

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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B E F O R E: ANTONIO REYNOSO, CHAIR

COUNCIL MEMBERS: FERNANDO CABRERA
CHAIM M. DEUTSCH
RAFAEL L. ESPINAL, JR.
PAUL A. VALLONE
LETICIA JAMES, PUBLIC ADVOCATE

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

D. KATHRYN GARCIA, Commissioner of
Sanitation

BRIDGET ANDERSON, Deputy Commissioner of
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ADRIANA ESPINOSA, Director of New York
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JUSTIN WOOD, Director of Organizing a
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National Resources Defense Council

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: This is as microphone check. Today's date is December 18, 2018. Committee on Sanitation being recorded by John Biando. Committee Room 16th Floor. Testing one, two, three, audio test, one, two.

CHAIR ANTONIO REYNOSO: Good morning. I am Council Member Antonio Reynoso, the Chair of Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management. Thank you for attending this oversight hearing. Today we will be discussing materials on our waste stream, in our waste stream that can be diverted from landfill but are not collected for curbside recycling by the Department of Sanitation. We will also hear proposal Intro 1075A sponsored by the public advocate Leticia James uhm in relation to an Organic Waste Curbside Collection Pilot Program. DSNY provides curbside collection service for refuse, metal, glass, plastic and paper recyclable. DSNY also collects food waste for organics recycling in certain community districts and we expect that this program will be expanded citywide in 2019. Uhm proposed Intro 1075A would create a pilot program for organics recycling in buildings including City Agencies. The Bill also mandates education and outreach in those

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2 buildings that will participate in the program. I
3 hope that DSNY will be able to see what works and use
4 that information to educate the public about
5 residential organics recycling as the program expands
6 to more community districts. According to the 2017
7 Waste Characterization Study there is a significant
8 portion of our Waste Stream that is picked up as
9 refuse but could potentially be diverted from
10 landfill. These materials include electronic waste,
11 textiles, harmful household products and plastic
12 shopping bags. If we are going to meet our goal of
13 attributing zero waste to landfill by 2030, we need
14 to understand the waste stream and create actionable
15 plans for each of the materials. Today, I hope to
16 get an update on how the City is working to create
17 accessible programs to promote recycling, reuse,
18 donation or proper safe disposal for these items. We
19 need to do more than just create the programs to
20 divert these materials though. The City needs to
21 reach out to communities and teach people about the
22 programs available to them and the best way to keep
23 these materials out of the refuse stream. Without
24 proper education and outreach, participation in these
25 programs and our progress toward zero waste will

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likely be disappointing. I look forward to hearing testimony from DSNY, environmental advocates and other interested groups about their experience with the current initiatives to divert materials from the waste stream so far uhm so far and any advice that they have for how the City could be doing to engage of communities. I will now turn it over to the public advocate who would like to speak about her Bill. Public Advocate Leticia James from Brooklyn.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE LETICIA JAMES: Uhm good morning and thank you uhm Chairman Reynoso and Members of the Committee for convening this hearing today. Uhm my name is Leticia James and I am the Public Advocate for about 13 more days. Uhm it is very fitting that my final City Council Hearing as Public Advocate is a Sanitation Committee, a Committee that I once chaired and is dear to my heart and I want to thank the Commissioner, I want to thank the staff, uhm for educating me about all of the issues and thank you for working with me and I look forward to working with you in my other capacity. I am also proud of all of the work that we have been able to do together including the advanced initiatives that increased recycling and raise

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2 awareness of the important of smart waste practices.
3 I thank you for working with residents of public
4 housing and I just uhm thank you again for
5 introducing me to the world of uhm sanitation. Uhm I
6 will now like to turn to the Legislation as the
7 subject of this hearing. Uhm as the Public Advocate,
8 I serve as the voice for the most vulnerable and
9 today I am speaking on behalf of the City itself,
10 which is at risk of the devastating consequences of
11 the climate change and could find itself submerged
12 under water in the decades to come. Climate change
13 is one of the most critical issues that we face and
14 as I travel the State, I am beginning to see the
15 effects of climate change and uhm it is very, very
16 real and it is unfortunate that our Country has now
17 turned its back on the devastating consequences of
18 climate changes and refuses to accept the realities
19 of it. A recent report from the UN found that we
20 have only 12 years, 12 years to limit the true
21 catastrophic effects of global warming. This should
22 be a sign to all of us that we have no time to waste
23 and that time is of the essence and that we must act
24 now. New York City has set ambitious goals to combat
25 climate change including sending zero waste to the

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2 landfills by 2030 and launching the largest compost
3 program in the Country and given that our organics
4 program is at present voluntary, our public servants
5 should serve as a model to propel the cultural shift
6 on organics recycling throughout the City. Education
7 and outreach will be critical to this program's
8 success. In our policy brief, we highlighted best
9 practices from San Francisco, which has had mandatory
10 organics recycling since 2009. The City of San
11 Francisco uses zero waste coordinators in each Agency
12 and Office to support education and compliance
13 efforts and these Zero Waste Coordinators are City
14 Employees who volunteer to serve in the role and
15 receive additional training and support from San
16 Francisco's Department of the Environment to ensure
17 that employees understand and follow the Organics
18 Recycling Law. This is a model, that we should
19 consider using for education, outreach and compliance
20 as part of the pilot program. I recognize that it
21 will take resources but I think given the, given the
22 realities that we face it is certainly worth it and
23 we cannot afford to stall the City's Organics
24 Collection Program in light of the impending Climate
25 Crisis. I urge my colleagues to support this Bill.

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2 I look forward to the discussion today and I thank
3 you for this opportunity to say a few words. Thank
4 you, Mr. Chairman and Happy Birthday to your little
5 baby boy.

6 CHAIR ANTONIO REYNOSO: It was, two days
7 ago. Thank you for that. Uhm it has been a great
8 experience being a dad, uhm everyone says that it
9 changes you and that's the truth, it's absolutely the
10 truth so thank you for that. Our Public Advocate for
11 13 more days who is going to go on to bigger and
12 better things, uhm protecting us at the State level.
13 We are going to miss you dearly here in the City
14 Council presiding over us. I know your work that you
15 did as a Sanitation Committee Member who was one of
16 the first Sanitation Committee Members from Brooklyn
17 or Committee Chairs from Brooklyn uhm before no
18 wanted to seat, it was all Staten Islanders that took
19 all, that did all the work but once they shut down
20 Fresh Kill it got hot again so thank you again and I
21 am looking forward to moving on this Bill as soon as
22 possible. Uhm again thank you for your advocacy.
23 Now I will allow for Commissioner of Sanitation, D.
24 Kathryn Garcia. And I need to swear you just though
25 just saying.

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KATHRYN GARCIA: Okay you can swear me

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in.

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COUNSEL: Please raise your right hand.

5

Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and

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nothing but the truth in your testimony today and to

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answer Council Member questions honestly?

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KATHRYN GARCIA: I do.

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COUNSEL: Thank you.

