 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: It depends on  
20 whether or not they end up going right into the  
21 regular refuse and getting sent to a landfill. If  
22 it's a larger animal, then it goes-it is taken care  
23 of by the contractor to ensure its proper disposal.

24

25

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: And how—from the  
3 moment that you get a call on 311, how long before  
4 you--

5 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: We're usually  
6 pretty fast. I'd have to get you the exact time on  
7 our service level.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: But what's the--

9 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: And so, it would  
10 be, you know, you know, usually it's a day maybe--

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Okay, it was--

12 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: --or a large  
13 animal. Most people don't call about dead rats.  
14 They, you know, if they see them, they'll put them in  
15 a black bag and--

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: [interposing]  
17 Okay.

18 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: --I take what's in  
19 the black bag.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: And my other  
21 question and last question is in regards to your good  
22 work and—and trying to get of these rats, but as we  
23 know, they double in one month.

24 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Have you seen how  
25 many one couple can have in a year?

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: It is  
3 unbelievable. It's—they took those biblical words,  
4 "Be fruitful and multiply" very little. So, and—and  
5 maximized it. So, I'm just curious as to how we—is  
6 this sustainable what we're doing right now in light  
7 of the fact that they can multiply so fast.

8 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Well, I mean I  
9 think as—as Deputy Commissioner Schiff has testified  
10 we've had people graduate out of rat reservoirs. You  
11 know, lose the destination. So, you don't have to  
12 have rats if you can get it under control. They  
13 don't necessarily—like you got to have a couple to  
14 start. So, if we can get rid of and get it to a  
15 clean slate any amount of pretty decent shop, there  
16 won't be any.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Okay.

18 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: But I think right  
19 this second is going to take a sustained effort, and  
20 it's going to really take everyone's assistance in  
21 making sure that they're doing the right thing in  
22 terms of keeping food away from these little  
23 critters.

24

25

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: And I think it's  
3 going to go back to changing the culture. Thank you  
4 so much.

5 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Thank you.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Alright.

7 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: And Council member  
8 Cabrera, during the budget hearing, I'm looking to  
9 expand the marketing arm of the Department of  
10 Sanitation to make sure that we could really start  
11 allowing them to—to educate folks on exactly how to  
12 not litter, how to get to zero by 30 and so forth.  
13 So, I hope that you—you become an advocate alongside—  
14 alongside.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: I'm already in.

16 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Alright. We  
17 appreciate it. There we go, we got two.

18 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: I'm going to bet in  
19 trouble with Blake the new head of OMB. [laughter]

20 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: You'll—you'll be--  
21 well it's all culture. It really is and when it  
22 comes to the rats it's our fault. Like I want to be  
23 perfect now. We want to get rid of them, and we're  
24 spending all this—all these resources and this money,  
25

1 but it's inability to-to keep trash contained or to-  
2 to separate trash and it's a cleanliness issue--

3  
4 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Uh-hm.

5 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: --and--and it is  
6 litter and--

7 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Uh-hm.

8 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: New York City it's  
9 a-it's a-it's a big deal, it's a big issue. So, I  
10 just want to make sure that we don't, you know, it's  
11 not all the rats' fault. We've got to do our part,  
12 too, and now I'm going to call on Council Member  
13 Deutsch.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Thank you. So, I  
15 don't know if you have the figures today or I should  
16 wait 'til the budget hearing. My first question is  
17 what is the head count of Sanitation Enforcement  
18 Officers?

19 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Enforcement  
20 Officers I would have to get you the exact number.  
21 It's in the order of like 250.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: 250. That's for  
23 the city, the entire city.

1  
2                   COMMISSIONER GARCIA: That's for the  
3 Enforcement Agents. We still have Sanitation Police  
4 Officers and there's approximately 55, 55 of those--

5                   COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: [interposing]  
6 So--

7                   COMMISSIONER GARCIA: --but I can--I will  
8 definitely provide because I think that you ask me  
9 this every year. The headcount numbers are not only--  
10 for the whole city, but I can also provide it for  
11 each of the boroughs.

