

May 20, 2020

To Whom It May Concern,

I'm a resident of Peter Cooper Village in City Council District 4. Our building's brown compost bins are an essential way for me and my neighbors to reduce landfill. I'm very disappointed that compost pick-up is suspended through next year – such a long suspension seems completely unnecessary. Composting reduces carbon emissions, reduces landfill, and produces useful fertilizer. I'm convinced it could save the city money in the long term if we develop the right processes.

Please ensure we maintain funding for NYC composting and resume it as soon as it's practical.

Sincerely,
A. Jesse Jiryu Davis
7 Peter Cooper Rd #9G
New York NY 10010

My name is Adam Duflo and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. Composting is essential and encourages far healthier life habits than recycling, which isn't facing potential elimination and hardly works given the vast majority ends up in landfills.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,
Adam Duflo
4742 39th Place
#2F
Sunnyside, NY 11104

Good morning/afternoon,

My name is Safiyyah Adesokan. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Access to public compost is important to me and my family because it is an important tool I use to educate my child on how to be conscious of the waste we create.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our family, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Safiyyah Adesokan

Hello at NYC City Council,

My name is Ahna Johnson and I am with Peels and Wheels Composting. We pickup organic waste by bicycle in New Haven and turn it into soil-enhancing compost. In this testimony, I ask that New York City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress the City has made in diverting food scraps, yard waste, and valuable recyclables from landfills. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach, and all composting services. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications and will be a massive setback of the City's sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to maintain residents' ability to continue recycling and composting, and not toss the significant progress we have made in diverting valuable materials from landfills and incinerators in the past few years.

I am asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with an additional expansion of funds for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners, and to GrowNYC, together represent approximately \$7 million. Restoring this \$7M to the budget, plus some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to reduce their impact on the environment, reduce long term costs for the City, and live lives that are more environmentally responsible, without massive behavioral change (which we know can be challenging to instill!) With this funding, organic material that makes up at least 34% of the residential waste stream will be diverted from landfills. We should not waste the value of the nutrient resources in our food, and should not waste money and resources shipping this heavy and wet material far from the City, instead of keeping it close by in composting facilities.

Restoring \$7M+ would ensure that:

- at least 8 non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as essential community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to serve their communities, allowing individuals to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least 6 community composting facilities can continue their work of processing organic waste, turning it into usable compost to amend soils and grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity;
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living; and
- individual New Yorkers who are already stressed by economic collapse and fear of infection during a global pandemic can continue to take a small daily action, making them feel connected to the world, and recognizing that small actions can make a difference.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to the City of New York and all of its inhabitants, and I hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you,

Ahna Johnson

Good afternoon,

My name is Ainhoa Perez and I'm a scientist at The Rockefeller University. I'm writing to ask the City to restore the community-based Composting Programs and do not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals. As a scientist I cannot stress enough the importance of investing in climate change and waste solutions, which will lead to a crisis way worse than COVID19.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills, a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

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- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small

investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

Additionally, I urge the City to pass the CORE Act, introduced last week by Council Members Antonio Reynoso and Keith Powers; and make composting mandatory across NYC, like recycling is. With more people participating, composting will actually become a source of income for the city, rather than an expense.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

TO: NYC CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS
FROM: ALAN-ARTHUR AURELIA
SUBJECT: SAVE NYC'S COMPOSTING PROGRAM

Dear City Council Members,

Since quarantine, I've missed so many things. However, the thing I believe I've missed the most is the amazing Composting Program NYC recently implemented and was running strong until the unfortunate shutdown. The composting program brings communities together, benefits our planet, and greatly improves the quality of life for all. Even though these times are extremely tough on everyone in many ways, I implore you all to ensure NYC's Composting Program can get up and running ASAP. As a native of NYC, I've never seen such an amazing environmental initiative, and NYC needs to continue this program to show the country and the world that in spite of everything, we stay strong, steadfast and work to continue cleaning up our planet and our city.

Sincerely,

 5/20/2020

Alan-Arthur Aurelia

To whom it may concern,

Volunteering at the Red Hook Community Farm Compost Operation enriched my life.

Every Saturday, dozens of other like-minded New Yorkers from all walks of life, from all ages, backgrounds and countries, levels of education, able-bodied, developmentally disabled, young and old met for three hours to shovel compost, learn and laugh together.

THIS IS A BEAUTIFUL THING.

This is a **truly New York thing**.

Rain, shine, snow, heat wave, we met and did something good for the environment and for our community.

None of this would have been possible without the help of BBG, DSNY and the guidance of the employees at Red Hook Compost.

I have learned so much from the staff there. They have truly changed my life for the better.

The community built volunteering at Red Hook was a beautiful thing. It gave us three hours a week to destress, to share moments with like-minded people, to work in unison for the greater good and to help our community. We all became friends. The most unlikely of friends!

Please don't take this away from us.

I understand that, to you, my personal experience is potentially insignificant so I would also like to remind you of the importance of our **air quality**.

While so many people are having respiratory issues at the moment, do we really want to add more methane gas into our lungs?

Furthermore, as I am sure you are aware, while methane gas depletes the oxygen in our environment, compost soil aids in the growth of plants which create clean oxygen.

So, in a way, you have a choice here; help us breath better or help us get sick.

Please reach out if there is anything else I can say or do to implore you that the benefits of this program both from an environmental standpoint and a communal one, far outweigh the short term financial gain and reallocation of your funds.

Thank you,
Alanna Gladstone

To: Honorable Antonio Reynoso
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

My name is Alex Nelson and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. My neighborhood doesn't have Curbside Composting. In normal times I would take my compost to BK Rot and I very much want them to be an option for all of Bushwick residents when we get to the other side of this global crisis. I'd be heart broken if we didn't have them in our community. I feel like for as large as a city as we live in conservation, and composting, should be a priority. There's always a sense of "if you can do it in New York you can do it anywhere" I want our city to be an example to the rest of the country.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis. I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,
Alex Nelson
6 Stanhope St Apt. 2F
Brooklyn, NY 11221

To whom it may concern,

I am a constituent from Brooklyn in zip code 11226 whose life has been enriched and empowered by the composting programs which will lose funding under the mayors proposed emergency budget plan. These programs provide a direct economic benefit in the city, build community, boost the city's reputation worldwide, and have extremely beneficially long term economic impacts.


Abandoning these programs is an extremely wasteful and shortsighted economic mentality - we must persevere with initiatives like community and curbside composting to address the climate crisis and tipping fees. The climate crisis demands an outreach tool like the composting programs and the constant building of food scrap diversion infrastructure is essential to a sustainable economic future.

Every economist would agree that cutting the legs out from under these programs will only cause more economic challenges in the future.

These programs have given gardens and soil health and lead ridden playgrounds a new hope for remediation - they have allowed new yorkers to be proud of where there food scraps go and that they are not wasted. Don't waste that.

Sincerely and with my power as a voter, a composter, and a financial supporter I hope you hear our command.

-Xander



May 21, 2020

New York City Council
Committee on Finance
250 Broadway
New York, NY 10007

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to urge the Council to reinstate organics collection as part of the City budget process.

Composting has made a measurable difference in the amount of food I discard: by separating compostable food scraps such as vegetable cuts, coffee grounds, and egg shells, the number of bags of garbage our household discards each week has gone from 2 or 3 down to 1 at the most – that’s a savings of over 100 bags per year! Our garbage smells better without the food scraps in it, and as a result we end up taking out the garbage less often, which means less methane-producing refuse and fewer plastic bags are being sent to the landfill.

Composting has prompted me to re-think what I choose to throw out, and more likely to repurpose leftovers and usable scraps. Because we drop off our compost at a Grow NYC site, it also encourages us to visit our local greenmarkets and buy from the local farms that sell there.

I am fighting to save organics collection in NYC because it allows me to be part of the change I want to see in the world: less waste, lower greenhouse gas emissions, and the capacity to slow the progress of Climate Change.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Alexandra Gray

274 E 2nd St, 3F
Brooklyn NY 11218

May 20, 2020

To: Honorable Mathieu Eugene
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

My name is Alexandra Tatarsky and I am a lifelong New Yorker. I've been living in Lefferts Gardens for 10 years and I am very disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting programs! The thing that absolutely makes the area so special, vibrant, and vital to my happiness, health, and sense of community is: the community composting that supplies our community gardens and city parks where we flourish together!

I had just turned 12 on September 11th. I remember the dust and debris swirling in the air, and I remember the sense of panic and uncertainty, especially the adults' anxieties regarding finances and if the city would ever recover.

I also remember that recycling programs were suspended and took years to be reinstated. This upset me very much as a young person who cared and cares about our shared earth! Halting essential waste management programs to maintain the health of our city and our planet did NOT feel like a necessary sacrifice during that very scary time. It exacerbated my sense that the people in charge did not have their priorities straight and my fear that our world would be doomed. I feel the same way now.

I trust that you will continue fighting to restore our composting programs! And I thank you for this! Healing the earth is part and parcel of healing each other.

NYC composting saves nearly 5 MILLION POUNDS of scraps from the waste cycle yearly and this enriches our parks & gardens instead of festering in landfills and releasing toxic gases. When we dismantle an infrastructure like this, it can take a very long time to reinstate. People love their Compost! It gives us a sense of working together to do something with real impact. Please don't take this away! It is both a vital service and a genuine morale booster.

Food waste accounts for fully 21% of NYC waste! Community composting is something we can all do on a daily basis that has real impact to have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope!

Furthermore, composting is a public health issue. Food scraps in the trash attract vermin and cause respiratory problems whereas food scraps in the compost make delicious soil to grow plants and improve air quality. Poorly managed city waste systems disproportionately affect underserved black and brown neighborhoods so this is also an issue of environmental justice.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs!

Thank you so much!

Sincerely,

Alexandra Tatarsky (alex.tatarsky@gmail.com)

To: Mark Levine
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

My name is Alexandria and I am deeply disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs.

I have been taking my food scraps to the 157th St. food scrap drop-off site for the last year and a half and to several different drop-off sites in the years before that. In the month since the City has suspended this service, I have had no other options for composting my food waste. I have been storing as much as I can in my freezer and refrigerator in the hope that these programs will return soon, but I am running out of space. Community gardens are not accepting scraps and there is not a way to properly compost within my own home. It breaks my heart that the City is telling us to now throw our food scraps in the trash after years of efforts to divert thousands of pounds of landfill waste.

It is simply not acceptable for NYC to continue these cuts for the next year or more.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are crucial. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a significantly positive impact on the environment.

Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

We need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future, especially in this time of severe uncertainty. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crises.

I implore the City to restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

All the best,

Alexandria Gross
555 W 160 ST

May 20, 2020

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Alexia Welch and I'm a constituent submitting testimony today to urge the City Council to stand for budget justice.

In the midst of a serious public health crisis, the Mayor is proposing \$2 billion of cuts to core social services and safety net programs while leaving the budget for policing and jails — nearly **\$6 billion** — virtually untouched. I am specifically disheartened to know of the particular budget cuts to compost services throughout NYC until summer 2021: an environmentally catastrophic decision that will have impacts on our communities for years to come. This nascent but hugely impactful educational community program deserves enduring support in this moment, not a turned back. Nearly 1/3 of NYC's residential waste could be composted (turned into nutrient-rich soil to support gardens and parks) and our compost programs (Brown Bins, GrowNYC and community garden drop-offs) are doing all of the legwork to actually make a dent in re-routing this unnecessary waste. To see this group of people - and the passionate education they provide - gutted in this crucial moment is devastating. The implicit endorsement of rotting landfills in this budget decision strikes me as an informative metaphor.