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KATHRYN GARCIA: Good morning Chair

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Reynoso and Members of the Committee on Sanitation

12

and Solid Waste Management and Public Advocate

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Leticia James for the next few days. I am Kathryn

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Garcia, Commissioner of the Department of Sanitation

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and I am joined by Bridget Anderson, Deputy

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Commissioner for Recycling and Sustainability for the

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Department. The New York City Department of

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Sanitation collects more than 3.5 million tons of

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waste and recyclables each year. New Yorkers are

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accustomed to separating traditional recyclables and

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placing them at the curb for department pickup. This

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includes metal, glass, cartons and plastic and paper

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and corrugated cardboard. As we continue to improve

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our curbside recycling rate compared to a decade ago,

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we also recognize the changing nature of our waste

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stream and the economic trends that influence how we must plan and identify opportunities to divert other materials from disposal and develop sustainable programs to manage New York City's discards beyond the traditional curbside collection. Earlier this year, we released our 2017 Waste Characterization Study, a comprehensive analysis of the composition of our curbside refuse and recycling collections. This study which the Department presented to this Committee in May found that 34% of the waste the department collects is traditional curbside recyclables, mixed paper and cardboard and metal, glass, plastic and cartons. Since the 1980s we've worked to develop one of the earliest and now the largest mandatory curbside recycling program of any municipality in the Country. We now collect more than 600,000 tons of these products per year and capture more than 50% of these designated recyclables in our curbside recycling program. Another 34% of the waste we collect is organics, food scraps, food soiled paper and yard waste. We have developed the Nation's Largest Curbside Organics Collection Program serving 3.5 million New Yorkers. Last year we collected 43,000 tons of organics through the

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2 curbside collection program and food scrap drop off
3 sites, a number that we hope to continue to grow.
4 However, even if we were able to divert 100% of all
5 traditional recyclables and organics into the
6 appropriate curbside collection programs, we would
7 only divert 68% of the waste we collect. That is far
8 from our goal of sending 0 waste to landfills. To
9 achieve this goal, we must develop policies and
10 programs to address the other 1/3 of our waste stream
11 that does not have a home in the curbside diversion
12 programs. These policies and programs can also help
13 to promote waste reduction and reuse to decrease the
14 overall amount of waste we collect and contribute to
15 our zero waste goals. In the last several years, we
16 have implemented new programs and expansions to the
17 services we offer New Yorkers for non-curbside
18 collected materials and the infrastructure to handle
19 it. We take this role as stewards as the City's Zero
20 Waste Goals very seriously and we will continue
21 aggressively on this path in order to grow these
22 programs. Today, we are incredibly proud of the work
23 that we have done so far. In today's testimony I
24 will highlight several of these programs in place
25 today and some challenges we aim to overcome in the

1
2 future. New York City has a robust reuse sector
3 comprised of non-profit and commercial enterprises
4 that collects and redistributes unwanted goods.
5 Reuse is considered to be a higher and better use
6 than recycling as products can continue to be used
7 for their original intended purpose. These efforts
8 reflect a changing focus rather than focusing on just
9 diverting waste for recycling via curbside
10 collection, we are treating discarded materials as an
11 opportunity for us to build industries and develop a
12 local economy around materials that can be recovered.
13 The Department's efforts to track and measure the
14 flow of reused and donated materials in New York City
15 are precedent setting nationwide. In 2016, we
16 launched our DonateNYC website and mobile app to make
17 it easier for New Yorkers to give good, find goods
18 and do good. These tools provide an easy way to find
19 local opportunities to reuse unwanted goods and to
20 directly exchange unwanted goods with organizations
21 that need them. We also provide support to the local
22 nonprofit community to expand their capacities and
23 reach more New Yorkers. In Fiscal Year 2018,
24 DonateNYC partner organizations together reused
25 52,000 tons of used or surplus materials. These

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include more than 31,000 tons of rescued food, 11,000 tons on textiles, 8,000 tons of used goods and nearly 1,000 tons of electronics. Last year, the Department released the New York City Reuse Sector Report, a comprehensive survey of the City's reuse associated business and organizations that includes places that sell, repair or rent used items. That report found that more than 2,200 businesses with more than 3,600 locations citywide engage in reuse, resell, repair and rental services reducing the amount of waste New Yorkers throw away. The Department also continues to promote efforts to reduce food waste by encouraging the donation of surplus edible food. Pursuant to Local Law 176 of 2017, the Department has finalized the development of a food donation portal that we expect to launch next spring. This application will be a new component of our web-based and mobile DonateNYC platform and will increase food donations and recovery from businesses with surplus edible food by matching donor food establishments with food rescue organizations. Clothing and textiles make up 6% of residential waste and we continue to work with our partners to expand opportunities to donate, reuse and recycle these items. In 2011, the City launched

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2 ReFashionNYC in partnership with the nonprofit
3 housing works to make clothing donation easy through
4 a convenient in-building collection service.
5 Apartment buildings with 10 or more units can apply
6 to receive a donation bin placed in a common area of
7 the building. Residents put their unwanted textiles
8 in the bin, when it is full, the material is
9 collected and put to reuse. All proceeds from
10 donations support the charitable mission of housing
11 works. Today nearly 1,700 residential buildings with
12 170,000 households and more than 360,000 residents
13 have refashion bins. In Fiscal Year 2018, New
14 Yorkers donated 1,900 tons of textiles through
15 Refashion NYC. We continue to grow the program and
16 have recently worked with housing works to add more
17 partners, to expand capacity for textile donations
18 and we are conducting outreach to dry cleaners,
19 laundromats, fitness centers and other clothing
20 related businesses to encourage them to enroll as
21 well. Also support other efforts to donate used
22 clothing, we partner with GrowNYC to offer weekly
23 clothing collections at green markets and to host
24 community scale clothing donation and stop and swap
25 events citywide. Earlier this month, we worked with

1
2 Goodwill to collect discarded clothing at the New
3 York City Marathon. Although electronic waste
4 comprises less than 1% of the waste stream,
5 electronics often contain toxic materials like
6 mercury, cadmium, lead and other heavy metals that
7 can be toxic to humans and the environment. The
8 Department created E-cycleNYC in 2013 in partnership
9 with ERI an industry leader in safe and secure
10 electronics recycling. Similar to RefashionNYC the
11 E-CycleNYC apartment building program is provided at
12 no cost to the City and is available in any building
13 with 10 or more units. It has since grown to be the
14 most expansive and convenient E-Waste collection
15 program in the country serving nearly 14,000
16 apartment buildings with more than 850,000 households
17 and 1.8 million residents. Additionally, since 2016,
18 the Department is also phasing in appointment based
19 electronic waste collection service for residents who
20 do not live in large apartment buildings eligible for
21 the E-CycleNYC program. Today residents of Staten
22 Island, Brooklyn and Western Queens can schedule a
23 collection appointment on-line or by calling 3-1-1.
24 This program will expand to the rest of Queens and
25 Bronx next fall. We also continue to accept

1
2 electronic waste at our safe disposal events and at
3 community scale electronic waste recycling events
4 hosted in partnership with local elected officials
5 and community organizations. Together our electronic
6 waste recycling programs collected and properly
7 recycled nearly 4,000 tons of electronic waste in
8 Fiscal 18. The comparison between the participation
9 and E-CycleNYC and RefashionNYC draws an important
10 distinction. In 2015, a New York State Law banned
11 the curbside collection of electronic waste as refuse
12 and the City enacted regulated to enforce this State
13 Law. This Disposal Ban has helped dramatically grow
14 the participation in each of the Departments
15 Electronic Waste Recycling Programs. The 2017 Waste
16 Characterization Study showed that the amount of E-
17 waste in our curbside waste stream had declined by
18 60%. For textiles, a similar disposal band does not
19 exist and participation in RefashionNYC program is
20 entirely voluntary. As a result, participation in
21 the program has grown at slower rates and fewer
22 buildings have enrolled overall. Like electronic
23 waste, harmful household products make up a very
24 small share of the overall waste stream just 0.4%.
25 But these products can pose a danger to sanitation

