



# sanitation

Kathryn Garcia Commissioner

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## Testimony of Kathryn Garcia, Commissioner

### Oversight Hearing on the New York City Department of Sanitation Snow Plans for the 2018-2019 Snow Season and Int. No. 1228

#### New York City Council Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste

Wednesday, October 23, 2018 1:00 P.M.  
250 Broadway, 14<sup>th</sup> Floor Committee Room

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Good afternoon Chair Reynoso and members of the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste. I am Kathryn Garcia, Commissioner for the New York City Department of Sanitation. With me here today is First Deputy Commissioner Steven Costas, and Edward Grayson, Director of the Bureau of Cleaning and Collection. I would like to thank Chair Reynoso and the members of the Committee for holding this hearing to discuss with you the Department's Draft Snow Plans and our preparedness going into the upcoming 2019-2020 snow season.

In accordance with Local Law 28 of 2011, our Draft Snow Plans detail the Department's snow-fighting procedures from planning and preparedness to implementation. The Plans identify how we will allocate personnel and equipment resources in each borough and district, the coordination of services among agencies, and customer service protocols. We will consider all comments and recommendations received by elected officials on our draft Plans, and then we will publish the Final Borough Snow Plans on the Department's website by November 15<sup>th</sup>.

While the Department's workforce, and its vehicles and equipment, appear most visible in the public eye in the wintertime, the Department's preparation and planning process for each year's snow season is actually continuous throughout the year. For example, the Department made operational changes and adjustments for the 2018-2019 snow season after Winter Storm Avery last November. Additionally, following each winter snow season, the Department performs a review and assessment of its response to all storms during the previous season.

As part of our annual review, staff review over 1,400 snow routes in all five boroughs and revise them as necessary based on the prior year's experiences, and to adjust for any changes, such as the construction of a new school or changes to traffic patterns. The Department performs preventative maintenance on all snow-related equipment and upgrades equipment as necessary. The Department also ensures it has adequate equipment, parts and supplies to carry out our Snow Plans, including salt and calcium chloride, snow chains, and, this year, brine.

The Department holds winter operations training for Sanitation Workers from September through December each year. Training includes spreader operation, attachment of plows and chains, use of two-way radios and the use of Magellan return-to-route navigation. We also conduct a full-scale snow drill once the Night Plow season begins, to get everyone in "Snow Mode". This important exercise involves all Department divisions, including both operational and

administrative functions. During Night Plow operations, the Department increases staffing on night shifts to ensure sufficient coverage for snow or winter weather. This year the Night Plow season will begin on October 28<sup>th</sup> and end the first Monday in April. The movement of the Night Plow season is a direct result of our evaluation following Winter Storm Avery.

Additionally, while the Department has historically used salt in combination with calcium chloride to treat roadways ahead of snow storms, one of the recommendations that came from the aftermath of Winter Storm Avery was to use other means to inhibit the accumulation of snow and ice on roadways. Last year, we piloted the use of salt brine in liquid form, and for the 2019-2020 season, we are expanding this program to all five boroughs. The sodium brine solution will be used as an anti-icing measure to further help prevent dangerous road conditions in conjunction with rock salt.

Throughout the duration of a storm, Department field managers constantly monitor roadway conditions, equipment use, and variations in weather patterns. Our field officers report this information on an hourly basis back to their respective borough commands, which is then relayed to our Operations headquarters.

Salt spreading operations continue for the duration of the snowfall. Once the snow accumulation becomes greater than two inches, the Department deploys its snow plows. Plowing operations continue until all of the City's traffic lanes are passable. Following the completion of all roadways, we begin clearing bike lanes, bus stops, crosswalks, and other pedestrian infrastructure.

In recent years the Department has acquired additional snow equipment to more effectively remove snow from narrow streets, ramps and elevated roadways. Thanks to these investments, the Department now has a total of 705 large and small salt spreaders, 20 anti-icing vehicles which will be used to spread brine before a storm, 302 front-end loaders, 569 SUVs for field officer supervision, and 36 snow melters. This fleet not only makes us better prepared to respond more effectively to large snowstorms but also improves our ability to respond to ice storms and other types of frozen precipitation where plows alone are ineffective.

The Department's snow budget for Fiscal Year 2020 is \$111 million. The Department has adequate staffing, with more than 6,400 Sanitation Workers available to manage this winter's snow and ice storms. We also have available approximately 300,000 tons of road salt stored at over 42 locations citywide, with contracts in place to deliver an additional 600,000 tons as necessary. The Department also has approximately 65,000 gallons of brine stored at seven locations citywide.