To make the metaphor even more potent, the city's continued over-investment in *policing* and *punishment* instead of in people's actual needs is alarming to me as someone who is watching the disproportionate toll that COVID-19 has taken on Black, brown and low-income New Yorkers, as the NYPD continues to criminalize and harass these same communities. The NYPD has become an increasingly destructive force in this city, empowered by current and former Mayors. Instead of growing and adapting to become innovative and dynamic civil servants, the NYPD has become a staunch emblem of an old and outdated system of brutality and harm. ***I say this as the child of a retired NYPD police officer***, who has had first-hand conversations for my entire life about the truly destructive and dangerous culture that the NYPD engenders.

I deeply believe that what we need is *housing, health care, jobs and education*. Please commit to fighting for **better funding for services that actually help our communities and less funding for the NYPD and Department of Corrections**. I believe that right now we have the unique opportunity to effectively change many of the rampant injustices in our communities. I am calling on the council to help make this possible.

Thank you,

Alexia Welch
Bushwick, Brooklyn
11237

Good Morning,

My name is Alexis Audette, I live in Hell's Kitchen and I'm a member of Hope from Hell's Kitchen Indivisible. Our group has supported a variety of climate-related initiatives in New York, including the Climate and Community Protection Act and the New York City "Dirty Buildings" bill. On the personal front, I enrolled my co-op building, 404 W 48th Street, in the city's composting program and we received our bins in early March.

The pandemic cannot be a pretext for reducing our efforts to fight climate change. In fact, seeing what happens when our public health system is in crisis should make us all the more committed to avoiding the destruction that climate change will wreak. For that reason, I ask that cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The choices we make now will determine our future, from whether my apartment building can compost waste to whether our planet will be inhabitable. Please restore funding for the NYC Compost Project and partners and GrowNYC to the budget.

Thank you,

Alexis Audette

I believe composting is a good thing for the community. It makes the world better and we need to keep finding ways to make the world better. It's an all-around good. How can we expect a better future for our children if we are not taking action to fight climate change now?

For the past months we have talked about "listening to the science" in regards to COVID-19 and how to live our lives during this pandemic. But the science has been telling us for decades that the planet is warming, and we also know that composting our food waste is an environmentally sound practice on so many levels - it sequesters greenhouse gases in the earth AND grows trees and plants which in turn clean the air and sequester greenhouse gases. Not to mention beautify our environment, improve mental health and physical fitness, and the list goes on and on. It is a no-brainer that we should be investing in composting and making it mandatory in our city.

Please restore and strengthen composting in New York City. It is the right thing for our city to do, to be healthy now and in the future!



Mary Mitchell Family and Youth Center

2007 Mapes Avenue, Bronx NY 10460

(718) 583-1765 ♦ Fax: 718-583-1064 ♦ themarymittelfyc.org

To: Honorable Rafael Salamanca, Jr.

Salamanca@council.nyc.gov

CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov; SpeakerJohnson@council.nyc.gov;
info@nyccommunitycompost.org

Re: Community Composting

My name is Aleyna Rodriguez and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community compost and recycling outreach programs. My first job after College was with Bronx Green-Up and the NYC Compost Project hosted by the New York Botanical Garden. I learned a great deal working with Jodie Colon and the compost team! That, when my seasonal position ended I took the Master Composter Course and became certified, which helped me tremendously when I became employed by the Mary Mitchell Center. The first thing I did with my new position was work on our waste management system and getting our Center the Brown bins to accept food scraps from the community. While also working with our local community gardens to improve their compost systems.

In order for us to roll out our new waste management system, I depended a lot on NYC Compost Project hosted by the New York Botanical Garden and also Grow NYC, they were both always there when we needed help!!! Their teams are always eager to help, provide knowledge through workshops, and assist with trouble shooting.

NYC Compost Project is family to the gardening and farming community and is essential for NYC to go Zero Waste by 2030! Compost is the heart to all this work, NYC has a tremendous food gap and inequity amongst the Food System, especially in The Bronx. Our beautiful community gardens and urban farms are now stepping up their game to feed their communities during this pandemic and they need the support from NYC Compost Project to continue!!

If this pandemic is teaching us anything is how we need to become resilient and sustainable. Removing funding from a program that is grounded on sustainability, absolutely does not make sense to me. NYC Compost Project has helped so many New Yorkers to accept and understand composting as the new norm and there is still so much more that needs to be done.

We need composting in our community, The Bronx alone has over 300 gardens and composting is the ground our gardens grow upon! Compost is what keeps our open green spaces, parks, and street trees looking vibrant and blooming in this dense concrete jungle that we live in. Please keep NYC Compost Project running, I need Jodie, Jessica, Ursula, and the rest of the composting team to help support our gardens!!!!

We have already lost so much because of COVID-19. I hope we do not have to add such an important and beloved program to that list. We need the NYC Compost Project to continue to support our community as we work together to create a more healthy, equitable, and sustainable City.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the



Mary Mitchell Family and Youth Center

2007 Mapes Avenue, Bronx NY 10460

(718) 583-1765 ♦ Fax: 718-583-1064 ♦ themarymitchelfyc.org

larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Aleyna Rodriguez

Executive Director

The Mary Mitchell Family and Youth Center

**2007 Mapes Avenue
Bronx, NY 10460**

914-810-4115

Community compost programs are a vital part of a greener NYC, as well as a source of jobs for money. We can not have such a shortsighted response to the global pandemic; addressing climate change and shoring up NYC's resiliency as a coastal city must be part of our response.

Alice Forbes Spear

Dear Speaker Johnson,

I have recently heard that budget cuts include the elimination of the community composting subsidy. This funds the seven nonprofits that make up the NYC Compost Project in every borough, including the one that serves my neighborhood in the Bronx. The NYC Compost Project provides essential services to me and other: • community gardeners and urban farmers • local and citywide greening and volunteer groups • schools and youth organizations • agency and institutional partners • seniors and other residential groups I have benefited from the Compost Project's helpline, hands-on assistance, resources, and educational efforts. They have been crucial in helping me to use composting to reduce waste, grow food, connect to my community, and learn green job skills. Their work helps improve the health of our depleted soils and the environment at our homes and in our neighborhoods throughout NYC. Now more than ever, we need the NYC Compost Project to continue to support our community as we work together to create a more healthy, equitable, and sustainable City. We have already lost so much because of COVID-19. I hope I do not have to add such an important and beloved program to that list.

Sincerely

Alicelda Tracy ,

Alistair Mackay
521 Macon St, #3
Brooklyn, NY 11233

To the members of the New York City Council and the Office of Management and Budget,

I am writing today to ask that you please come together to Save Community Composting and restore composting service in the city to the level it was at before the enormous cuts went into effect. With these proposed cuts, New Yorkers – our neighbors and community members – will be left with no public options to keep their food scraps out of landfills for at least one year. After over a decade of public investment in composting, the proposed cuts would be a devastating setback to the OneNYC 2050 Zero Waste to Landfill goal and Green New Deal policies.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

We cannot repeat the mistakes of the past, especially with regards to austerity, when the critical balance of our future and the future of the next generation lies with us here today. Please rethink these cuts and give our communities a fighting shot at a future worth living in.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Regards,
Alistair Mackay

Good evening,

My name is Allison Duncil and I am with Make Manhattan Fair campaign. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

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This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our city and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you,

Allison Duncil

Good morning/afternoon,

My name is Allison, I live in Harlem. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Organics recycling is important to me because of the avoided greenhouse gas emissions, and the tight knit community and camaraderie that it creates for New Yorkers.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Allison Reser

Hey, Good Morning, NYC Committee on Finance,

My name is Allison Worrell & I live in Melrose, in the South Bronx.

This neighborhood often gets the short end of the stick-- & I don't want that to continue with the city getting rid of free, public composting. Like most New Yorkers, I live in an apartment and GrowNYC was my only option for properly processing food scraps.

The South Bronx is disproportionately affected by air pollution. It doesn't make sense to scrap a program that helps the community combat environmental issues. **Climate Justice = Social Justice and ending free public composting is another blow:**

1. Fresh Direct & its fleet of trucks should never have been allowed to set up shop on the South Bronx waterfront-- especially since it doesn't include a public area, like the Costco in Queens.
2. There shouldn't be a new jail slated to go up on 141st ST and Bruckner Blvd.-- it should go near the Bronx Criminal Court.
3. COVID-19 is hitting the Bronx the hardest-- because it's disproportionately affected by negative socioeconomic issues.

I understand that budget cuts need to happen. But halting 100% of public composting is not the way to do it. I'm not asking for the City Council to restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. For now, I'd be OK with only restoring the NYC Compost Project, its partners, and GrowNYC.

Like COVID-19, the climate crisis is a global issue. Let's make NYC a green city and set a positive example for the rest of the world.

Thanks for reading.

Allison Worrell
Melrose, South Bronx Resident

Good afternoon, name is Alyce Erdekian and I am with the Red Hook Diabetes Support & Education Program (RHDSEP), partnering with many Red Hook community organizations that focus on health education and sustainability. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. The Red Hook community has been part of the curbside compost pick up pilot program, and also relies on the Red Hook Farm as an enormous source of community activity, education and support. The loss of composting through both curbside and drop off has a real impact on the community engagement, youth education and on the level of garbage on the street. We are very invested in composting for our community and beyond.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;

- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to the RHDSEP, the Red Hook community, and personally, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Alyce Erdekian, MPH

Red Hook Diabetes Support & Education Program

SAVE COMMUNITY COMPOSTING in NYC

To: Honorable Robert E. Cornegy Jr.
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

My name is Amanda Finuccio and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. I am a member of 426 Halsey Community Garden. We have a small composting initiative that's been overwhelmed since the City suspended the Curbside Composting and Food Scrap Drop-off programs. People in our neighborhood are desperate for a way to compost, and we can't safely keep up with that demand. We need the City to step up and honor its commitments to Zero Waste by funding community composting rather than leaving this essential work to volunteers like me.

As composting has a direct impact on the environmental consequences of our urban lives, the environment as well as everyone who depends on its health and long-term stability, benefit greatly from these programs.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Amanda Finuccio
Concerned Resident of NYC
1357 Fulton Street
Apt 2A
Brooklyn, NY 11216

May 21, 2020

Good afternoon, my name is Amanda Legg and I am a resident of Greenpoint, Brooklyn. In this testimony, I am joining with fellow New Yorkers to ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. I urge the City to take a long view of organics recycling and not to reintroduce millions of pounds of waste to our landfills. Our trash problem is already out of control here in the city, and putting our compostable scraps back into the waste stream is extremely short sighted and irresponsible.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council not to abandon organics collections during this crisis but to recommit to organics diversion programs that have made significant impacts in our communities. Please do not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

History shows us that temporary suspensions do not have temporary effects. In the wake of the 9/11 attacks, the City suspended plastic and glass recycling in July 2002 to close a budget gap. Plastic recycling was suspended for 12 months and glass for 21 months. Once recycling resumed, rates plummeted and they have still not fully recovered, even now in 2020. Recycling compliance works best when practice and behavior are consistent.