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2 employees on collection and in the transfer station
3 and they can present a risk to humans and the
4 environment when disposed improperly. The Department
5 hosts 10 annual safe disposal events short for
6 solvents, automotive, flammable and electronics. At
7 these events, two in each borough annually, New
8 Yorkers can drop off these harmful household
9 products. These products include paint, household
10 cleansers, and chemicals, automotive fluid,
11 electronic waste, unwanted medicines and other
12 potentially dangerous products from around the home.
13 In the last two years the Department has also begun
14 offering smaller popup safe events in partnership
15 with local elected officials and community groups.
16 The Department also operates five household special
17 waste sites, one in each borough. These sites are
18 open every Saturday and the last Friday of each
19 month. These sites which are related by the New York
20 State Department of Environmental Conservation
21 accepts latex paint, fluorescent light bulbs, mercury
22 containing devices, car batteries and other common
23 special waste products. Together these programs
24 collect more than 600 tons of household hazardous
25 waste in Fiscal Year 2018. New York City Waste

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Stream and our non-curbside recycling programs are influenced heavily by State Law. The Bottle Bill, more formally known as the New York State Returnable Containing Law is an effective program that diverts a significant quantity of bottles and cans. Bottle Bill Diversion represents the diligent and sore separation of containers by New York residents that are captured not in our curbside collections but rather through redemption centers. However, because this material is not collected on our recycling trucks, we are not able to count this in our mandated curbside diversion rate. This means that the overall amount of material recycled by New Yorkers and our Recycling Diversion Rate are both effectively much larger than our statistics show. Since the Bottle Bill was amended in 2012, the deposit initiators are no longer required to report on the quantity of redeemed beverage containers by County in New York State to the New York State DC, which had until then published them. Each year we work to get voluntary reporting of Bottle Bill Diversion from redeemers operating in New York City and report this in our non-curbside statistics but we do not have a full picture. Our partial reporting from Fiscal 18

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2 documented more than 50,000 tons of bottles and cans
3 redeemed and we think that the total number likely is
4 more than double this amount. Several other State
5 Laws mandate non-curbside collection programs for
6 various products. The Electronic Equipment,
7 Recycling and Reuse Act established the disposal ban
8 that was let, that has led to this success of our
9 city-run electronic waste recycling programs.
10 However, that Law which pre-empted a similar City Law
11 did not set sufficiently clear or aggressive
12 requirements for electronic manufactures to fund
13 takeback and recycling programs. While New York City
14 has benefited substantially from the extended
15 producer responsibility components of this Law,
16 especially in comparison to many upstate County,
17 Cities and Towns we have been forced to shoulder
18 additional costs associated with our appointment
19 based electronic waste collection program. In
20 addition, the State has enacted Laws requiring
21 plastic bag recycling and rechargeable battery
22 recycling in certain establishments. However, both
23 of these Laws create challenges from both the
24 measurement and enforcement perspective. The
25 Department continues to advocate for better reporting

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2 requirements and local enforcement authority for
3 these and other State-mandated non-curbside recycling
4 programs. Looking forward, the Department will
5 continue to seek New and Innovative ways to reduce,
6 reuse and recycle waste through non-curbside methods.
7 There are several categories of ways for which few or
8 no recycling options current exist. We are excited
9 to finally implement the ban on expanded polystyrene
10 food service products and we look forward to working
11 with the State and City Governments to enact
12 meaningful reform for single use carry out bags. We
13 will continue to evaluate options to promote reusable
14 or recyclable products and we will explore options
15 for additional non-curbside recycling programs. In
16 addition, we have increasingly looked upstream in the
17 product cycle to influence the choices that
18 manufacturers, retailers and consumers make as they
19 create, design, sell and purchase products. The
20 Department has worked with several consumer goods
21 manufacturers, waste management enterprises and other
22 State and Municipalities to work toward a circular
23 economy where products and resources can be
24 continuously reused, refurnished, and regenerated for
25 ongoing use as new products. I now turn to Intro

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2 1075, which authorized the creation of a two-year
3 pilot program in no fewer than three boroughs to
4 collect organic material from City offices that
5 receive Department collection service. The
6 Department currently provides organics collection
7 service in certain city buildings on request and
8 where are the collection services available including
9 City Hall. We also offer curbside organic collection
10 service at nearly 800 public schools. The Department
11 supports the goal of aligning our City Government
12 more closely with our Zero Waste Goals and we look
13 forward to embarking on this pilot to help us study
14 participation rates and tonnage diversion in order to
15 achieve our goal. I would also like to thank the
16 public advocate for sponsorship of this Bill and for
17 her ongoing dedication to sustainable waste
18 management both in her current role and in her tenure
19 as Chair of the Sanitation Committee. I am pleased
20 to assure good luck as she has to Albany though I
21 think it is very cold there, to assume the office of
22 Attorney General and snowier. It's actually snowier.
23 Together as, I hope you come back to the City right,
24 you got to be back in Brooklyn? Oh, okay. There you
25 go. Together as we as New Yorkers have an incredible

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2 opportunity to achieve our goal of sending zero waste
3 to landfills by 2030 through a combination of both
4 curbside and non-curbside collection programs. The
5 initiatives that I have outlined today place us on a
6 path to achieve this goal and I thank the
7 Administration and Council for their past, present
8 and future support as the Department leads the City
9 on this journey. Thank you for the opportunity to
10 testify today and we are not happy to answer your
11 questions.

12 CHAIR ANTONIO REYNOSO: Thank you
13 Commissioner, I want to allow for the Public Advocate
14 to ask questions and I know she is feeling a little
15 under the weather too so I just want to make sure
16 that if you need to get out early you can.

17 PUBLIC ADVOCATE LETICIA JAMES: Thank
18 you.

19 CHAIR ANTONIO REYNOSO: I just want to
20 acknowledge Council Member Cabrera, Espinal, Deutsch
21 and Deutsch from the Committee.

22 PUBLIC ADVOCATE LETICIA JAMES: Thank you
23 so much, Mr. Chair. Uhm there is a bug going around
24 and I think I caught it. Uhm I want to thank you for
25 your testimony, thank you for your kind remarks and I

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2 look forward to working with you to identify those
3 buildings. Uhm, do you have any idea what buildings,
4 we, where this pilot program would best work.

5 KATHRYN GARCIA: Uhm I think that we
6 would need to work on, on what would make the most
7 sense. I would actually like to see a variety of
8 different building types so that we can really study
9 what, what works in terms of the outreach, in terms
10 of their set ups uhm so we are thinking that it would
11 be primarily in office buildings.

12 PUBLIC ADVOCATE LETICIA JAMES: Okay.

13 KATHRYN GARCIA: Uhm that are picked up
14 by the Department but that we are open to other
15 locations as well, like for example, uhm based on a
16 Sanitation Worker we actually recruited a food bank
17 not far from our offices in Manhattan. I think
18 because he thought it would help with rats. So, and
19 I think that it has gotten a little bit better there.

20 PUBLIC ADVOCATE LETICIA JAMES: Good.
21 And you suspended, I guess the expansion of Curbside
22 Organics Collection uhm was, can you tell it why and
23 it is going to get back on track for further
24 expansion?

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KATHRYN GARCIA: Uhm, so yes, we took a pause at the beginning of May of this year and our intention is to get back on track. We have been making adjustments in terms of how we collect it. And so, in some Districts we were collecting both days with uhm a split body truck. Which you probably would have seen. I don't have to explain what a split body truck is and we were having issue with bulk so we had to change, sort of and create a hybrid where at least one of those days we are still collecting with a regular size, rear loader, which is required redoing routes so that is what we have spent our time, sort of mapping out again, but our intention is to get back on track.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE LETICIA JAMES: And is there a report card on how each District is doing with respect to organics collections?

KATHRYN GARCIA: So, we don't have a report card per se but we certainly have data on who is, who is giving us more material. Uhm, who is participating more. Uhm and who is not. We are happy to provide like the actual raw numbers of. We don't grade it, we don't say well this is an A, this is a B but we know which have higher percentages.