12                  COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: What's the job  
13 of a Sanitation Enforcement, and what is the job of a  
14 Sanitation Police Officer?

15                  COMMISSIONER GARCIA: So, a Sanitation  
16 Enforcement Officer is primarily going to be  
17 enforcing the recycling codes as well as the  
18 cleanliness codes. So, they're likely to be giving  
19 the tickets to--when they are doing the commercial  
20 routing when they go up and down avenues to make sure  
21 during those two hours that I mentioned that people  
22 have cleaned the 18 inches in front of their  
23 buildings. They also do for residences, and so those  
24 are the primary types of tickets that they would  
25 write. In addition, they can write other tickets, so

1  
2 they tend not to write a lot of personal service  
3 tickets because they don't have the ability to make  
4 you give I.D. On the other hand, Sanitation Police  
5 Officers are police officers. They carry guns. So,  
6 they are primarily focused on things like the illegal  
7 dumping because those can end up being very  
8 confrontational situations where they're pulling over  
9 a vehicle, and making a stop and making arrest of  
10 that nature, and so they're—they tend to be more  
11 focused on those sorts of issues while the  
12 enforcement agents are usually—there's usually about  
13 two per community board everyday who are doing the  
14 sort of quality of life summonses.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: So, I mean, so  
16 it seems like there's—you have 250 as opposed to 55.  
17 So, is—does that mean that the most priority is for  
18 mixed recycling than—and is commercial establishment  
19 enforcements than illegal dumping and littering?

20 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: They're—they're two  
21 very different.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Because you  
23 have—you have a lot fewer Sanitation Police Officers.  
24 You have 55 and close to 250.

25 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Uh-hm.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Like for example  
3 in the commercial districts, I have to be very blunt  
4 and honest, that we have an initiative in the City  
5 Council. Each member receives \$200,000 for the--

6 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Uh-hm.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: --for the  
8 initiative. So, I put my entire initiative to  
9 Sanitation through--for extra corner waste baskets  
10 pickups in commercial areas for 26 weeks.

11 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Uh-hm.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: So, once the 26  
13 weeks runs out, the rest of the year, you have maybe  
14 two days a week, three days a week, some days--  
15 sometimes four days a week corner waste basket  
16 pickups in commercial areas. So, this goes back to  
17 my previous thing when it comes to the budget that we  
18 need to set a good example because if I'm walking  
19 down Avenue U let's say in my district--

20 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Uh-hm.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: --and I have  
22 something in my hand and I see the corner waste  
23 basket is overflowing, and I cannot even throw that  
24 can or wrapper into that corner waste basket, what am  
25 I going to do with it? I--I'm saying I would throw it

1 on the floor, me personally, but people would just  
2 dump it and just like, you know, put their hands  
3 down, just make believe that, you know, the--the can  
4 or that wrapper goes on the floor. So, when--when a  
5 neighborhood is clean, I think people tend to keep  
6 the neighborhood clean when they see that the corner  
7 waste baskets are clean and empty, when they see the  
8 streets together with enforcement on our commercial  
9 establishments, when you put everything together, I  
10 think we could have a cleaner city. But when one  
11 neglects then everyone neglects and just throws  
12 everything on the floor. So, we need to make sure  
13 again, you know to close that gap to make sure that  
14 all our commercial areas throughout the city receive  
15 it seven days a week. You know, I know Sheepshead  
16 Bay roads those corner wastebaskets are overflowing,  
17 and no matter how many times I speak to store owners  
18 about the baskets--

20 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: [interposing] Uh-  
21 hm.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: --right. So,  
23 you don't have all the stores adopting the basket,  
24 but you have those--those--those good business owners  
25 that take it upon themselves to adopt the baskets,