I am asking that the Council restore organics program cuts including curbside collection. Though the brown bin program has yet to reach all of New York City, suspending the program will likely have grave consequences over time.

In the interest of access and equity, I am specifically asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. These programs ensure that all New Yorkers can participate in organics collection and help to raise awareness about the importance impacts of diversion and waste reduction.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our community and to the environment and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Amanda Legg

To: Honorable Rory Lancman
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

My name is Amanda and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs.

Yes, there has been an urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19. Community composting programs should not be part of that, as they are essential. As the most populated city in the world, New Yorkers have the power to slow down climate change, which is the longer-term crisis we are facing.

Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise. If help is needed in learning how to manage or finance community composting, and how to persuade more people to move toward zero waste, why not reach out to the program directors of cities who have had these programs for years? These cities include:

San Francisco, CA

Seattle, WA

Portland, OR

Denver, CO

Boulder, CO

Cambridge, MA

Fairfield County, CT

Westchester County, CT

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. There are cities across the US with curbside composting programs going strong for years. Back in 2012, Portland, Oregon saw a 44% decrease in trash at the curb within a year of starting their program. We can do it too.

City-led Community Composting programs show us and give us hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Amanda Reis
Freelance Copywriter and Editor
71-22 164th street
Fresh Meadows, NY 11365

Eliminating funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs is short sighted and will have negative environmental consequences for NYC.

People want composting. I don't live in an organics collection neighborhood, but my building had two compost bins of our own. Neighbors in other nearby buildings have been sneaking their kitchen scraps into our bins because there is no drop-off at Eastern Parkway and Franklin Ave.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. Composting programs show that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need to all contribute to a green future for all New Yorkers.

Thank you,
-a smock

Amanda Smock

Dear Finance Committee,

I wanted to share my concern over the recent suspension of the municipal composting services and Zero Waste outreach programs in NYC. We have been shown time and again that climate change is exponentially compounding, and as a city, composting is one of our strongest weapons to combat it. Nearly a third of household waste can be composted, not only offsetting the waste stream, but working as a carbon sink to boot. Over the last decades, establishing a robust compost system in NYC has been a major success - and deserves to be scaled up into more socioeconomically and racially diverse neighborhoods, not cut. While the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting economic scarcity are truly devastating, cutting the community composting programs is a serious step backwards from creating a more sustainable city. Now is not the time to shy away from climate change, but time to adapt and embrace even more aggressive ways to combat it. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

After spending so much time encouraging people to start composting, every food scrap tossed to the trash feels painful! Composting is a great way to provide individual action against climate change, while simultaneously encouraging people to really examine their waste streams. It provides a hopeful way to stay engaged, and promotes a healthier, more sustainable future for all.

As a community garden member, we have been overwhelmed by requests to drop off food scraps, and are having to recommend that residents begin home composting and worm bins - options that are simply not feasible for many New York City residences. Even in homes where this IS possible, the smaller scale does not allow the process to occur efficiently. I would also be remiss to not mention the large amount of privilege and resources required to have the space and resources to attain needed supplies for home composting.

If composting is scaled up, it could even become a source of revenue to the city, while creating the jobs that our residents will desperately need after the city reopens.

I respectfully request that New York City restore funding and expand the Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Thank you for your consideration,
Amanda Strenz
955 Coney Island Avenue,
Brooklyn, NY 11230

SAVE COMMUNITY COMPOSTING in NYC

Sample Testimony / Letter to City Council Member

To: Honorable [your council member]

CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov

Re: Community Composting

My name is **Amber Bennett** and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. Having curbside compost collection in our neighborhood is one of the things we like most about it. It helps incentivize companies to use compostable packaging, and diverts tons and tons of waste from landfills.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Amber Bennett
505 16th St
Brooklyn NY 11215

Dear Speaker Johnson,

I have recently heard that budget cuts include the elimination of the community composting subsidy. This funds the seven nonprofits that make up the NYC Compost Project in every borough, including the one that serves my neighborhood in the Bronx.

The NYC Compost Project provides essential services to me and other:

- community gardeners and urban farmers
- local and citywide greening and volunteer groups
- schools and youth organizations
- agency and institutional partners
- seniors and other residential groups

I have benefited from the Compost Project's helpline, hands-on assistance, resources, and educational efforts.

They have been crucial in helping me to use composting to reduce waste, grow food, connect to my community, and learn green job skills. Their work helps improve the health of our depleted soils and the environment at our homes and in our neighborhoods throughout NYC.

Now more than ever, we need the NYC Compost Project to continue to support our community as we work together to create a more healthy, equitable, and sustainable City.

We have already lost so much because of COVID-19. I hope I do not have to add such an important and beloved program to that list.

Sincerely,

Amy Herrera

Dear Speaker Johnson,

I have recently heard that budget cuts include the elimination of the community composting subsidy. This funds the seven nonprofits that make up the NYC Compost Project in every borough, including the one that serves my neighborhood in the Bronx.

The NYC Compost Project provides essential services to me and other:

- community gardeners and urban farmers
- local and citywide greening and volunteer groups
- schools and youth organizations
- agency and institutional partners
- seniors and other residential groups

I have benefited from the Compost Project's helpline, hands-on assistance, resources, and educational efforts.

They have been crucial in helping me to use composting to reduce waste, grow food, connect to my community, and learn green job skills. Their work helps improve the health of our depleted soils and the environment at our homes and in our neighborhoods throughout NYC.

Now more than ever, we need the NYC Compost Project to continue to support our community as we work together to create a more healthy, equitable, and sustainable City.

We have already lost so much because of COVID-19. I hope I do not have to add such an important and beloved program to that list.

Sincerely,
Amy Kline
2390 Palisade Ave. Apt. 2E
Bronx, NY 10463

Good afternoon,

My name is Ana Martinez de Luco and I am the Co-founder and Executive Director of Sure We Can (SWC), a community space, sustainability hub, and redemption center located in the Industrial Business Zone (IBZ) of East Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Our organization has served canners, who collect and redeem bottles and cans to earn a living and who are most vulnerable and most left behind for over 10 years.

In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its climate justice and zero waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting. Our urban gardening, education and outreach, and composting programs at Sure We Can all tie into our mission to constructively impact climate change and help New York City reach its zero-waste goals while continuing to serve some of the most marginalized members of our community. As such, SWC already provides green jobs and dignified, honest work while serving as a thriving example of a circular economy in action. In our primary redemption activities at SWC, we have diverted approximately 12,000,000 bottles and cans from New York City's waste stream and distributed over \$700,000 to over 800 community-level recyclers and working canners. In our current 2020 census outreach work, we engage and include the traditionally undercounted members that we serve.

Since 2015, we have had our own small scale composting program, collecting and processing food scraps from local restaurants and cafes. As mentioned above, this program has enabled our own members as well as local volunteers to take ownership in the process of composting, which is an extremely efficient way to gain awareness of their own personal footprint and empower them to reflect upon their future choices. In addition to this program, we also have been serving our local residential community as an organic waste drop-off site, due to the fact that this district was not served by the voluntary City program -- therefore, we also speak here on behalf of the members of our community who have expressed their resentment around the suspension of the collection provided by the City.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we join together with #SaveOurCompost campaign to urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years. We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to

source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases. This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this request to our organization, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority is not left behind in the budget process.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Ana Martinez de Luco

Executive Director
Sure We Can

To:

Honorable City Council Representatives:

I am writing to request your help in doing everything possible to preserve our Composting Program. The composting program should be one of the first things that reopens and should grow larger! It is unconscionable to me that especially now, when we know how important the health of the planet is for avoiding catastrophic pandemics like COVID 19, we are contemplating to do away with the composting program. We should be building on it, expanding it, not doing away with it!

The program changes culture and helps move towards a cleaner, healthier society! What does this say to our children that instead of moving towards green jobs that the compost program creates we do away with the little we are doing to decrease pollution and make useful use of our left over organic waste?

During the past months of the pandemic, one of the things I have missed most is the pick up program in the Saturday market. Because I do not have access to it, I had to start disposing of organics in plastic bags, increasing its use enormously. I have no doubts this is the case for many of our neighbors.

Please help us keep green jobs, avoid more and more pollution, expand education in the community and keep doing something good for us and the generations to come.

Thank you for your consideration.

Ana Lucia Martinez
77 Cooper St Apt 3H
New York, NY 10034
Phone 917-361-2257

Good day, I am Ana Vasquez and I would like to offer testimony to the cuts to our community-based composting programs, including GrowNYC and the NYC Compost Project. I am a resident of Washington Heights. Today, I ask that the City think creatively and does not decimate its funds for its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. My family and I have been able to consistently compost because of this programs. This is something we are committed to because every little action helps. As the initiators and active participants in a class for the development of children's capacities to perceive the world through the lens of principles such as honesty, humility, trustworthiness, courage the aspect of environmental stewardship including composting has been important in drawing practical learning on ways to serve the community and the world. The class is open to all the children in the Washington Heights and Inwood communities and there are a number of children's families that now regularly compost.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. As I understand it, more than \$28 million of the cuts are coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is the time to consider the long-term implications of such decisions, one being setting the City back further from its sustainability goals and what it implies for citizens wellbeing and health.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not lose momentum on the progress we have made in the past few years.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, I am asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. It will allow us to reach more neighbors and families and together find ways to continue to support and advance the composting efforts to date.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and

preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our family, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Good morning,

My name is Anastasia Smolina, and I live in New York City. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Living in NYC, these programs are the crucial way for us to reduce our footprint and the amount of waste that we send to landfills. Having access to composting programs empowers our communities to make a difference in building a better future for our planet.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. This is a crucial component for people to continue drive momentum and engagement with this.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our community, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Anastasia Smolina

#SaveOurCompost!

Finance Committee,

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills - a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination funding for organic waste recycling. This is short-sighted and will set us back from achieving our sustainability goals.

I urge the City Council to ensure that we at least fund and maintain some food scrap recycling option for New Yorkers such as the successful community drop-off sites run by nonprofit organizations like Grow NYC, BigReuse, and the Lower East Side Ecology Center.

Our environment, our green jobs, and our shared future are too important to throw away.

Anastasiya Osipova
osipova.anastasiya@gmail.com
1073 Manhattan Ave, apt.2R
Brooklyn , New York 11222



**ParentChild+ Program Testimony
Committees on Youth Services and Community Development**

**Submitted by ParentChild+
in Partnership with the City's First Readers Initiative**

May 20th, 2020

Good afternoon: My name is Andre Eaton and I am the New York State Director for ParentChild+, formerly The Parent-Child Home Program.

ParentChild+'s unique focus is on providing parents with the skills, knowledge, and materials they need to support school readiness in the home and build home learning environments that support children's language, literacy, numeracy, cognitive, and social-emotional skills. In doing this work, we are also helping parents learn what to look for in a child care setting, how to identify and access their children's next educational steps, and how to support their children's continued academic progress. Our partners in this work in New York City and elsewhere in the state include school districts, public libraries, social service agencies, literacy programs, community health centers, and community-based organizations. Focusing on school readiness and early literacy supports for families challenged by poverty, isolation, limited education, and language and literacy barriers, ParentChild+ provided over 46,000 home visits and distributed over 23,000 books & educational toys in New York City last year with support from the NYC City Council.