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PUBLIC ADVOCATE LETICIA JAMES: And is
Manhattan leading again?

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KATHRYN GARCIA: No, because they don't
have a lot of curbside. Uhm no.

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PUBLIC ADVOCATE LETICIA JAMES: Brooklyn?

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KATHRYN GARCIA: Brooklyn would be
better, yes.

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PUBLIC ADVOCATE LETICIA JAMES: Okay.
And my last question, is separate and apart from the
Legislation is medicine?

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KATHRYN GARCIA: Yes.

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PUBLIC ADVOCATE LETICIA GARCIA: Can we
focus a little bit on that and what efforts are we
doing to collect outdated medicine in cabinets to
address obviously the whole, I mean I guess, be a
part of the effort to combat opioid.

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KATHRYN GARCIA: So, there are two
things, one is that the, the State does have take
back programs with pharmacies but we also will
collect it at all of our safe disposal events.

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PUBLIC ADVOCATE LETICIA JAMES: Okay.

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KATHRYN GARCIA: Uhm, yeah, its tricky
because the chain of custody is pretty rigid in terms
of the handling so that is where we take back drugs

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2 of any kind but then you can usually return them to
3 pharmacies as well.

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PUBLIC ADVOCATE LETICIA JAMES: Thank
5 you.

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CHAIR ANTONIO REYNOSO: Thank you Public
7 Advocate. And Commissioner I just want to thank you
8 for your thorough testimony uhm I'm going to.

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KATHRYN GARCIA: There will be a quiz.

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CHAIR ANTONIO REYNOSO: Well, I have
11 questions here and I'm going through the testimony to
12 reference the questions and I don't want you to
13 repeat yourself so I'm going to be limited, so I'm
14 just going to ask about a couple of things that I
15 think are important. I want to get my colleagues to,
16 to ask questions. The plastics bags issue. Uhm so
17 can we just talk about that for, what we are doing to
18 reduce the plastic bag use? Uhm and after the feat
19 was delayed what work alternatively did the
20 Department of Sanitation to do to try to deal with
21 this issue and the reusable bags, are they still
22 being handed out? Is it something, those are very
23 popular so I just want to know if we can get just an
24 update on the plastic bag...?

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KATHRYN GARCIA: Certainly.

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CHAIR ANTONIO REYNOSO: Situation, thank
you.

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KATHRYN GARCIA: So, obviously you are
aware that after the great work that they Council
did, you were pre-empted and you know I think that we
were hopeful that the report that came out would lead
to a path forward, instead it was really just was a
series of options of which uhm the Legislature at the
State Level have not taken any action. Uhm so we
have been diligently providing many of our reusable
bags. We are over 400,000 bags have been given out
in the City of New York and we continue to do that to
spread the work and you actually start to see them
now all over the place, which you know is heartening
uhm because everytime someone remembers to bring it,
it is a bunch of plastic that we therefore do not
have in our waste stream but it is challenging
politically at the moment uhm so you know we are
hopeful that with the change in the State Senate that
we might begin to see movement again on this issue.

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CHAIR ANTONIO REYNOSO: And I do want ot
say that we had some issues in the State Assembly as
well, believe it or not even from some of our more
progressive members, so it is going to be a tough

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2 one, long term, I just wanted to know that we are
3 still working to try our best to try and educate
4 folks on the dangers and the challenges that plastic
5 bags pose so we can start having a reaction to it, I
6 guess or an action to it.

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KATHRYN GARCIA: No abs... I mean
8 absolutely but I mean this is, this is what we know
9 from other Cities that if you do a fee of any kind
10 you get more participation. Uhm so we are doing what
11 we can with it being a voluntary action, bring your
12 reusable bag but we are certainly making every effort
13 to provide people with access to reusable bags.

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CHAIR ANTONIO REYNOSO: I just want to I
15 guess, not quote but uhm Council Member Laurie Cumbo
16 was convinced to support the plastic bag fee, when
17 she saw how effective the fee for the Metro Card was
18 and we practically stick with the same Metro Card now
19 and before they were being thrown away.

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KATHRYN GARCIA: They were all over the
21 floor.

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CHAIR ANTONIO REYNOSO: Everywhere and
23 now everyone keeps a, it's not an issue, no one had a
24 problem with it and it hasn't affected any large

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2 population, whether you are poor or rich you just
3 stick with your card.

4 KATHRYN GARCIA: Uh-huh.

5 CHAIR ANTONIO REYNOSO: So just throwing
6 that fees can change behavior, more so than anything
7 else and not cause, and not cause a burden on to
8 nicer people. Uhm can we identify what cannot be
9 diverted from landfills. There is nothing that we
10 can do about it, it is going to go to landfill.

11 KATHRYN GARCIA: I'm not sure that there
12 is nothing. We haven't come up with a plan like for
13 example, diapers and hygienic products are a
14 relatively large portion of the waste and they are
15 about 4.2% of the waste stream and at this point we
16 don't have a plan for them. Uhm there are non-
17 designated plastics such as styrofoam which make up
18 5.5% of the waste stream but we are obviously going
19 after styrofoam as of January 1. Carpeting and
20 upholstery are a chunk of that and we are hopeful
21 that there is some extended producer responsibility
22 Bills that have been floating around that we are
23 hoping to work towards having enacted.

24 CHAIR ANTONIO REYNOSO: Can you just,
25 clarify, producer responsibility?

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KATHRYN GARCIA: Certainly.

CHAIR ANTONIO REYNOSO: Is that a State
or a Federal, like who? Who? Who?

KATHRYN GARCIA: Well, anyone, any, any,
it tends to mainly happen at the State level and what
it is similar to the Bottle Bill where the
manufacturers are responsible for ensuring that at
the end of the life of their product, their product
has somewhere to go. And in its used much, much,
much more extensively in Europe than it is here. So,
it actually forces the manufacturers of the products
or the packager to think about you know as you put it
together how are you going to take it apart. And so,
they have been very effective at both reducing
overall waste and making things easier to recycle.
So, that is one of the, we know has been floating
around at the State level for a while and so has
Paint Stewardship Bills. So. But that's, those are
some of the products, also construction and
demolition material so obviously if a contractor does
work on your they are responsible for it but if you
do it yourself then we will collect it. So, that is
another chunk of material. So there, are, there are
some that are still challenging but you know I think

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2 that we want to continue to create creatively. Some
3 of those are easier than others.

4 CHAIR ANTONIO REYNOSO: So, in your
5 testimony you went through DonateNYC, RefashionNYC,
6 the Electronic Waste, Harmful Household Products.
7 And while I see that we have an initiative to take on
8 those challenges. I, I'm, I can't sit here feeling
9 comfortable that what we are doing is going to be
10 enough to significantly get us to a place where we
11 are closer to zero waste by 2030. Uhm and I believe
12 a big part of that is education and information not
13 getting out to the public. I just want to uhm, I
14 know that during the Budget season I'm going to be
15 requesting that you get a significant increase in
16 your marketing budget so that we can start really
17 putting, putting the City on the notice as to the
18 work that we want to do to get to zero waste. So,
19 can you, can you just let us know, we had initiatives
20 before like the Save as You Throw Program which we
21 haven't seen moving forward. Can we just talk about
22 what it is that we are thinking about what we are
23 doing that can get us there and whether or not we are
24 on track?