1 but then you have the rest of Sheepshead Bay Road,  
2 which is overflowing and people just, you know, I'm—  
3 I'm cleaning my corner basket, but look at the next  
4 block and then that trash is going to my block. So,  
5 if we could get every commercial area throughout the  
6 city those corner waste baskets picked up every  
7 single day, and get our recycling and our trash in  
8 our residential areas, you will see the difference on  
9 the people. I think we could end up looking like  
10 California. I don't know about—hopefully we don't  
11 have those rats in Brooklyn, but we could end up  
12 looking like—like anywhere out of—out of New York  
13 City. In addition to that, I have also found that,  
14 you know, it's a lot easier to target homeowners than  
15 to target someone who's dumping or doing illegal  
16 dumping in the corner waste baskets. So, a lot of,  
17 you know, a lot of my constituents in and around my  
18 district they complain to me they have mixed  
19 recycling. They try their best. It's a full-time  
20 job because I do it in my house, and my wife knows my  
21 job is the trash. I come home, first thing I go to  
22 the trash. This way she has no gripes against me,  
23 and it's a full-time job. I have two large clear  
24 bags in my kitchen, one for recycling, one for paper.  
25

1 I make it as easy as possible for the Sanitation  
2 workers and for myself, but then you have those  
3 residents who are getting summonses, right because  
4 it's an easy summons, right. All you have to do is  
5 go in front of the house, see a wrapper there and you  
6 just tape it to the door. And secondly, you have  
7 people that have fire hydrants in front of their  
8 homes, and there has to be a little sensitivity  
9 because what happens when you have a fire hydrant you  
10 have people parking there at 2:00 in the morning.  
11 Remember we have over 60,000 Uber drivers in this  
12 city. So they stick around. Where do they park? At  
13 the hydrants. I'm not blaming it on the Uber drivers,  
14 but you have people that go on dates. They park at  
15 hydrants. They have Burger King or some kosher food  
16 in their car ,and then where does it get dumped. It  
17 gets dumped right outside the car at the hydrant.  
18 Now, those homeowners or business owners, the next  
19 morning get ticketed because they have wrappers and  
20 everything else in front of their business or homes  
21 because they have a hydrant. So, you need to alter  
22 that sensitivity because sometimes, you know a person  
23 needs to go to work, and they can't sit in front of  
24 their house with a—with a—with a broom every single,  
25

1 you know, second of the day during the—during the  
2 routing hours. You know, it's a Catch 22. So, I  
3 think there needs to be more collaboration and more  
4 outreach to people and more sensitivity and, you  
5 know, not going after those easy summonses, those  
6 easy tickets where it's a recycling issue. I live  
7 near a school. Every morning I open my trash can,  
8 there is a half—half a cup of Dunkin' Donuts, coffee  
9 or something in my trash just thrown inside because I  
10 keep my trash easy for the Sanitation workers to, you  
11 know, to get—to get my trash. I keep them in front  
12 of my house. People just dump in stuff. You know,  
13 so every few weeks I have to clear it out. I have a  
14 liner, a garbage liner and so every few weeks I have  
15 to clean it out because it starts smelling. You  
16 know, so when you have that mixed recycling because  
17 someone just throws something in, or even when you  
18 have children in the house and you can't watch them  
19 every second of the day. So, they shouldn't be  
20 targeted by the mixed recycling. Let's target those  
21 who—those who dumped under the train trestles or on  
22 the street. Let's target those who dump their  
23 household trash in the corner commercial waste  
24 baskets. Let's go after those big people, not after  
25