Before children enter pre-k or kindergarten, many of the children living furthest from opportunity and children from families with home languages other than English are being cared for by family members or in informal settings. These are the families least likely to have access to the information, materials, and activities that will build their school readiness skills, and ensure their children have the language, literacy, and social-emotional skills that they need to enter a classroom ready to be successful students. The support provided by the City's First Readers Initiative is critical to preparing them to be ready to enter a classroom and to be successful in school.

ParentChild+ provides critical learning tools, books and other educational, interaction-stimulating materials, to families with two- and three-year-olds. This is an age group that often has very limited access to literacy supports. The Program helps families build literacy enrich environment in their homes. They are visited twice a week in their homes by an early learning specialist, or home visitor, who introduces the materials to the family, and models for parents how to read, talk, and play with their children to build language, social-emotional, and early literacy skills. ParentChild+ staff also connect families to other social service supports when necessary and assist parents in planning for their children's next educational step and with registering their children for

a pre-k or Head Start program. This year we have continued to expand our reach, adding our working with Family Child Care providers in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, and South Jamaica and Astoria in Queens to support them in building school readiness-rich care environments for the children they care for during the day. This enables us to reach families who are not able to be a part of our one-on-one home visiting model, because they work long and often irregular hours. Both the providers and the families receive books through our FCC model, and the ripple effect is powerful as each of the providers will go on to bring these school readiness skills to other children in their care over the coming years.

ParentChild+ continues to be so honored to be part of the City's First Readers Initiative. Working with our partners in this initiative, we were able to provide intensive early literacy support to 100 additional families challenged by poverty, isolation, and language and literacy barriers in communities across the city. We were also able to connect ParentChild+ families with a continuum of other school readiness services and activities in their communities. Working with our City's First Readers partners, we connect families, who might not otherwise access literacy supports at all, to additional resources through their public libraries, special programs in their children's schools, and community-based programming offered by organizations like LINC, including story times, parent workshops, school registration informational sessions, and book distribution events.

Our work with families significantly increases children's school readiness, decreases their need for special education services as they move through school, and improves their school performance. Our work with FCC providers improves the quality of the interaction in the care environment, increases reading with parents at home, and decreases home screen time.

With support from the City's First Readers Initiative, ParentChild+ has been able to expand to seven communities, reaching families in both South Jamaica and Astoria, Queens, Washington Heights, Manhattan, Sunset Park, Brownsville and East New, Brooklyn, and most recently Far Rockaway who would otherwise not have access to these supports. Many of these communities have historically had limited early childhood school readiness services available. With additional funding, ParentChild+ could reach more deeply into these communities and expand into additional communities. ParentChild+ could easily reach an additional 150 families across the city in the coming year.

We look forward to working with the City Council to expand this critical continuum of services for young children and their families. Thank you so much for allowing me this time to present ParentChild+'s critical school readiness work as part of the City's First Readers Initiative.

Greetings,

My name is Andrea Beeman. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Keep citywide access to GrowNYC's drop off sites, allowing 6 existing DEC registered community composting sites to continue processing food scraps, & to continue educating the public about the methane produced by landfills when food scraps are not composted—methane that contributes to global warming & jeopardizes our children's future.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask for my family & neighborhood & ultimately for the planet, and I hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Andrea Beeman

Dear City Council,

5/19/20

My name is Andrea Lieske,

It really bothered me to learn that the NYC Compost Project is being discontinued. Please restore this citywide community composting program for FY 2021.

As a longtime New Yorker, I have witnessed firsthand the positive impact of city funded compost programs on our city - in particular at Earth Matter NY, where thousands of visitors, trainees, and volunteers benefit from the exposure to their Compost Learning Center on Governors Island and its knowledgeable staff. The metamorphosis of this city, to where compost is now a household word, could not have occurred without the steadfast drumbeat provided by Earth Matter NY and the other leading compost organizations over the last decades.

Earth Matter not only educates, they process over 1,500,000 lbs. of food scraps and other organics each year that would otherwise go into landfill, which would increase the city's GHG emissions.

Now is not the time to be eliminating the crucial resource Earth Matter NY provides - the example of closing the loop by growing food locally, to feed New Yorkers in need, in compost made from food waste.

Now is not the time to lose this example that we as individuals can steer the course of civic responsibility towards the beacon of sustainability in the larger world.

I ask you to PLEASE reconsider! RESTORE THE FUNDING to the NYC Compost Project and public Food Scrap Drop Offs..

Sincerely,
Andrea Lieske

May 2020

Good afternoon, my name is Andrea Ramos and I am a New York City resident. In this testimony, I am asking that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this city has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short sighted and has potential to have real long-term implications, setting the city back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of the organics program. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food

in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and

- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our neighborhood, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Andrea Ramos

Good afternoon, my name is Andres Pascual and I am a member of the Williamsburg neighborhood. I have lived in Williamsburg all my life and would like to give back to my community what it has given me in my 33 years of life which is to leave it in better shape than I received it. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Organics recycling & composting helps cut carbon emissions as well as reduces waste in which the city pays to be shipped to other parts of the country. Not only am I tired of sending unnecessary waste to someone else's community, but I would like to reduce the city's rat population while reducing our waste at the same time.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. By restoring the organics program, we will be teaching future generations how to take care of our community while cleaning our air, reducing waste and lower overall temperatures not just in NYC, but on earth. By reusing our compost to expand green spaces, it will increase our visibility as leaders of a greener future.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to the neighborhood of Williamsburg, Brooklyn and the greater New York City area and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Good afternoon,

My name is Andrew Wilhelm and I am a resident of East Williamsburg. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting. I have been a longtime backyard composter and was very excited when the city started to roll out the curbside pick up. I was equally excited when I recently took a tour of the very impressive Staten Island Compost Facility. The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals. Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, I am asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;

- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;

- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow

food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and

The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our city, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Andrew Wilhelm

Good afternoon, my name is Andy Myers. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. This short-sighted cost cutting will destroy the incredible good work that has been built over years of hard work with the view to sustainably support the city and the environment.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;

- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to me, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Good afternoon, my name is ANIKA ISLAM and I am a New York City resident. In this testimony, I am asking that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this city has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short sighted and has potential to have real long-term implications, setting the city back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of the organics program. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to us/our [organization/neighborhood/family], and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process. Thank you.

Anika Islam

SAVE COMMUNITY COMPOSTING in NYC

My name is Anita Chan and I am absolutely disheartened to learn that the City is planning to gut the funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. The Mayor's proposed budget would slash the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. Throughout the past few years, I worked in community gardening and composting and have seen first-hand how important composting is to our communities and to our earth.

When I was 16 years old, I interned at East New York Farms where I had my first composting experience. Years later, I became a staff member and taught community members and interns how to compost, set up food scrap collection in the community, and connected with other amazing folks in the composting world to make collective change. The organizations who are a part of the NYC Compost Project, East New York Farms, and many other gardens, organizations, and individuals have been working tirelessly to provide compost education, divert organic waste from landfill, and transform organic waste into nutrient rich compost to grow food and help various green spaces in the city thrive.

Community composting programs are essential in NYC. I understand that we are going through stressful times due to COVID-19 but we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic and easy things that every person can take part in to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Community composting programs also create green jobs and work towards environmental justice for communities. This budget cut is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals, such as zero waste by 2030.

We urge the City Council to ensure that the City does not eliminate all funding for community composting programs. We need to at least maintain some capacity for composting and not toss away all of the progress and momentum gained in the past few years.

Sincerely,
Anita Chan & Family
1455 Geneva Loop #7B
Brooklyn, NY 11239



106 Cabrini Boulevard, 6E, New York, NY 10033
(917) 640-0980 | pottflan@verizon.net

Dear Councilman Rodriguez,

I am saddened by the news of the city shutting down what seemed to be an efficient and smart way to keep so much garbage out of our landfills and turning it into the best fertilizer for gardens, tree pits, and green spaces like the ones where I volunteer in our Washington Heights Community, The 181 St. Beautification Project.

I have made numerous trips to the Smuggler's Cove space where we could get processed compost for our Pinehurst Steps and it makes all the difference.

It shocked me to see how often I have to take out the garbage now that I no longer take my food scraps to the bin. Our super now has more garbage bags to haul out to the curb and the possibility of rats chewing them open is inevitable.

I hope the city council could somehow keep the program going, even if it means hauling my frozen compost to the farmer's markets. I am willing to do that if the council is willing to keep it going.

Thank you,

Anita Flanagan, Washington Heights resident and active volunteer

Good afternoon, name is Anke Roggenbuck. I'm a Greenpoint, Brooklyn resident who believes in the importance of the City's Compost project. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. In this tenuous time, we are living in, it has become especially clear how interwoven our lives and lifestyles are with the greater world and how our actions affect our environment for better or worse. We need ways to relieve the heavy burden we put on our landfills. Organics recycling and composting is an effective and sustainable way to ease our carbon footprint.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills—a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, I am asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;

- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to Greenpoint and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Anke

To: Mathieu Eugene
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

I hope this testimony finds you, and all your loved ones safe and well. I would like to urge you to please fight to save New York City Community Composting.

I'm a member of the Maple Street Community Garden, and the opportunity to compost my food scraps for the garden changed my garbage dramatically. I cook a lot, and when I began composting not only did the garbage I throw out curbside get cut in half, but I wasn't throwing out soggy or decomposing material; so I had less worry about my trash attracting animals.

Our small community garden is constantly teetering on the brink of having too much compost donated; so for the past 5 years when the community garden has been unable to accept compost, or has been closed for the season I would take my compost to the Grand Army Plaza farmer's market. I've then bought composted soil from the Union Square farmer's market and used it in my apartment gardening.

I'm concerned about the future of this program for several reasons. I have exercise-induced asthma, so for both myself and for my fellow citizens I am concerned about air pollution. During this period of the COVID-19 pandemic I think about this now, more than ever. I have learned that with the NYC Composting Program shut down more garbage will need to be hauled away with diesel trucks, and more garbage will be burned (most often in neighborhoods that are low-income, or majority African-American). With your vote to reinstate our Composting Program that could be avoided.

I'm proud to be able to speak on behalf of a program that works to increase environmental, health and social justice; puts more nutrients in our soil; keeps New York City cleaner; and creates local jobs. I love the NYC composting program and truly would love to see it come back as soon as possible.

Thank you so, so much for your thoughtful, hard work to help New Yorkers during this challenging time. And thank you for your consideration.

Best,
Ann Gillespie
346 Midwood Street, Apt. 2B, Brooklyn, NY 11225

Dear City Council,

My name is Anna Poaster. I work with Hellgate Farm, an urban farm in Astoria, Queens, and run our community food scrap drop-off site. We collect food scraps from the community and turn it into usable compost, that is then spread on our gardens to nourish plants, that are then harvested to feed the community through our CSA, market, and donation programs, in a holistic and regenerative cycle. Our site has been supported by technical assistance from the Compost Project at Queens Botanical Garden and I was trained as a Master Composter through the Compost Project's course at Brooklyn Botanic Garden in 2014.