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KATHRYN GARCIA: Certainly, so obviously we do agree with you that having a marketing budget would be useful and we are starting to put together the bones of what an RFP might look like for that since obviously procurement is a very long process in the City of New York. Uhm because we do think that we need to continually get the word out about waste and opportunities and programs that we do have for people to make use of. Uhm you know there, there are tools in the toolbox and obviously ones that we have, that we have been implementing are primarily on the voluntary side. I think if we are going to actually meet our goals it will be a question of whether or not we want to take on some things that are more challenging and really going to be able to drive that which politically might not be the most comfortable thing to do.

CHAIR ANTONIO REYNOSO: So, in short politics is holding you back?

KATHRYN GARCIA: Isn't it always.

CHAIR ANTONIO REYNOSO: I hope my politics are not. So uhm, now I appreciate that answer. I think people need to hear you know the challenges that we are going through in trying to

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2 achieve zero waste by 2030. We have a lot of folks
3 that talk about climate change and the need to
4 protect the earth and the environment but when it
5 comes to doing the aggressive things that are
6 necessary to get us there, uhm like this, it goes
7 over their head, right. This is not the fancy green
8 new deal so maybe are not as encouraged or as
9 motivated to be helpful. But uhm what it thinks
10 again with education, we can get more people involved
11 and motivated so I will do my part uhm as well to
12 push that. I want to allow for my colleagues to ask
13 a few questions uhm Council Member Espinal first is
14 going to be followed by Council Member Deutsch.

15 RAFAEL ESPINAL: Woah, woah, I had no
16 idea I was first, okay. Good morning Commissioner.
17 It is a pleasure seeing you. I have I guess two
18 questions. One uhm something that I saw recently and
19 maybe I was hallucinating when I saw this but it was
20 early 6 a.m. a Sanitation truck was in front of my
21 house picking up the trash and recyclables. I
22 thought what I was the, the sanitation worker dumping
23 the plastic, my plastic recyclables into the same
24 trash as the overall trash. Are there any instances
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where that might happen or maybe I was seeing things?
Or?

KATHRYN GARCIA: Or maybe they were just
doing the wrong thing?

RAFAEL ESPINAL: Maybe it was in the
wrong thing? Right?

KATHRYN GARCIA: No, there are certainly
instances where sanitation workers do the wrong
thing. Ho... thankfully based on the tonnage numbers
it is rare that that would happen but if you see it
again, please let me know.

RAFAEL ESPINAL: Okay, great, I was just
wondering. Uhm it was good to know.

KATHRYN GARCIA: You can actually tell me
today if you remember the day and I can...

RAFAEL ESPINAL: Yeah, I don't remember
it was actually like a month or two ago. Uhm and
then second question, I did pass that Bill that would
create that Food Waste Portal that you mentioned in
your testimony, last year. Can you give me more of
an update and tell me more of how it is going to
work? And what the design is like? And how
businesses and nonprofits can play a role in using
it?

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KATHRYN GARCIA: Oh certainly, I mean so really, it's, it's a matching and I will let Deputy Commissioner Anderson speak more to it but it is similar in structure to our current Donate Site uhm but we are excited about it and so it is also sort of how to make it sort of streamlined and people understand what is allowed and what is not allowed. And so, I'm excited to have perhaps an event come March if it is not snowing.

RAFAEL ESPINAL: Right, I'm looking forward to that.

BRIDGET ANDERSON: So, uhm we are very excited about it and we have been seeing the updates on that, we are beta testing it right now with some potential donors and potential recipients and one of the things that we didn't want to do is uhm add bureaucracy to things that already work well. So, City Harvest Food Bank already have very effective portals for a lot of their food. So, the question was how do we tack all of the food that is not getting captured already and one of the primary points is to do hyperlocal connections of foods. So, we have somebody who is curating donors who have food to donate, where they are located and the recipients

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2 in where they are located to see how close, how
3 closely located are they and could there be informal
4 arrangements made within a neighborhood even to
5 connected donated food and recipient foods. So, we
6 have a front-end portal for donors and recipients to
7 sign up. Different types of food categories they can
8 say they are interested in. We are very much
9 supportive of eating and eating in this process. And
10 then we have an Administrative portal where we are
11 actually physically creating matches. And one of the
12 focuses is how do we do this in a hyperlocal way,
13 less traffic uhm and create those personal and
14 neighborhood connections.

15 RAFAEL ESPINAL: So, what type of
16 businesses would be able to participate in this. I
17 have a lot of catering halls and all these other
18 folks who find this to be an attractive option.

19 BRIDGET ANDERSON: Absolutely, so any,
20 and this actually helps too, if you are required to
21 separate your food scraps for composting you can also
22 remove some of those food scraps or leftover food
23 through donations as well. So, any business that has
24 leftover food, can sign up, we hope they will
25 register for the portal, when you have excess food

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available, you put it on the portal, we try to do matches as quickly as possible so if there is perishable food and in the connection there is a discussion that happens about who can deliver, who is picking up you know how that works and what the capacities are of the recipient and of the donor.

RAFAEL ESPINAL: Okay, great, uhm I just, Commissioner I just want to thank you. I know that the compost program was put on pause for a while, uhm but you are accommodating enough to get us a trash bin in East New York so we are very grateful, thankful. Organic.

KATHRYN GARCIA: It's an Organics Bin it's not a trash bin.

RAFAEL ESPINAL: Sorry.

KATHRYN GARCIA: The food scrap drops off stuff.

RAFAEL ESPINAL: Yes, it's amazing, thank you.

CHAIR ANTONIO REYNOSO: I'm glad to hear that as well. Council Member Chaim Deutsch, also from Brooklyn. Brooklyn is well represented here today and the Bronx.

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CHAIM DEUTSCH: Thank you, thank you
Chair. I just want to say Commissioner, uhm in
regards to Senior Citizens and people with
disabilities, so, how can we better accommodate these
individuals when uhm many are receiving tickets from
Sanitation Department like I have a constituent for
example, who has a prosthetic leg and his aid leaves
before uhm let's say 2:00 in the afternoon and then
the trash needs to be put out like let's say after
4:00 or 5:00.

KATHRYN GARCIA: After 4:00.

CHAIM DEUTSCH: Yeah and so when they put
it out sooner, then.

KATHRYN GARCIA: It's a violation.

CHAIM DEUTSCH: Uhm then it's a violation
and this has become an issue in my District. And how
could we uhm tackle this? Maybe through Legislation
or maybe through uhm working with Sanitation, letting
them know certain addresses that people are having
difficulties to putting out the trash at the, at the
given time. It's been happening quite often to
several individuals in my District who are disabled.

KATHRYN GARCIA: Right, no I mean I think
that this challenging because we, they, it is

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2 actually a specifically a rule that it has to be
3 after 4:00. There is no discretion.

4 CHAIM DEUTSCH: More challenging for.

5 KATHRYN GARCIA: But there is not
6 discretion for the enforcement agent to not write the
7 ticket if they see it. Uhm, we can talk about how we
8 can be helpful in terms of that in different ways but
9 the one thing I would not want to see is the reason
10 that we want it out after 4:00 is because we don't
11 want it to sit out on the curb for an excessive
12 period of time, so, the longer that it is out there
13 it's, it's a problem for attracting vermin. But we
14 can sit down and certainly talk through specifically
15 how many people are having issues with this and look
16 at what we can do going forward.

17 CHAIM DEUTSCH: Okay, is there anything
18 that you can think of now?

19 KATHRYN GARCIA: No, there is not, I mean
20 like, because it is, it is pretty rigid. There is no
21 enforcement discretion on this particular piece. It
22 says like we actually did a very specific rule, it
23 used to be a policy. Uhm and then that changed to
24 now it's a rule in the City of New York.

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CHAIM DEUTSCH: Do you believe it could
be an issue for, uhm for seniors?