1 those little people who work hard each and everyday  
2 who try to recycle, who do their best and end up with  
3 a pink ticket on their door. So, we need to, you  
4 know, re-evaluate of how these summonses are issued,  
5 and I think it's very important and I think it will  
6 encourage more because it doesn't encourage when  
7 someone gets a \$25 ticket. It just gets them upset  
8 especially in—in my district in my neighborhoods we  
9 have one of the cleanest in that community board, and  
10 then when people get those summonses, it's very  
11 frustrating. So, thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Your—your  
14 enthusiasm is noted Council Member Deutsch, we're  
15 excited about how the next four years are going to go  
16 with you on the committee. A lot of issues there  
17 packed into one. So, we'll—we'll definitely be  
18 following up. Thank you for your concerns. We're  
19 going to have Council Member Chin followed by Council  
20 Member—by Public Advocate Tish James.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you. I just  
22 want to follow up on the illegal dumping because like  
23 in Chinatown the—the big belly is great. We have it  
24 on many busy corners and it's working, but one of the  
25 negative effects is that it actually attracts a lot

1  
2 more illegal dumping and you have people putting  
3 garbage right next to it. We also have incidents  
4 where people were trying to shove everything in and  
5 they can't get it all in there, and there's BID  
6 that's working in the area and they're getting  
7 frustrated because it's like all of a sudden now  
8 people are putting illegal stuff there, and so I  
9 think it's something that we want to work together  
10 with, you know, DSNY to some public education and  
11 include some tough enforcement.

12 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: So, the-the-it's  
13 actually not illegal dumping unless there's a car or  
14 some vehicle. It is improper disposal.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Okay.

16 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: And that is  
17 actually one of the things we're trying to change in  
18 this legislation is to allow us to look into that bag  
19 and see whether or not there's anything identifying,  
20 and be able to write the ticket to that  
21 identification. Because right now if I don't see you  
22 do it, I can't write you the ticket.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: But isn't that--wait  
24 a minute, if that's already--

25

1  
2                   COMMISSIONER GARCIA: [interposing] No,  
3 no, only if it's put in the litter basket not if it's  
4 next to the litter basket.

5                   COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Oh.

6                   COMMISSIONER GARCIA: So, we're trying to  
7 fix that little problem that we're having, but  
8 certainly like we try and make sure that we're being  
9 really clear. We've done some outreach to the  
10 businesses in terms of making sure that they have a  
11 carter and are not using the corner litter baskets  
12 for their commercial waste. We also will continue to  
13 do work with the BID, who I think has been extremely  
14 helpful around making sure that they're communicating  
15 to that entire community about what we're trying to  
16 accomplish, and I know that yes when you have the-  
17 when suddenly have more bags sort of showing up on  
18 the corner, it's very, very frustrating, but one of  
19 the things we think in this package of bills would  
20 really help is to be able to do better enforcement  
21 about the bag next to the big belly, which we  
22 currently can't write or we have to see it to write  
23 it.

24                   COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Okay, I mean we  
25 just-it's just something we have to really correct,

1 but I agree with my colleagues that we really need to  
2 do more public education campaign and outreach. And  
3 starting—I agree with Councilman Cabrera, we've got  
4 to start with the youngsters, the people in public  
5 school because I remember when I went to public  
6 school, you learn not to throw garbage on the street—  
7  
8 -

9 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Oh, yes.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: --and cross that  
11 the crosswalk. [laughs] So that is something that we  
12 really have to educate, and also create the  
13 atmosphere that is unacceptable to throw things on  
14 the floor and throw garbage on the street. So, that  
15 we really have to really work on that, and hopefully  
16 there is money in the Sanitation budget to really do  
17 more of these public education campaigns.

18 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Okay. Thank you.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you, Council  
21 Member Chin, and Council Member—I'm sorry, Public  
22 Advocate Tish James. You're going to close us out.  
23 So, good questions.

24 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Just quick. As  
25 from the \$32 million, do we have any exterminators

1 that are currently on staff either in DSNY or the  
2 Department of Health?  
3

4 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: It's not--DSNY does  
5 not have exterminators. So--

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHIFF: The Health  
7 Department has exterminators.

8 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: How many  
9 exterminators do you have and what is the--what is  
10 their function? I mean I know their function. What  
11 is their purpose?