Losing the support of the Compost Project will be a huge blow to the program we have built over the last eight seasons. We will not be able to help our neighbors compost their food scraps without the support from the Compost Project (namely helping us source "browns" materials, as well as helping us adjust our processing systems). Helping our neighbors responsibly dispose of their food scraps is a vital service to the community and a key part of a climate resilient future for a city. These programs have educated thousands of people (including myself) to re-think our relationship to waste and the urban environment. I urge you to re-think the mayor's decision to de-fund this vital service. So much thought and labor has gone into building these programs and it feels gravely unfair to take them away when they are universally successful in their mission and loved by the community members who use them. Please do the right thing and restore the funding.

Sincerely,
Anna Poaster
Astoria, NY

To our elected officials,

We work for Think Zero LLC, a waste reduction and diversion consulting firm in NYC.

We understand that this time is very difficult, and is forcing difficult decisions from our government. However, the decision to gut all of NYC's composting programs is penny-wise and pound-foolish.

We ask that you immediately restore funding to our community composting and recycling outreach programs (GrowNYC and the NYC Compost Project).

These nonprofits perform vital work for the city. They:

- Employ 85 composting experts, many of whom have decades of institutional knowledge
- [Process 6 million pounds of food scraps per year](#), cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 2,129 metric tons of CO2 equivalent (landfilling these generates 1,597 metric tons of CO2 equivalent while composting sequesters 532 metric tons of CO2 equivalent)
- Operate 87 Food Scrap drop-off sites and support 106 volunteer-led sites
- Distribute over a million pounds of finished compost for free to our city's parks and community gardens, where it then replenishes our soil
- Train the next generation of composters through the Master Composter course and other outreach events

For all of this work, they require a budget of \$7 million per year. This represents 0.007% of the city's \$89.3 billion executive budget.

If the City cuts all funding for composting, **we're concerned with how this might affect the Commercial Organics Rules' expansion.** Starting in July 2020, DSNY is vastly expanding the Commercial Organics Rules. For example, before, only restaurant chains with 100+ locations were required to compost; now, restaurant chains with 2+ locations are required.

If the restaurant and food service industry would like to push back against these regulations, they very well could. They could easily cite that the City cut its own composting programs in response to Coronavirus. The City would have no rebuttal.

We're also concerned about how the city will meet its OneNYC goals and C40 goals (which Mayor de Blasio joined this month). To meet these goals, the city must have a robust, publicly funded composting program.

There is a lot at stake: local, green jobs; institutional knowledge; greenhouse gas emissions; soil health (and preventing soil erosion); fulfillment of the City's stated goals; and more.

We hope you will **immediately restore funding to our community composting and recycling outreach programs.**

Respectfully,

Think Zero LLC

Good afternoon, name is Ann A. Aust and I am with Manhattan Plaza. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Composting is very important to myself and many of the tenants here in our building.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. Restoring this program means that food scraps will not be going into a useless landfill, will be utilized in a sustainable, healthy system and eliminates the need for worm bins, which I cannot accommodate in my small studio.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;

- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this request to myself, the building where I live and to everyone who wants a healthier life, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Ann A. Aust

May 20, 2020

Council Member Laurie Cumbo
New York City Council
1 Hanson Place, Suite 201
Brooklyn, NY 11243

Dear Council Member Cumbo:

I write to you with my concern about the City's plan to eliminate funding for community composting and zero-waste outreach programs. I know that funding is tight right now. But once we get through Coronavirus, we will still be facing an ecological crisis.

For every bit of food waste we can keep out of landfills, we also keep methane from our atmosphere. As a greenhouse gas, methane traps approximately 30 times more heat than carbon dioxide.

As New Yorkers, we have established a habit of composting. This is a remarkable thing! It's a seemingly small act, but accessible to everyone, and it has a measurable impact on our greenhouse gas. We are doing ourselves and future New Yorkers (and all occupants of planet Earth!) a service for every bit of composting that we do.

Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers in all neighborhoods, uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

Programs that contribute to a more sustainable future will be a comfort to us all in these bizarre times. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that, through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that you please do what you can to restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs! We so appreciate them!!

Sincerely,

Anne Calder
182 S. Oxford Street #3
Brooklyn, NY 11217

Good afternoon, name is Anne Schoeneborn and **I am a resident of Flatbush, Brooklyn, as well as a co-Founder of Q Gardens Community Farm and a Board Member of the Brooklyn Queens Land Trust.** In this testimony, I ask that the City not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. **I have been an avid community composter for the last eight years and I have personally seen the incredible benefits composting has by:**

- **Vastly reducing the amount of “trash” we send to our landfills**
- **Creating nutrient-rich compost that amends our urban soils and enables communities to grow healthy food**
- **Providing a powerful way for children and adults to participate in waste reduction and the creation of a regenerative urban environment**

The Mayor’s proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to me and the vast network of community gardens and avid composters in NYC. I truly hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

To: Honorable Brad Lander
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

I've lived in New York City for over 40 years and remember well the incredibly polluted air and water, the trash in the streets, the neglected parks. We still have a long way to go to repair our urban environment, especially in communities of color that suffer the greatest harm, but I have been so encouraged by the city's recent progress towards sustainability and addressing the climate crisis. We must not go backwards. The Covid-19 pandemic is a lesson for us all of what happens when we fail to take action in time to prevent a catastrophe that science tells us is coming.

Composting is a key element of an overall strategy to mitigate the larger looming devastation that will result from unchecked global warming. When fully implemented, it will also reduce costs for trash disposal. Organic waste decomposing in landfills is the country's third largest source of human-related emissions of methane—a potent greenhouse gas. Food and yard waste accounts for over 30% of the New York City's waste stream.

I was thrilled when the city began its pilot composting program in my neighborhood. Among other things, it was an opportunity to personally contribute to making our city and world more sustainable. Added to the paper, glass, metal, and plastic recycling, composting has allowed our household to dramatically reduce the amount of trash we produce. Where once we put out two or three bags of trash a week, we now have one 8-gallon bag of trash at most a week. The same is true for our whole cooperative building, which now needs a third of trash cans it once did. Our building also has been using compost to improve the poor soil in our enlarged tree pits and garden border, saving us money and helping us contribute to the efforts in our neighborhood to prevent sewage overflows.

By cutting composting, the city is turning away from its commitment to sustainability and peoples' ability to take individual actions. It is also penny-wise and pound-foolish, throwing away the investment already mailed in piloting the program before it has a chance to get established. I urge you to restore funding to the Zero Waste and Community Composting programs.

Sincerely,

Anne Schwartz
530 First Street, Apt. 6
Brooklyn, NY 11215

April 28, 2020

The Honorable Bill de Blasio
Mayor of the City of New York
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor de Blasio,

We are writing to express our dismay at learning about the impending suspension of the City's organics recycling program to begin next week, May 4th. The impacts of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic have been harsh, unforgiving, and will have lasting ripple effects. At North Brooklyn Neighbors, we have fought along with partners and allies for many years to reduce trash and divert waste from landfills. The City cannot afford to turn its back on those efforts.

The fiscal constraints the City now faces are real and will force many hard choices. In a matter of just a few weeks, our City has been dealt a substantial blow that can be felt by all of our communities. An unimaginable loss of life, massive economic displacement, and public institutions like schools and libraries operating virtually are only a few of the issues on our plate. Instinct calls us to retreat, regroup, and rethink priorities. But we don't beat this by retreating. We beat this by showing our resilience.

COVID-19 is a health crisis and an economic crisis occurring during an environmental crisis. We must find ways to overcome each crisis without exacerbating another.

Mr. Mayor, we urge you and the City Council to take a long view of recycling and waste reduction programs. Since March, in response to the pandemic, our organics program has been completely dismantled. Community gardens have been shuttered to non-members and barred from collecting compost from the public. Large-scale community compost collections have been closed and defunded. Now, curbside collection is set to be suspended for at least 14 months.

History shows us that temporary suspensions do not have temporary effects. In the wake of the 9/11 attacks, the City suspended plastic and glass recycling in July 2002 to close a budget gap. Plastic recycling was suspended for 12 months and glass for 21 months. Once recycling resumed, rates plummeted and they have still not fully recovered, even now in 2020. Recycling compliance works best when practice and behavior are consistent.

Projections show that the organics program saves money over time by processing waste locally instead of incurring the costs for transport and landfilling out-of-state. The program is already having profound impact. A modest investment in the organics program has removed millions of pounds from the waste stream per year, created capacity to distribute free locally sourced compost, and strengthened citywide gardening activities.

A retreat from organics collection will likely have public health implications that we will need to be attentive to. With many more New Yorkers cooking and consuming food at home, a significant portion of waste is shifting from the commercial stream to residential. Rats normally rely on food sources found in restaurant refuse but now that has largely moved to private homes -- the rats will follow. The brown bin program, with its rodent-resistant containers, prioritizes safe disposal to reduce the health risks posed by


rats. As rodents search for new sources of food, we must keep food waste out of easily chewed trash bags and in the very bins provided by the City to residents for collection by DSNY.

This is an opportunity to make further inroads with organics collection. Research shows that it is an ideal time to make lasting changes when normal routines are disrupted. Most New Yorkers are generating more food scraps than normal, and many are also using their down time to maintain outdoor spaces creating yard waste. By not abandoning organics recycling collections, the City has a chance to introduce the program to residents who might otherwise not be receptive and help make the program more successful in the long-term.

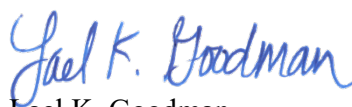
As we face this time of unprecedented crisis, let's commit to learning from past experiences and seek policy solutions that are sustainable and build on our resiliency. We know there's a path that will allow us to retain organics recycling and meet the public health demands posed by this pandemic.

We greatly appreciate your thoughtful consideration and look forward to working together on a solution.

Sincerely,


Anthony Buissereth
Executive Director


Lisa Bloodgood
Board Co-Chair


Lael K. Goodman
Environmental Justice Program Manager


Nicole De Feo
Board Co-Chair

cc: Speaker Corey Johnson
New York City Council

Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams

Commissioner Kathryn Garcia
NYC Department of Sanitation

Council Member Costa Constantinides, D-22
Chair, Committee on Environmental Protection

Council Member Stephen Levin, D-33

Council Member Antonio Reynoso, D-34
Chair, Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management

Good afternoon, name *is Anthony Lin*. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to *us*, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Composting Pickup in NYC

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to ask for the continued funding of New York City's composting program.

The rollout of the brown bins for composting has been a success. I live on Richardson St—in the same apartment for 14 years—and more and more people were beginning to use these, and it would be a shame to see that progress destroyed. I understand that there are going to be tough economic times ahead, but we need to keep NYC and Brooklyn at the front of the burgeoning green economy. We have consistently elected officials who propose to care about the environment, we need to turn those promises into action.

Again, I know that there will be tough budget decisions to be made, and that composting does not pay for itself, but this doesn't require a ton of funding and it's what citizens have been championing in the voting booth. Additionally, not only is composting good for the environment, but it creates jobs, which I think we all can get behind. As a long-time voting citizen of Brooklyn, I ask that you continue to fund the city's composting program.

Respectfully,

Anthony Malakian

Good afternoon,

My name is Arax-Rae Van Buren and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate financial support for composting and e-waste recycling programs.

Cutting these programs will reverse the progress that we have made by diverting food scraps and toxic electronic waste from landfills. When in a landfill, food waste is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions and electronics leach heavy metals and toxins into our soil and waterways. We can't let the current budget crisis allow us to lose sight of the looming climate crisis and we must continue to divert these materials from landfills to reach our sustainability goals.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future to continue. These programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to community compost and e-waste collection programs.