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KATHRYN GARCIA: Well I mean, I, I, I my
mother is 78 years old she doesn't have a problem
getting, making sure that she is complying with what
the rules are for the City of New York.

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CHAIM DEUTSCH: I'm talking about someone
who has a home care attendant or has an aid. So, if
that home care attendant leaves at a certain hour
where the person cannot pull out the trash, that's,
I'm talking about in those circumstances.

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KATHRYN GARCIA: I feel like those are a
very unique set of circumstances and we should
really, we can really, we can talk about that.

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CHAIM DEUTSCH: We have, uhm tens of
thousands or hundreds of thousands of people with
disability in our City and we have uhm a lot of
seniors, so from, there is a percentage that cannot
pull out their own trash, so they will have maybe
their aids or a neighbor who would pull it out for
them but it doesn't always go out after 4:00 so you
have that, you have that percentage. I'm not talking
about someone who could do it on their or and/or they

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2 could do it on their own, I'm talking about those who
3 can't.

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KATHRYN GARCIA: Alright, we can
5 certainly discuss it in the future.

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CHAIM DEUTSCH: And thank you, and I want
7 to just give a shout out to Henry who has been really
8 amazing and very responsive 24, 24 hours a day.

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KATHRYN GARCIA: I know.

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CHAIM DEUTSCH: As you, thank you.

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KATHRYN GARCIA: Thank you.

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CHAIR ANTONIO REYNOSO: Commissioner, I
13 wanted to just, it seems like we are doing
14 everything. I don't know if we are doing everything
15 to the level that we need to do it. How are we tying
16 it into the zero-waste conversation? How, how are
17 making sure that everything we do speaks to how we
18 are getting to zero waste? Do you have an internal
19 document that shows us how we are going to achieve
20 zero waste and that everything we are doing is
21 contributing to get there? Or are you, kind of or is
22 everyone in the Department of Sanitation right
23 depending on what initiative, working on what's like
24 inside, just trying to get their side road down to
25 zero. I'm just wondering how?

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KATHRYN GARCIA: So, I mean internally obviously we have people who are assigned to specific programs. Uhm but also internally there is the overall metrics which we really look at as how much waste are, we sending still to landfills and so that is our, our benchmark. That is what we are driving against and so that's the big number at the end of the day, is that coming down. Are the tons of recyclables going up and we are very careful to try and document what we know and so they all internally understand and perhaps this is one of the things that we need to do in terms of getting the message out, how their pieces fit into the overall pie of driving down to zero waste.

CHAIR ANTONIO REYNOSO: So, now the Public Advocate's Bill. Uhm in City Hall we heard has a terrible, does a terrible job, a terrible job of putting the organics in the bin and doing what they are supposed to do. They have a very low return, either they eat all of their organics, all of their lunch is eaten and they are extremely efficient or we are just not doing a good job in City Hall. So, I just, I guess, I guess the level of achievement that we can get with this program and piloting it.

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Uhm and making, which building will you pilot? Which ones are you looking to, to take on? So that eventually we can get every City, City Building doing their part?

KATHRYN GARCIA: Right no certainly I think this is still something where uhm perhaps we have to do some education and City Hall. Uhm to deepen our engagement there.

CHAIR ANTONIO REYNOSO: I think what is specifically wrote on the Bill, wrote on the Bill City Hall has to be one of the buildings.

KATHRYN GARCIA: We will, we will continue to work with both your side and other side of the building. Uhm to make sure that we are uhm getting. Uhm you know it is possible that everyone is eating everything. It's unlikely but it is possible uhm that we are getting the diversion that we would expect in that building. But I think we want to look at a variety of sizes like if you are in an office building uhm you know that is large, like how would you do it there? Like what would be your approach? Uhm there are, there are very different scopes of buildings that uhm I think we can look at across all five boroughs, so, we have not picked

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2 specifically any buildings but we want to see, you
3 know, does, when you go in and you are talking to the
4 Department of Health is that different than when you
5 are talking to the City Council? And how do we
6 change our messaging? Or do they have a cafeteria or
7 do they not have a cafeteria? Are most people
8 bringing in their food? Are most people going out to
9 lunch? I think that those play a role in what you
10 would expect uhm coming out of this?

11 CHAIR ANTONIO REYNOSO: Uhm is it, is it
12 unusual that we haven't had those conversations
13 already or that we haven't put forth those models
14 that would be ideal in City Sites so we can get there
15 and once we do get that done in these City Buildings
16 that we can use that as a model for private buildings
17 and so forth and expand on that. You know, I wish it
18 wouldn't have taken Legislation to kind of get there.
19 So, can you just like, can we talk about that?

20 KATHRYN GARCIA: Oh sure, I mean, uhm
21 obviously we obviously appreciate the advocacy of the
22 Public Advocate on this. We do have agencies that
23 are required to do recycling plans so we do engage
24 with them that way. Uhm I think that our focus has
25 been more on the, in the commercial sector more on

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2 where there is food preparation and food activities
3 occurring just because of the volume and then in the
4 private sec... in the residential sector you know that
5 people are either cooking or like there are more food
6 prep activities and this is also why we were doing
7 schools, though they don't seem to cook that much
8 anymore but that's why we were doing schools as a big
9 push. But we certainly should have been, come to you
10 earlier to have this conversation because I do think
11 it is important that City Agencies show that they can
12 walk the walk and talk the talk.

13 CHAIR ANTONIO REYNOSO: That would be go...
14 we should set the example, I agree 100%. Public
15 Advocate, Leticia James.

16 PUBLIC ADVOCATE LETICIA JAMES: So, in
17 schools where, you know I was part of the uhm effort
18 to expand Universal School Lunch. So, with school
19 lunch, with breakfast and I think there is a snack.
20 You are saying that there is less and less cooking?
21 It is all prepackaged and?

22 KATHRYN GARCIA: It is a lot of
23 prepackaged, uhm it's a lot of prepackaged in the
24 schools these days. You know breakfast in your
25 classroom has been challenging because it is a little

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2 bit easier when they go to the cafeteria in terms of
3 set up and those things but you know we continue to
4 work closely with school food and with the custodians
5 to make sure that we are getting it right and you
6 know they did make a big push and got rid of
7 styrofoam several years ago which was huge. Uhm and
8 that has made a big difference.

9 PUBLIC ADVOCATE LETICIA JAMES: You said
10 something interesting which caught my attention, you
11 mentioned that as part of our waste stream which has
12 been challenging is the disposal of feminine products
13 and pampers. There are no biodegradable products on
14 the market?

15 KATHRYN GARCIA: Not that people are
16 using.

17 PUBLIC ADVOCATE LETICIA JAMES: So...

18 KATHRYN GARCIA: I mean that is there is
19 a lot of plastic in diapers and usually there is
20 quite a bit of nonrecyclable material in feminine
21 care products as well. There are some very, very
22 expensive biodegradable products that aren't, that
23 don't perform very well. So, the challenge I think
24 is, is one between you know product performance and
25 you know during the use of the product versus sort of

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2 the end of its live and we are constantly looking at
3 what products are out there, uhm the pros and cons of
4 the different ones but right now and right you know
5 people can use cloth diapers but again there is an
6 expense to having those things cleaned, etc. so, so
7 I think the challenge is we don't have the right
8 solution yet. I mean certainly there are companies
9 working on it.

10 PUBLIC ADVOCATE LETICIA JAMES: And is
11 there, does the City have a relationship with some of
12 these major corporations. One to talk about this
13 issue and two to talk about packaging.

14 KATHRYN GARCIA: So, we don't have
15 necessarily direct relationships with them but we
16 have been working in contour with things like the
17 Closed Loop Fund to meet with like the Unilevers of
18 the World and put a little bit of pressure on them
19 because they will say you know we are doing 20% post-
20 consumer and I am like that's not enough. Uhm you
21 need to help create the market for the materials that
22 you use.