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHIFF: So, I'll  
13 have to see if I have the number of--of exterminators  
14 with me. Their function is we will do exterminations  
15 on public property and do exterminations on private  
16 property where the private property owner is not  
17 complying with our order, and then we bill that  
18 private property owner for the work.

19 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: So do you--we have  
20 to get a court order against that property owner  
21 before the Department of Health can come in and  
22 exterminate?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHIFF: It will--it  
24 will depend on whether we can gain access.  
25

1  
2 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And so in case-in  
3 residential-on residential property we would have to  
4 get a court order or a--

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHIFF: [interposing]  
6 We may.

7 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Okay. Excellent.  
8 I was an early supporter of the big belly trash cans,  
9 and I believe that we should—we should get rid of the  
10 waste cans—waste containers in the city of New York  
11 and we should provide more big belly cans in the city  
12 of New York. I think that will—will greatly reduce  
13 our rodent population, but I do recall, and I don't  
14 know whether or this has been resolved. There was an  
15 issue with OMB because big belly was not considered  
16 an expense item.

17 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: No, it's not  
18 capitally eligible.

19 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: It's not--

20 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: It is an expense  
21 item.

22 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: It is an expense  
23 item.

24 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: But every one of  
25 them is on the expense budget.

1  
2 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And, therefore,  
3 it was cost prohibitive for Council Members because  
4 the expense budget allocated to each Council member  
5 was limited and, therefore, it limited the amount of  
6 money that you can spend on a big belly container.

7 Can we resolve that so we can make it capital  
8 eligible so that more member--?

9 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: No.

10 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Why?

11 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Because it's not  
12 expensive enough to be capitally eligible under a  
13 bond counsel's determination. There's many things if  
14 you'd like to take on capital eligibility, but I  
15 would like to be capitally eligible. That is  
16 currently not capitally eligible.

17 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: So, I think this  
18 is an issue that we should have with the  
19 Administration because I don't, you know, one  
20 attorney's interpretation is different from the next.  
21 So, clearly, we need to have a discussion with bond  
22 counsel as to whether or not that item or any other  
23 item is capital eligible so that more members can  
24 appropriate funds from their budge for big belly  
25 containers.

1  
2                   COMMISSIONER GARCIA: We will not allow a  
3 big belly to be placed outside of a BID at this  
4 point. So--

5                   PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Why is that?

6                   COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Because we cannot  
7 service them in the way that they need to be cared  
8 for.

9                   PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Because there's  
10 not enough sufficient collection?

11                   COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Because it's--it's  
12 not a question of collection. They really need to be  
13 looked at every single day because they just--they end  
14 up attracting a lot of things on top of them. So,  
15 it's not that the bag inside is even necessarily full  
16 because it will tell you when it's full. It's that  
17 it's just collects things on the top and--and so you  
18 end up with a lot of litter that can blow around.

19                   PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: But we are  
20 placing them in these--in these designated areas  
21 correct?

22                   COMMISSIONER GARCIA: They're all under  
23 BID control.

24                   PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: All under BID  
25 control within the designated area?

1  
2                   COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Within the  
3 designated areas.

4                   PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Uh-hm.  
5 Interesting.

6                   COMMISSIONER GARCIA: But definitely go  
7 talk to Bond Counsel because I--

8                   PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: [interposing]  
9 Well, I want to--

10                   COMMISSIONER GARCIA: --I have really  
11 tried to push back on them. They've been highly  
12 unsuccessful.

13                   PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Well, I'm going  
14 to talk to bond counsel, but I'm also going to talk  
15 to you and to others with respect to providing them  
16 outside of the--the outside of BIDs because I believe  
17 that will go a long way in reducing the rodent  
18 population here in the City of New York.

19 Commissioner, can you speak to me a little bit about  
20 basketball and rodents? Because I don't understand  
21 that.