Sincerely,
Arax-Rae Van Buren

Good afternoon,

My name Arianna Stenta and I am with Queens Solid Waste Advisory Board (QSWAB). In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting. Composting is not only important to me as a member of QSWAB but as a woman concerned about the well-being and future of the world.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to myself and QSWAB as an organization, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you,

Arianna Stenta
31-61 43rd Street
Apt 2F
Astoria, NY

Dear Speaker Johnson,

I have recently heard that budget cuts include the elimination of the community composting subsidy. This funds the seven nonprofits that make up the NYC Compost Project in every borough, including the one that serves my neighborhood in the Bronx.

The NYC Compost Project provides essential services to me and other:

- community gardeners and urban farmers
- local and citywide greening and volunteer groups
- schools and youth organizations
- agency and institutional partners
- seniors and other residential groups

I have benefited from the Compost Project's helpline, hands-on assistance, resources, and educational efforts.

They have been crucial in helping me to use composting to reduce waste, grow food, connect to my community, and learn green job skills. Their work helps improve the health of our depleted soils and the environment at our homes and in our neighborhoods throughout NYC.

Now more than ever, we need the NYC Compost Project to continue to support our community as we work together to create a more healthy, equitable, and sustainable City.

We have already lost so much because of COVID-19. I hope I do not have to add such an important and beloved program to that list.

Sincerely,

Arn Hazen

My name is Arthur Sprogis and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. I'm a lifelong New Yorker and lifelong advocate for sustainability. It is a fallacy that New Yorkers cannot and will not change their approach to waste management. I believe New York City can lead in sustainability by removing our waste to landfill by 2030.

In the months since the City has suspended Curbside Composting and Food Scrap Drop-off sites, I've had no options for composting my food waste. I have been storing it in my freezer in the hope that these programs will return, but I have long-since run out of space. It breaks my heart to throw my food scraps in the trash after years of diligently composting, and it is not acceptable for the City to continue these cuts for the next year or more. I feel betrayed by the Mayor who has committed to reducing our waste to zero by 2030.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: **climate change**. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Arthur Sprogis



May 21st Hearing:

Dear Councilmember Dromm and Members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Ashley Cruce (resident of Jackson Hts) and I am a furloughed Environmental Educator at Queens Botanical Garden in Flushing, Queens and a proud NYC Compost Project Master Composter (trained in 2012 at QBG). I am a passionate booster for composting as a long-time gardener and environmentalist.

As an Environmental Educator and Master Composter, I have taught hundreds of Queens' kids about the joys and science of composting over the past 9 years. I have used my composting know-how with kids, adults, and seniors from diverse ethnic groups in many Queens' school gardens, community gardens, co-op gardens and compost sites! Before the pandemic shut them down, I volunteered with 3 different community composting sites and 2 local schools' Green Teams that are all affiliated with the QBG Compost Project (see site list below).

Therefore, I am so concerned about the proposed FY2021 budget cuts under Sanitation that would cut all citywide curbside organics collection and cut the \$3.5M subsidy for the vital NYC Compost Projects (7 organizations) and the Grow NYC Zero Waste programs. These have been instrumental in raising awareness and changing New Yorkers' daily habits over the past 26 years, and my own for 10+ years. The QBG Compost Project outreach staff have given valuable technical assistance and supplies to all the JHts community compost sites I am affiliated with, and connected me to two local school Green

Teams to set up compost sites and educate the young eco-warriors we need to address climate change!!

Trained Master Composters (MCs) in all 5 boroughs have paved the way for curbside organics collection and created food, farming, and composting entrepreneurs. MCs, like myself, are now staff with DSNY, Botanical Gardens, Parks Dept., Green Thumb, DEC and are owners of micro-hauling businesses. Many more MCs are volunteers at citywide community compost sites, school gardens, and community gardens.

We were finally on the right track to meeting our NYC zero waste and climate goals, but the immediate and now proposed FY21 cuts have been short-sighted and a major misstep. Other U.S. and Canadian cities have continued their organics collections during COVID-19, and have deemed composting **ESSENTIAL** with CDC-recommended safety protocols implemented [see U.S. Composting Council's website: <https://www.compostingcouncil.org/page/COVID19>]. Sadly, we were never given the chance to continue our compost operations with safety protocols.

With curbside organics collection indefinitely suspended (and it must be mandatory when it returns), these eight vital organizations--with expertise, infrastructure, and experience--need to retain their subsidy of \$3.5M to train, educate, provide technical assistance, and process food scraps collected from NYC residents by Grow NYC and other partners.

Prioritize citywide composting now, in FY21 and beyond: bring back MANDATORY curbside organics collection and by all means support the NYC Compost Project and Grow NYC Zero Waste programs!

Sincerely,
Ashley Cruce, MA, LMSW

QBG Environmental Educator (furloughed)--Flushing, Queens
QBG Compost Project Master Composter (2012)--Flushing, Queens
JHScraps' Community Composting Site--Jackson Hts., Queens
[affiliated with Jackson Hts. Beautification Group (JHBG)]
Dunolly Gardens' Co-op Composting site--Jackson Hts., Queens
Riis/Queensbridge Community Garden (MAPS)--LIC, Queens
PS69Q & PS92Q Green Team School Garden & Compost Volunteer--
Jackson Hts. & Corona, Queens
McIntosh N'hood Assn. Garden & Compost site----E. Elmhurst, Queens
[Green Thumb garden, owned by Brooklyn Queens Land Trust (BQLT)]

May 21, 2020

Dear City Council Members,

I'm so upset to learn that the community composting services that I use in my neighborhood have been cut from the budget. For many years, I've used the NYC Compost Project 7th Ave drop-off in Prospect Heights and the greenmarket drop-off at Brooklyn Borough Hall. Not only was I able to reduce my household trash, but I learned so much from the friendly staff at these sites who provide education and literature around composting and community greening. They even gave me free compost made from the food scraps I provided!

I use the compost to grow vegetables on my roof and I'd love to continue doing this especially when going out the market is so difficult these days. It's hard to believe given the terrible crisis in this city that you'd even think of cutting these community programs!

Regards,
Ashley Golub
Brooklyn Heights

Good afternoon,

My name is Ashley Lehrer. In this testimony, I ask that the City does **not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals** by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Composting is not only better for the planet but importantly minimizes bad smells and keeps rats out of garbage on the street. I love being a part of a city that understands the importance of composting and its environmental, community, and public health benefits.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is **short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications**, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City **at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting**, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the **NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education**. If the municipality cannot support this important civic responsibility, at least allow the citizens who desperately want to be able to compost and not send their food scraps to landfill, have the funds necessary to facilitate localized community composting across the city.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately **\$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases**.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
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- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and

- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our community, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority is not left behind in the budget process.

COMPOSTING MUST BE A PRIORITY!

Along with education and social services, composting benefits all!!

Corporate tax dollars should fund composting as the large buildings in the city create massive amounts of waste, they should pay for their impact!! Not get a tax break!

Show us, your constituents, that **you are dedicated to our well being**- not the needs of the ultra wealthy or backward capitalists that seek to extract as much as they possibly can on the backs of the people!

Thank you,

Ashley Lehrer

ashley.lehrer@gmail.com

Good afternoon, name is Ashley Minyard, and I am a Brooklyn resident and local composter. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. I used to live in Park Slope, where I had access to the city's composting program. When I was using the brown bins, the waste created by my home was cut drastically, with less than one small grocery bag of waste a week! I now live in Bushwick, where we do not have access to the brown bin program. My weekly household waste has tripled! The Zero Waste plans were working toward expanding this program to my community, and by putting it on pause, we will take a step back from giving the less affluent neighborhoods access to this essential service.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

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- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our community and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Ashley Minyard

Good morning,

Our names are Aurore and Adrian Stanek-Griffiths. We used to live in Fort-Greene and recently moved to Clinton-Hill/BedStuy, sadly losing the access to the organics curbside collection when we moved. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. **As terrible the COVID crises can be, it doesn't make the environmental crises any less of a catastrophe. We just don't have the luxury to wait to reduce our emissions and do everything we can to help the environment. The reality check is here, money is contractual, physics and biological laws of nature won't negotiate with our dollars. We have to be serious. More pandemic and even more severe crises are to come, our priority is to build a green and resilient city over anything else. This is our only chance.**

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. We need to switch paradigm, change our habits, enter in a circular economy world. Education is one of the major keys to build a resilient city.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;

at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;

at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity;

and

the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to us, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Aurore and Adrian Stanek-Griffiths

Good afternoon,

My name is Austin Buben and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate financial support for composting and e-waste recycling programs.

These cuts will directly affect the LES Ecology Center together with the NYC Compost Project partners and GrowNYC Zero Waste programs. The cuts represent approximately \$7 million, and if restored can continue to provide citywide access to these crucial Zero Waste programs. It's essential to retain these programs so as not to lose the existing recycling infrastructure, knowledge and habits that will be difficult to rebuild once eliminated.

Cutting these programs will reverse the progress that we have made by diverting food scraps and toxic electronic waste from landfills. When in a landfill, food waste is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions and electronics leach heavy metals and toxins into our soil and waterways. We can't let the current budget crisis allow us to lose sight of the looming climate crisis and we must continue to divert these materials from landfills to reach our sustainability goals.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future to continue. These programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to community compost and e-waste collection programs.

Sincerely,
Austin Buben

Good afternoon, my name is Awesta and I am a New York City resident. In this testimony, I am asking that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this city has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short sighted and has potential to have real long-term implications, setting the city back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of the organics program. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to us/our neighborhood, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

-Awesta Zarif

TO: NYC Council Finance Committee
FROM: Bahij Chancey and Leila Mougoui Bakhtiari
SUBJECT: #SaveOurCompost

May 20, 2020

To the members of the NYC Council Finance Committee,

Our names are Bahij Chancey and Leila and Mougoui Bakhtiari. We are writing to urge the Council to maintain some level of funding for the Department of Sanitation's compost program. As a former Senior Manager with Green City Force, a nonprofit organization that trains NYCHA residents for jobs in the green economy, the NYC Compost Program played a vital role in building green jobs across NYC communities and inspiring young adults towards green behavior when they experienced the amazing act of organics recycling, turning food waste into valuable and important soil nutrients. Since GCF's founding, the organization has trained over 600 young adults from public housing for family supporting jobs, and the NYC Compost Program has been a key part of this training and the sector of employment that our graduates enter. As a Master Composter, trained at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden through DSNY's certificate program I have seen the importance that the city's community composting has in building communities around NYC's volunteer operated gardens.

As a volunteer with the Gowanus Canal Conservancy for the last ten years, the organization's work in the composting and education program brought lots of additional volunteer involvement and bolstered community stewardship in our local neighborhood. Through the NYC compost program we have used the finished product to care for and steward hundreds of street trees in the Gowanus watershed through the Gowanus Tree Network.

If NYC Council sacrifices this program now, years of progress will be lost and we will fall backwards in NYC's sustainability goals. Dozens of community organizations and some small businesses that depend on the organics recycling ecosystem will be threatened and may have to close. If the city wishes to remain on track to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and send zero waste to landfills by 2030, the organics recycling program is essential.