23 PUBLIC ADVOCATE LETICIA JAMES: Right.

24 KATHRYN GARCIA: Uhm we don't have a
25 tremendous amount of leverage beyond the bully pulpit

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2 but we are trying to make sure that we are having the
3 connection so where we can have an impact we will.
4 Uhm and using the power of municipalities together to
5 have that conversation. Uhm there is clearly a lot
6 of interest particularly coming out of Europe where
7 there is a lot of pressure on the big multi-nationals
8 to think through their product design and end of
9 life. Uhm they are just not the same Legislation
10 here as there are in other places.

11 PUBLIC ADVOCATE LETICIA JAMES: I do know
12 that we passed a Bill, I believe last year, basically
13 requiring that all I think shelters, I think shelters
14 that we would providing residents I think free
15 diapers, or Pampers and feminine products.

16 KATHRYN GARCIA: Uh-huh.

17 PUBLIC ADVOCATE LETICIA JAMES: Uhm have
18 we, are we, as part of the RSP was the issue with
19 respect to recycling part of the uhm?

20 KATHRYN GARCIA: I can't answer that but
21 I mean I would say that probably the issue was the
22 performance of the product.

23 BRIDGET ANDERSON: Uhm and cost.

24 KATHRYN GARCIA: Well, and cost and I
25 mean the, the, as Deputy Commissioner Anderson

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2 mentioned, you could use cloth diapers, I have to
3 say, it was many, many moons ago, I found them very
4 ineffective. So, it was my intention to try and do
5 that but it didn't actually work out very well.

6 PUBLIC ADVOCATE LETICIA JAMES: What
7 worked for my grandmother and my mother can work for
8 the nation.

9 KATHRYN GARCIA: Okay.

10 CHAIR ANTONIO REYNOSO: Thank you, thank
11 you Public Advocate and Commissioner. Thank you for
12 your time. Uhm I appreciate you coming in and
13 helping us out I just I would like to say that I feel
14 like we are kind of running through the motions here
15 when it comes to a lot of this stuff. I am just
16 hoping we could hit a you know a breakthrough a wall
17 here and really starts seeing these numbers drop in a
18 significant way. But I do thank you for your time
19 and your great work so thank you and Bridget thank
20 you so much for being here as well. We have one
21 panel, Adriana Espinosa from the New York League of
22 Conservation Voters, Justin Wood from NOPI, Greg Todd
23 Community Carting and Composting and Eric Goldstein
24 from NRDC the National Research Defense Council.
25 Eric I am going to have you start.

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2 ERIC GOLDSTEIN: Hello? Thank you, Mr.
3 Chairman, my name is Eric Goldstein, New York City
4 Environment Director with the National Resources
5 Defense Council. Thank you for your continuing
6 leadership and for calling this hearing. Managing
7 organic, the organics waste stream, food waste and
8 yard waste is the most important, the most important
9 residential trash initiative launched by the de
10 Blasio Administration. Simply stated, it is going to
11 be impossible for New York City to hold itself out as
12 a National Leader and Sustainability if it can't
13 successfully manage its food waste and yard waste
14 properly. Organics represents the single largest
15 portion of the residential waste stream, more than
16 30% according to the City's most recent waste
17 characterization study. Most of the organics now
18 going to landfills or incinerators where they are
19 buried and generate methane, a very potent global
20 warming gas as you know. So, unless the
21 Administration is able to implement the better
22 solution it will never, ever be able to achieve its
23 zero waste goals or its equally ambitious climate
24 reduction, climate warming reduction goals and under
25 the current approach it will waste valuable

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2 resources. On the commercial side, as you know,
3 there remains excess food that could and should be
4 repurposed and diverted to food banks, etc. and for
5 both commercial and residential organics uhm these
6 materials can be converted into valuable compost and
7 bio gas. Over time, directing organics from away
8 from landfills and incinerators can also save tax
9 payer dollars as the experience in City's that have
10 implemented mandatory programs like San Francisco
11 have demonstrated. Uhm, Sanitation Commissioner
12 Garcia has recognized these facts. On her very first
13 day in office she pledged to make the Department a
14 National leader in sustainability and specifically
15 highlighted the need for separated collection of
16 compostable for City residents. And to her credit
17 and the Department's credit the Organics Collection
18 Program launched in the Bloomberg Administration has
19 been greatly expanded under her leadership. The DSNY
20 Program now is already available to over 1 million
21 City households. But earlier this year, the
22 continued expansion of the Organics Collection
23 Program to new City neighborhoods was halted.
24 Apparently due to City Hall Budget cutbacks. This
25 decision is most short sided and must be reversed.

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2 Expansion of this program along with comprehensive
3 education and outreach efforts are essential if the
4 City's basic sustainability goals are to be achieved.
5 Public Advocate Leticia James has also recognized the
6 importance of better handling of the organics waste
7 stream. Last year, she proposed Legislation that
8 would require all City Agency buildings to
9 participate in the City's Organics Waste Recycling
10 Program, this makes perfect sense and that
11 Legislation was strongly supported by NRDC, as Public
12 Advocate James wrote "our public servants should be
13 the leaders on this issue and help our City towards
14 greater sustainability and responsibility." Training
15 over 300,000 municipals employees to separate food
16 waste by composting is needed she wrote to propel a
17 cultural shift throughout the City and improve the
18 efficiency of the Organics Program. Unfortunately,
19 Public Advocate James sensible original proposal was
20 apparently too much for some short-sided City Hall
21 officials. The amended version of this Legislation
22 Intro 1075A would establish a pilot program mandating
23 that at least 15 building occupied by City Agencies
24 and at least boroughs participate in Organics Pilot
25 Demonstration Program beginning in July 2019. We

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2 don't need any Demonstration Programs. We know that
3 this strategy works. Nevertheless, NRDC supports
4 Intro 1075A, even a small step forward is significant
5 when public policy is turning in the wrong direction
6 but much, much more is needed. The City Council has
7 led New York on solid waste issues in general in
8 composing in particularly in recent years. Both the
9 residential and commercial programs now underway owe
10 much to the City Council Legislation passed in 2013
11 and your leadership has advanced not only this issue
12 but many others on the Solid Waste scene. But now is
13 the time once again for a comprehensive City Council
14 action on this issue. We urge the Council to advance
15 Legislation in 2019 that would direct DSNY to
16 implement the City-wide mandatory Organics Collection
17 Program by December 2020. The Commissioner and the
18 Department could implement such a program, the public
19 would support such a program and we challenge the
20 Administration to tell us how it will ever meet its
21 Zero Waste Goals without such a program serving every
22 City neighborhood. Thanks for your listening and for
23 your continued leadership.