22                   COMMISSIONER GARCIA: So, it was a--it was  
23 a--it's a short commercial--

24                   PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Yeah.  
25

2                   COMMISSIONER GARCIA: --at a basketball  
3 truck that we filmed. So, it was--the premise of it  
4 is Talk Trash New York. So, it's someone trying--it's  
5 a kid making a basket--I can show you the video. It  
6 will be probably easier. It's like a kid making a  
7 basket and somebody else shooting garbage toward a  
8 little basket, and missing and walking away, and sort  
9 of shaming that person into, you know, doing the  
10 right thing.

11                   PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: So, this is a  
12 problem throughout the city of New York, basketball  
13 players are littering?

14                   COMMISSIONER GARCIA: No, no, no, no, no.  
15 It's just the basketball players are not littering.

16                   PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Oh, okay.

17                   COMMISSIONER GARCIA: There so it's just  
18 a theme. It's like--

19                   PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: It's a theme.

20                   COMMISSIONER GARCIA: It's a theme, but I  
21 have to show you the video. It's not that basketball  
22 players are littering.

23                   PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: [interposing] No,  
24 that's okay. No, no, you made--you made mention of it  
25 and I thought there was a correlation between

1 basketball and litter, and I asked the question  
2 because I didn't understand.  
3

4 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: [interposing] No,  
5 we're—we're trying to make the correlation that  
6 people think of litter baskets like basketball  
7 baskets.

8 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And Council  
9 Member Deutsch also underscored or made my point, and  
10 that it has nothing to do with low-income. The fact  
11 is that individuals who patronize Burger King,  
12 Dunkin' Donuts, Uber drivers and who else did you  
13 mention? And individuals on dates also litter, and  
14 so it has nothing to do with income, and so make sure  
15 that we--

16 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: [interposing] No,  
17 no, we don't believe that it is.

18 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: --we dispel  
19 people of that notion.

20 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: No.

21 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And last, but not  
22 least, I know you didn't want to promote a particular  
23 product and neither do I, but I was informed that  
24 some—I was told that mint somehow repels rodents, and  
25 so my question is I know you don't want to answer

1 that question, but is there any other thing or  
2 product that we know of that repels rodents if not  
3 mint?  
4

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHIFF: Do-do you  
6 mean like in like in the trash can?

7 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Yes.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHIFF: I don't  
9 think we've identified, but let me—I don't think  
10 that--

11 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: [interposing] If  
12 someone can get back to me.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHIFF: And I can  
14 tell you before I answer that--

15 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Yes.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHIFF: -thirty  
17 total exterminators and 15 in the reservoirs, but let  
18 me see if we--

19 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: [interposing]  
20 Okay.

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHIFF: --have any—I  
22 don't--[background comments, pause] Okay, no known  
23 repellent to rats.

24 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Got.  
25

1  
2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHIFF: And we  
3 should also mention that a lot of the big bellies  
4 went to parks.

5 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Went to parks?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHIFF: Right, and  
7 the parks are managing them.

8 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you. Thank  
9 you, Mr. Chair.

10 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you. Again,  
11 I think Council members that have the mitigations  
12 already through the pilot program can speak to the  
13 great work that's happening in these districts in  
14 relation to the reduction of rats. What we're doing  
15 here in the City Council is pushing legislation so we  
16 can get some type of standard across the board so we  
17 can expand this to other districts where we think  
18 that there are issues with rats in the city of New  
19 York and I'm really excited about being able to—to  
20 see the progress elsewhere also be able to track that  
21 progress, and thank all the Council members that are—  
22 were here today, and also all the sponsors of the  
23 legislation as well as my committee staff. And  
24 again, Deputy Commissioner and Commissioner thank you  
25 so much for being here. I'm excited maybe in a year

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE  
MANAGEMENT

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to get-to catch up and see how we've done with the  
rats. Thank you. This meeting is adjourned.  
[gavel]

C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date March 24, 2018