Sincerely,
Bahij and Leila

129 11th Street,
Brooklyn, NY 11215

Testimony to the City Council
May 21, 2020
Re: Community Composting

My name is Barbara McClung and I live on the Lower East Side. I have been composting at the **Lower East Side Ecology Center** site for the last 2 years.

Since my co-op, East River Housing Corporation, doesn't have a composting program, I had made it my happy business to cross over the FDR Drive to make sure my scraps were put to good use. In our family, separating our food scraps for composting has become second nature and has been a source of pride and self respect.

As Governor Cuomo talks about "reimagining" our state, I find it incomprehensible that community composting should be terminated and unfunded. We've already done it—let's "imagine" even bigger and better. As we are all concerned about Covid 19, this program, too, is on behalf of the health and future of every New Yorker.

As a science educator in the NYC public schools for over 30 years, I always quoted to my students the words of Edmund Burke (1729-1797) "Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could do only a little." And I've tried to live by that.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Barbara S. McClung
457 FDR Drive, A1206
NYC 10002

May 23, 2020

Good afternoon, my name is Barbra Kiss and I have volunteered with Earth Matter, located on Governors Island, for the past five years. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle --such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to Earth Matter, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you,

Barbra Kiss

Testimony of the
Bronx Council for Environmental Quality
Submitted to the **New York City Council Joint Committee Hearing of**
Finance and Sanitation and Solid Waste Management on the
FY21 Mayor's Executive Budget, May 14, 2020

INTRODUCTION

The Bronx Council for Environmental Quality (BCEQ) calls for restoration of planned multi-year budget cuts to composting, organic recycling, and recycling education programs as part of a renewed commitment to community health and environmental justice for Bronxites.

Just as our nation confronts the consequences of public health disparities and its underlying environmental causes, the Mayor's Executive Budget adopts a "manage by budget" solution to revenue shortfall that will walk our city back from any lessons that can be learned from the COVID-19 crises. Indiscriminate budget cuts spread across multiple years and multiple city services shrinks the ability of the city as a whole to respond and recover from this crisis by ending key environmental programs.

BCEQ (www.bceq.org) is an all-volunteer 501c3 organization whose mission is "to establish — as an Inherent Human Right — a sound, forward-looking environmental policy regarding an aesthetic, unpolluted, environment protecting a natural and historic heritage." We adopt composting and organic recycling as budget priorities because they are central to the Bronx's environmental quality.

Before this crisis, Bronxites suffered the highest asthma rates in the United States, a wide disparity in the distribution of green space throughout the borough, and underinvestment in parkland and recreational access, particularly along its 200 miles of waterfront. As Bronxites struggle to recover from the recent devastating health crisis, they deserve and will require environmentally sustainable policies that address underlying community health conditions. Restoring budget cuts to NYC Compost Project and restoring organic recycling represents an essential investment towards this goal. Dr. Paul Mankiewicz of the Gaia Institute explains this:

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“Compost has been documented to bind lead in soils. Square miles of green space in NYC are likely to contain legacy lead concentrations in the hundreds to thousands of parts per million. The application of compost to these soils would significantly drop the significant liabilities the City may hold on these properties. Vegetation and soil surfaces are sinks for particles, including virus. The application of compost to support plant growth in the City will likely contribute to the wellbeing of New Yorkers on this front as well.”

PROPOSALS

BCEQ proposes two measures for FY 2021 as part of an “budget by managing” approach to key resources and needs:

Baseline funding for NYC Compost Project that recognizes its success as the city’s composting policy body and community-based education program since 1993. Composting transforms waste into a valuable soil amendment, saves space in landfills and money on trash disposal, and helps citizens reclaim the green spaces that sequester carbon, clean our air, and filter our water. NYC Compost Project’s decentralized, community-based composting program helps us reach these goals by training community members to keep and process organic waste on site, reducing hauling costs and air pollution of “compost miles.” NYC Compost Project fund programs and outreach in over 200 partner sites in the Bronx alone, creating a network of green spaces throughout our borough.

Community-based organizations serving the most vulnerable Bronxites depend upon the compost outreach and training offered by NYC Compost Project to sustain their community gardens, which reduce the impact of food deserts on their vulnerable communities and provide essential health benefits. The Bronx’ community garden network has and continues to make important contributions to New York City’s racial and class equity; endangering them through the

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elimination of DSNY subsidies will make the city less equitable. Rather than eliminating community-based composting programs of NYC Compost Project by eliminating its single source of funding, its annual DSNY subsidy, BCEQ recommends that the City Council and the Mayor's Office on Resiliency adopt community-based composting metrics and models as a city-wide priority and shared fiscal responsibility.

BCEQ calls for the restoration of funding for organic curbside pickup and processing as a refocused program that “closes the loop” and turns compostable organic material back into soil amendments for New York City's network of parks, golf courses, green roofs, reservoir areas, bioswales, brownfields, waterfronts, and community gardens. NYC has made organic recycling vulnerable to budget cuts by funding the voluntary program only as a contribution to waste stream diversion. It has not reduced the waste stream sufficiently because: 1. It is voluntary program, with self-selected participants; and 2. it does not show or provide New Yorkers any real benefits. Organic waste is shipped to out of state compost processing centers, encumbering DSNY with hauling costs and fees. A citywide leader in advocating for green solutions to CSO outfall and a green urban infrastructure, BCEQ recommends the integration of an organic recycling system with a community-based composting program – the public-private partnership that adds value to the New York City environment and increases the productive capacity of all our green spaces, especially those that provide fresh air, clean water, and locally grown food, for our most vulnerable populations.

Restoring the NYC Compost Project contract is a first step in creating a comprehensive, economically feasible project. Just as the Philadelphia Horticultural Society helps Philly in the greening and sustainability of their communities, we can follow that model. Philly's Parks

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Department has a program¹ that charges fees for services such as grass disposal or mulch pickup. They even have a list of uses² for compost, including stormwater erosion control filter socks.

CONCLUSION

The proposed cuts to DSNY subsidies for community composting and services for organic recycling put New York City on a backward path toward sustainability, environmental justice, and public health. BCEQ opposes these proposed cuts as bad environmental policy that will damage the national standing of New York City and its already underserved populations. They make the city less sustainable by withdrawing support for community composting, adding to our waste stream, and adding tonnage and costs to garbage removal.

Our current fiscal crisis does not call for conventional austerity budget policy but a strategic focus on the programs and policies that make the city and its people healthy. BCEQ holds up the success of NYC Compost Project, its model of community-based composting, and a closed-loop organic recycling program as strategies for a healthier New York City and calls upon the Mayor, the City Council, and Borough Presidents to work together to fund the essential environmental policies necessary for our recovery.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment. For more information, contact us at communications@bceq.org

80 Van Cortlandt Park South, Ste. E1,
Bronx, NY 10463



www.bceq.org

¹ https://www.phila.gov/media/20190512150443/2019-ORC-Price-Update-Flyer_V3.pdf

² https://www.phila.gov/media/20171115162327/Compost_Use_Direction_Sheet.pdf



Testimony of the **Bronx Council for Environmental Quality**
to the **New York City Council Joint Committee of Finance Hearing**
on the **FY21 Mayor's Executive Budget**, May 21, 2020

BCEQ (www.bceq.org) is a not-for-profit organization formed almost 50 years ago to establish “an aesthetic, unpolluted, environment protecting a natural and historic heritage.” We are all volunteers.

In the April 16th Savings Plan, the City created Vacancy Reductions across the agency, primarily from Maintenance and Operations for (42) Civilians amounting to \$831,000 in FY20, and \$2,493,000 in FY21. These cuts need to be rescinded, especially when (if) federal funds become available.

All parks and green spaces throughout the City are serving New Yorkers every day of the week. They are, in fact, the only game in town. All of our parks have been brimming with visitors since the beginning of the NY Pause order.

Both Mayor DeBlasio and Governor Cuomo acknowledge the importance of parks right now. Parks like Van Cortlandt in the Bronx are helping City dwellers sustain their mental and physical health. And yet, just as visitation is way up, we hear that funding will be cut down.

This is the time for people to experience nature (with proper social distancing and safety precautions) as a way to maintain a sense of normalcy and connection to the world. This is the time for the City to support its parks so that everyone, regardless of economic status, cultural background, or ability can enjoy the clean, green space they deserve.

But the reality we face is that if City funding will be drastically cut, parks will suffer. Bathrooms will go uncleaned or will be locked entirely. Lawns will go uncut. Areas with large groups of people are gathering will go unpatrolled. It will not be pretty.

Parks will not have enough maintenance, operations, and horticultural staff to keep the parks looking good. Seasonal employment, which is a huge part of the Parks workforce, may be cut by as much as 90%. Whatever work we have done so far to improve our parks, will surely fall by the wayside.

And while all parks will see the alarming results of the cuts, nowhere will it be felt more than in the Bronx, where we already receive a much smaller piece of the pie. Low-income Bronx residents do not have country homes to escape to. They do not have backyards. They have parks. Parks are essential infrastructure in a healthy city and critical spaces in a democracy. This mayor talks about equity and inclusion—with no cost of admission, and locations throughout the city, Parks are the most equitable and inclusive asset of them all.

Don't forget that in the 1970s, parks were a blight instead of an oasis. We cannot return to that scenario.

~ Christina Taylor, BCEQ Board Member



Testimony of the **Bronx Council for Environmental Quality**
to the **New York City Council Joint Committee of Finance Hearing**
on the **FY21 Mayor's Executive Budget**, May 21, 2020

November 2019 + January 2020 + April 2020 Initiatives

Initiatives with gray shading are efficiencies. \$ in 000's.

Department of Parks and Recreation	City Personnel as of 6/30/21	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24
November 2019 Plan						
Fair Play Expense to Capital Reallocation Reallocation of funding in the Fair Play Program from expense to capital.		(3,826)	-	-	-	-
Trees & Sidewalks Expense to Capital Reallocation Reallocation of funding in the Trees and Sidewalks program from expense to capital.		-	(5,000)	-	-	-
Seasonal Accrual Savings Savings associated with delays in hiring and general vacancies in seasonal headcount.		(3,300)	-	-	-	-
January 2020 Plan						
OTPS Accrual Savings Savings due to projected underspending on OTPS items.		(6,000)	-	-	-	-
PS Savings PS underspending.		(1,000)	-	-	-	-
April 2020 Plan						
GreenThumb Expense to Capital Reallocation (Fair Play) Reallocation of funding in the GreenThumb Fair Play Program from expense to capital.		(680)	-	-	-	-
Vacancy Reductions Vacancy reductions across the agency, primarily from Maintenance and Operations.	(42) C	(831)	(2,493)	(2,493)	(2,493)	(2,493)
OTPS Accrual Savings Delay purchases of non-critical, non COVID-19 items in FY20 and anticipated OTPS underspending in FY21.		(10,000)	(1,500)	-	-	-
Realization of Outstanding Revenue Realization of aged open cash receipts associated with completed grant funded projects.		(1,870)	-	-	-	-
TBTA Revenue Transfer Transfer of TBTA unspent balance from the capital budget to the general fund.		(2,329)	-	-	-	-

C = Civilian, P = Pedagogical, U = Uniform

27

Revised

www1.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/csp4-20.pdf on page 27

Good morning,

My name is Belinda Chiu and I am a native New Yorker, public health professional, environmental activist, and sustainability blogger @ahealthyblueprint. Outside of my professional work advocating for gender equality and the health and rights of girls and women, I share tangible ways the average person can reduce their ecological footprint. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. My family was one of the fortunate households to participate in the curbside collection programs when we lived in Elmhurst and Bayside, and our volume of regular trash drastically decreased thanks to city-funded compost collection services. As a public health professional and environmental activist, I understand the dire consequences that come with sending organic waste to our landfills.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. GrowNYC, its Greenmarkets, and its Zero Waste Program has made a tremendous difference for me, my friends, and family, and it pained me to find out my friends at GrowNYC were laid off due to the budget cuts!