The Department makes every effort to clear snow and ice from the City's highways, streets and bicycle lanes as expeditiously as possible, but this can be an extended process when persistent or heavy snowfall occurs combined with falling temperatures and high winds. Because every storm brings different challenges which impact the speed with which the streets are cleared, including storm intensity, temperature, time of day and accumulation, we ask the public to be patient and allow Department workers, who are performing under tough and often brutal conditions, to safely complete their tasks timely and effectively.

I will now turn my focus to Int. No. 1228. As proposed, this bill would expand the circumstances in which an affirmative defense for one, two or three family residential buildings to a violation received pursuant to section 16-118(2) of the Administrative Code would be allowed before the Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings. As a result of this bill, owners who were found to

have a dirty sidewalk or failed to clean 18 inches into the street would be allowed to assert a defense when:

1. The mayor has proclaimed a local state of emergency;
2. The mayor has publicly urged residents to remain indoors due to extreme hot or cold temperatures;
3. The Department of Emergency Management has issued a cold weather alert or the national weather service has issued a winter weather advisory; or
4. Any date during which the average daytime temperature was less than 25 degrees Fahrenheit and the covered person is either more than 65 years of age or an individual with a disability.

While the Department understands the intent behind this legislation, the Department cannot support any legislation that impacts the cleanliness of our sidewalks and streets. Currently homeowners can only be issued violations for a dirty sidewalk or for the failure to clean 18 inches into the street during residential routing hours, which are from 8:00 to 9:00 AM and from 6:00 to 7:00 PM daily. The Department believes that the cleanliness of the sidewalks and streets is a huge quality of life issue and relies on property owners to do their part in helping to keep the City clean. For these reasons, the Department opposes Int. No. 1228.

In closing, I want everyone to be assured that snow-fighting is a core component of the Department's mission, and our workforce understands that their performance is critical to keeping this City functioning 24/7. As we approach the official start of the 2019-2020 snow season, I'm confident that the Department's workforce can and will respond quickly and effectively to any major snow event. I look forward to your input and suggested comments on our Draft Snow Plans.

My staff and I are now happy to answer your questions.

33-26 85<sup>th</sup> Street  
Jackson Heights, N.Y.11372  
October 23, 2019

The Office of Daniel Dromm  
Council Member, 25<sup>th</sup> District, Queens  
37-32 75<sup>th</sup> Street  
Jackson Heights, N.Y.11372

Good morning Sebastian,

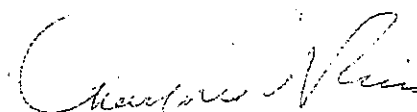
My name is Charlotte Weiss and I am one of the lucky people who lives in Daniel Dromm's district. I am writing you to show my support and gratitude regarding the issue of "Sanitation" summons and the elderly. I am presently 88 ½ years old, somewhat disabled with all the limitations age can bring. I presently live alone. Councilman's Dromm's office was very helpful to me in 2016 in dealing with a sanitation ticket I received for having litter on my lawn at 8:13 AM on an extremely frigid and windy day. That morning the mayor had issued a weather alert advising all seniors not to venture outdoors except in an extreme emergency. I didn't consider litter on my lawn an "emergency". They disagreed.

I live in a well maintained attached row house with a beautiful well maintained front garden/lawn. It is just off a major thoroughfare- Northern Boulevard with its many stores and business- and a Rite-Aide and a newly popular food truck on the opposite corner and NO garbage pails on these corners.

I am diligent in caring for my property for over 50 years but I can't be expected to go it alone. I think that Rite Aide should have a garbage pail at its exit, and the food truck should have a pail and a request that patrons use it, and that sanitation should provide the newly designed pails on the street corners. This is a community problem and requires a community approach----not dumping on the elderly and the homeowners.

I want to go back to living on a clean well kept block. I welcome your support and efforts to make it happen.

Sincerely,



Charlotte Weiss

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kathryn Garcia, Commissioner

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: DSNY

Address: 125 Worth St - 7th Flr - NY, NY  
10013

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Steven Costas

Address: First Deputy Commissioner

I represent: DSNY

Address: 125 Worth St - 7th Flr - NY, NY 10013

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Edward Grayson

Address: Director, Bureau of Cleaning and

I represent: DSNY collection

Address: 125 Worth St - 7th Flr - NY, NY 10013