24 CHAIR ANTONIO REYNOSO: Thank you Eric.
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ADRIANA ESPINOSA: Good morning, my name is Adriana Espinosa I am the Director of the New York City Program at the New York League of Conservation Voters. Thank you to Chair Reynoso for the opportunity to testify here today. At the New York League of Conservation Voters supports the passage of Intro 1075A sponsored by Public Advocate James. Diverting waste from landfills, organic waste from landfills is a critical component of the City's Zero Waste Goal. Organics represents the largest category of waste at 34% of the overall waste stream. The waste emits large quantities of methane, a potent greenhouse gas that is harmful to our environment but can otherwise be recycled to become compost or even cream energy. Reaching the 0 by 30 goal established in OneNYC will require work from all New Yorkers, cooperation from City Officials and private industry and by and from the general public and as is the case for all of our ambitious sustainability goals the City should be leading the way going farther, faster than they are expecting of every day New Yorkers. As of Fiscal Year, 2017, curbside recycling rigs were approximately 17.5% while this is an increase of 2005 levels, it is moving far to slowly to reach the 2030

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2 benchmark. More aggressive actions are necessary to
3 get us on track to 0 by 30 and the City can and must
4 lead by example to achieve these goals. While we
5 wish the Bill went further, a pilot program to expand
6 the organics program to City Agencies and Special Use
7 Buildings it is still a positive step forward. If
8 this Bill is adopted, we strongly encourage the
9 Department to make the pilot available to as many
10 City Agencies as practicably with an eye toward
11 expanding to all City Agencies and Institutional
12 Special Use Buildings served by DSNY. Further, NYLCV
13 hopes that the outreach and education conducted
14 pursuant to Intro 1075A will be used to inform the
15 Department of best practices to expand into a
16 Citywide Outreach Program on recycling. For these
17 reasons, the New York League of Conservation Voters
18 supports the passage of Intro 1075A and we urge the
19 City Council to pass this important Legislation.
20 Thank you.

21 CHAIR ANTONIO REYNOSO: Thank you,
22 Adriana.

23 JUSTIN WOOD: Good morning, uhm thank you
24 Chair Reynoso for holding this hearing and thank you
25 to Public Advocate James for sponsoring this

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2 Legislation. My name is Justin Wood I am the
3 Director of Organizing a strategic research at New
4 York Lawyers for the Public Interest and I am going
5 to start by largely echoing the comments of my
6 colleagues in the environment movement. Uhm with
7 every international and federal report finding that
8 we have entered a period of accelerating climate
9 change and climate related social crisis. It is
10 imperative that our local government do everything in
11 its power to reduce greenhouse emissions, including
12 emissions from landfilling of organic waste. So,
13 while we thank the Public Advocate for introducing
14 this Bill, uhm we are really disappointed that this
15 is such a limited pilot and, and it's surprising that
16 we are not moving forward with a, a much more
17 aggressive Bill to ensure that all City buildings uhm
18 participate in Organics Recycling. Uhm we urge DSNY
19 to go beyond the bear minimum uhm in this Bill and
20 rapidly ramp up to Organics Recycling Service to a
21 larger number of municipal buildings as soon as
22 possible. However, as a pilot program, this Bill is
23 a small step in the right direction that can set the
24 stage for a much bolder expansion of both Municipal
25 and Commercial Organics Recycling across the City for

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three reasons. First, by encouraging our huge City workforce to participate in waste diversion at work we also promote Organics Recycling at home and in our communities. Thousands of municipal employees and New Yorkers visiting these municipal buildings can become ambassadors for Organics Recycling. Second, by increasing the volume of source separated Organic Waste along DSNY Collection Routes, this measure may enable some of these routes to become more efficient and cost effective. Both the collection and processing of Organic waste via composting and anaerobic digestion creates significant more jobs than exporting waste to landfills or incineration and should be viewed as a source or green job development for the NYC region and part of our Green New Deal that hopefully we are going to be working toward on all fronts. Third, Organic Waste Collection from municipal buildings can also serve as a model and testing ground for similar types of buildings in NYCs huge commercial sector which lags far behind other cities in recycling and Organics Recycling. As you know, DSNY and the City Council, uhm are preparing to implement a Zoned Waste Collection System which will be a historic reform of the private waste system and

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2 require private haulers to meet disposal reduction
3 targets, consistent with the City's Zero Waste Goal
4 and to provide accurate and transparent data about
5 quantities collected and recycled. And I want to
6 pause and also thank the Public Advocate for her
7 support of this historic policy and her staff's
8 participation in that process as well. Because the
9 Zoned Commercial Waste System will enable DSNY to
10 have far more oversight and involvement in commercial
11 recycling programs, comparisons between municipal
12 buildings and commercial buildings could enable to
13 Agency to test employee education program,
14 contamination levels and diversion rates to find best
15 practices as both recycling programs expand. I will
16 just close by noting that the City's OneNYC Plan
17 calls for a 90% reduction of disposed waste from both
18 the DSNY Managed Waste Stream and the Commercial
19 Sector by 2030 which necessitates major growth in
20 Organics Recycling participation in both sectors over
21 the next 10 years. When the face the stark reality
22 of the climate crisis, cities like New York will need
23 to do a lot more to achieve major greenhouse gas
24 emissions reductions across every sector including
25 waste management as quickly as possible. In

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2 conclusion, we hope the pilot program and Intro 1075A
3 is viewed as a small but important precursor to a
4 much larger transformation of our city's waste
5 systems. Thank you.

6 CHAIR ANTONIO REYNOSO: Thank you.

7 GREG TODD: Uhm Council Member Reynoso
8 for this opportunity to testify and to Leticia James
9 for sponsoring this uhm innovative Legislation. My
10 name is Greg Todd. I am the co-founding of Community
11 Carting and Composting and we are a community based
12 micro-carter in Crown Heights Brooklyn. As revealed
13 in the 2017 Waste Characterization Study conducted by
14 the Sanitation Department, about 1/3 of the waste
15 generated by New York City residents is organics.
16 Given that the City generates about 11,000 tons per
17 day of commercial waste, that means that it sends
18 into landfills approximately 3,300 tons of organics
19 per day from offices and businesses. Plan OneNYC
20 states that the City's goal is to have zero
21 recyclables in the landfill by 2030. If the City has
22 any hope of achieving this lofty goal in just 12
23 years it needs to begin at home with its own offices.
24 As sanitation increases the requirements on
25 businesses to divert organics and in fact is issuing

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2 fines for those that don't, it will indeed cause
3 considerable consternation among businesses to be
4 fined for not composting organics when they know the
5 City isn't doing its fair share in its own offices.
6 We at Community Carting feel the best place for the
7 City to compost organics is locally. At locally
8 owned and operated community resource recovery
9 facilities. These facilities such as BK Rot, Big
10 Reuse, Earth Matter and Red Hook Composting process
11 organics locally. Not at distant facilities
12 reachable only by long truck trips. By operating
13 locally in our communities, we keep the jobs and
14 products of composting such as soil amendments right
15 here in New York City. Further, because offices are
16 not large generators of food waste, the amounts
17 generated could be taken to the local processing
18 facility by micro-carters such as Community Carting
19 and Composting. The net result would be green jobs
20 in our communities and fewer truck trips. We at
21 Community Carting and Compost stand ready to serve
22 the needs of the City's offices. Let us know how we
23 can help. I would like to further add that I think
24 the consensus of many is that a part of the problem
25 and our low recycling rates is the lack of education

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and one of the efforts, I am also the Chair of the Organics Committee at the Brooklyn Solid Waste Advisory Board and we are now collaborating with the Manhattan and the Queens Solid Waste Advisory Board to have an Organics Earth Day town hall meeting and we are have been actively working on that and will probably be held at the Brooklyn borough Hall and we are going to look at uhm thinking outside the box and educating people in the community about some of the other things that they could do to get involved in organics composting. So more on that soon. Thank you.

CHAIR ANTONIO REYNOSO: I appreciate that. Please let me know. I would love to partner and be helpful in that effort and you know I hear the entire panel in unison talking about this not being enough. I will engage with the Commissioner to make sure that the pilot program is just that and that we have a plan to more aggressively go after all of the City Buildings which should be a goal that they should have anyway. I don't think that would be too much of a challenge uhm but I really appreciate your testimony and time today and thank you for all of the

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

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work that you do. So, thank you very much. Uhm we
are adjourned. Thank you so much (gavel pounding).

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 JANUARY 19, 2019