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask on behalf of the #saveourcompost movement and all concerned citizens and stewards of the planet, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you,
Belinda Chiu

Good morning/afternoon,

My name is Bella Rabinovich and I am with the NYC Compost Project hosted by Big Reuse. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. At The Compost Project we worked not only to save food across from the landfill and turn them into valuable compost, but also to create a passion for sustainability in NYC residents.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. Having worked in compost outreach and education for the last four years I value the connections we have fostered between city residents and compost and believe it is extremely important to continue to support these connections.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;

at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;

at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and

the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our organization and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you,

Bella Rabinovich

Hello Council,

My name is Ben Croze and I live in District 40. I am writing today to express my concern about city plans to eliminate funding for community composting programs and zero waste initiatives. I am concerned that ending these programs will have negative effects on our city's public health and environment - specifically in low-income areas and in communities of color. I also believe New York City must prioritize organics collection in order to meet our zero waste and climate goals. Before current budget cuts, our city was making major advances in our waste management, empowering New Yorkers to take personal action to better our environment. As someone who worked at food scrap drop-off sites and composting facilities all across the city I can personally tell you that enthusiasm around these programs has never been greater. Composting is one of the best things each of us can do to mitigate negative impacts on our environment.

I am writing to encourage you to support funding for Community Composting Programs in New York City. I recognize the need for budget cuts in light of the ongoing pandemic, but we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger long-term issue of climate change. Just as we need to take care of our city during this unprecedented pandemic, we must also keep in mind the health of future generations and consider how our decisions today will effect them.

I ask that the city restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Ben Croze

GrowNYC Compost Coordinator
302 Lincoln Road, Brooklyn, NY 11225

Good afternoon, my name is Benjamin Lucas and I am with Sunny Compost. We run a community based compost site that borders Sunnyside and Woodside, Queens. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. After the shut down of DSNY food scraps collections our compost site decided to reopen. The amount of food scraps dropped off at our site more than quadrupled. The outpour of community members dropping off only shows how important organics collection is to our city.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals, and decreasing opportunities for climate-resilience

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. We do not know how long our little - volunteer run site can maintain this increased intake of food scrap collection. Restoration of NYC's organics collection will help to balance this intake in our community.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;

- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our community, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Benjamin Lucas, May 21st, 2020

From: Beth Sopko <scuba.diva1@gmail.com>

Date: Thu, May 21, 2020 at 1:11 AM

Subject: Please restore the composting program to New York City at once!

To: <clrivera@council.nyc.gov>

Good afternoon, my name is Beth Sopko and I am with the 4th Street Food Co-op, a food store that has been bringing healthy food for close to 40 years to a neighborhood that was formerly a food desert. In this testimony, we ask that the City not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Our store has been composting for at least 30 of the years it's existed.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills—a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted, since the cuts have potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. GrowNYC is a very important program to our organization

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and

urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and

- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our schoolchildren, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our organization, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you

Beth Sopko

Good Morning,

My name is Betsy Chiem and I am a long-time resident in Astoria, NY. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Composting organics has been a growing in our Astoria community in the past few years and we are doing our part to fight against climate change. Since discontinuation of compost collection in Astoria, an Astorian couple has volunteered their entire weekend and have collected 750 lbs of food scraps in just one month alone. This demand is increasing as more Astorians learn about this and operations is becoming more difficult.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our Astoria community, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you,

Betsy Chiem

Dear Speaker Johnson,

I recently learned that proposed budget cuts may eliminate the NYC community composting subsidy. This subsidy funds the seven nonprofits that make up the NYC Compost Project. I encourage you to work to restore funding to the composting program. This program has helped many New Yorkers live a more sustainable, healthy and fulfilling life. It has also helped to strengthen neighborhoods. I have seen these effects first hand in NYC.

I writing from an outsider's perspective, or rather the perspective of someone who lives outside the boroughs of NYC. I am from Upstate New York, but I love the "City." I love its vitality, diversity, energy and progressiveness. I love visiting the City for all of those reasons. The City's community composting program both feeds off these strengths and further enhances them. For examples, please see the attached poster from the Cornell Waste Management Institute.

Perhaps more relevantly, I am writing from the perspective of an experienced well-traveled student of composting. I have been active in the composting profession for well-over 30 years. I research composting, and teach college classes about it and related subjects. I have conducted trainings across the U.S. (including NYC) and beyond. I can claim a long list of publications, including books, about composting and its impacts that are recognized internationally. I am telling you about my credentials not out of self-interest but to add credibility to what I am about to write next. *Around the world, the NYC community composting program is a well-known and well-respected program. It is a model for other cities and communities to follow. The loss of the NYC community composting program would drain momentum from efforts to increase composting, recycling, self-sufficiency and sustainable practices worldwide. It would also remove a little bit of the shine of prestige that NYC enjoys around the world.* I am not exaggerating. The NYC community composting program is a positive example that has been cited by people across the U.S. and in places like China, Australia and Europe. It is truly a model program; and that is because it is truly an effective program. I have observed its methods and results during my professional and personal visits to the City.

Again, I urge you to keep the NYC community composting program strong and vital. I appreciate your consideration. Please feel free to contact me as needed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Rynk". The signature is stylized with a large, looping "B" and a long, sweeping "k".

Bob Rynk
Professor, Emeritus
SUNY Cobleskill
rynkrf@cobleskill.edu

Compost Use for Improved Soil

Make it and Use it: Urban Environments

Earth Matter:
Make it Turned windrow
Use it Vegetable production



Fresh Kills:
Make it Turned windrow
Use it Top dressing for landscape beds at golf course (left)
 Amend on-site soils for turf establishment (below)
 Photos courtesy of WeCare Compost



Earth Matter: Make it
 2-yard bin; passively aerated

Use it Vegetable gardening



Red Hook Community Farm: Make it Compost windrows created and maintained entirely by solar, wind, and human power
Use it Community Farm



NYC Compost Project hosted by NY Botanical Garden:
Make it Compost curing area
Use it Street tree planting



LESEC: Make it In-vessel (hot-phase): alternating layers food waste and sawdust.



Turn out to windrows: red wiggler worms finish the job



Use it
 Street tree planting
 Photos courtesy of NYC Compost Project hosted by LESEC

St. John's University: Make it
 In vessel composting, compost tea brewer



Use it
 Apply tea to soils of tree roots and shrub planting beds in late April and September



Earth Matter: Make it
 3-bin system; passively aerated

Use it
 On-site beautification



Good afternoon, name is Bonnie and I am with 462 Halsey Community Farm. We are a community garden located in the heart of Bedford Stuyvesant Brooklyn that serves the local community. We provide fresh produce, local honey from our bee hives and compost services. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Although we provide supplemental composting services for our community, the work of larger organizations like GrowNYC or equally if now more important as they process the bulk of the local compost. Our garden cannot handle the amount of compost that is generated in our local community.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. Restoration of these services would mean that our local community can continue to compost regularly and minimize the amount of waste produced.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;

- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to 462 Halsey Community Farm, the neighborhood and our local family's and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Bonnie Banks

568 Jefferson Avenue

Brooklyn NY 11221

Prospect Heights Community Farm
252-256 St Marks Ave
Brooklyn, NY 11238
phcfarm.com

Dear City Council,

My name is Brian L. Thompson, writing as an active member of the Compost Team at Prospect Heights Community Farm (PHCF) in Brooklyn, NY. PHCF, a community garden in the heart of Prospect Heights which boasts an active membership of over a 100 from our local community.

I join with my fellow community farmers to ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting. We have a strong compost system which tracks both waste stream diversion and compost production funded through support from foundations, city, and state funders so we know the value that composting contributes directly to the community as well as the local and global environment as a whole.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. Personally, I can share that since beginning to compost, I have been able to reduce my household garbage output from about 1 medium sized bag once a week to that same bag once every three (3) months. Sometimes four!

Instead of moving in this direction, the Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. The cuts

to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our neighborhood and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Brian L. Thompson
Prospect Heights Community Farm
Compost Team

May 21, 2020

Executive Budget Hearing Testimony

My name is Brooke Holman, and I'm a New York City resident living in Hell's Kitchen.

In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting. Composting is such a simple way for ordinary citizens to make a positive impact on the environment, and in a city of our size, that simple actions makes a sizable impact.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today, myself and other concerned citizens urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and

recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to my neighborhood, our city, and our planet, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

BRYN THORSSON

Testimonial Letter to the New York City Council
May 21, 2020

Thank you to the City Council for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of arts education. My name is Bryn Thorsson and I work for DreamYard Preparatory High School in The Bronx.

The mission of DreamYard Prep is to use artistry, scholarship, and character to produce graduates that are Life-Ready. This means that our young people are ready to embrace a meaningful career, believe that they can be successful adults and are prepared to contribute to society in a purposeful way. Students who create, learn about the world and themselves while doing it are preparing themselves for life beyond high school.

During the pandemic, we are working hard to maintain our students' education, including academic support, social and emotional support, and exposure to the arts and culture. Beyond the pandemic, arts and cultural experiences are going to be the bridge to a vibrant New York City, to restore mental health for families, and to engage students in learning. Artists and cultural organizations are ready to continue partnering with schools, after-school programs, community-based organizations, and health service organizations to take proactive steps to restore the health and safety of New Yorkers of all ages. In order for this to happen, city agencies need sustained funding.

My request is that budget cuts not fall disproportionately on the Department of Education, Department of Youth & Community Development, or Department of Cultural Affairs. The initial projections for these agencies would spell disaster for arts education and the cultural community that is part of the fabric of this city. Let us not take it out on young people or their future. And let us not make New York – where culture is a major economic sector with over 400,000 jobs – a place that disregards culture and community as an integral part of our lived experiences. These cuts will disproportionately disadvantage the students who are already in the most need. Indeed, programs that foster renewal, mental health, and community rejuvenation should be the last cut, not the first.

Let us remember that countless NYC youth discover a passion for theatre, music, visual art, dance, writing, or media arts, and build important life skills that help them in the future through our members' work. These young people represent the future cultural and economic vitality of our city. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Bryn Thorsson

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Caitlyn Bolton and I am a Harlem resident and member of our local community garden. I am writing to ask that the City continues its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by not eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. As someone deeply concerned with climate change, I know that composting organics instead of throwing them out to decay and produce greenhouse gases is an important part of fighting this pressing challenge.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. As a teacher I have seen the beneficial work that GrowNYC does in my public school and it would be a shame for that work not to continue.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work; at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our city, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Caitlyn Bolton

My name is Cameo Fucci, a chef for the NYC based organization, Wellness in the Schools. We work in schools all across the 5boros teaching students and their communities about healthy eating, exercise, and how all of that affects our environment. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Recycling and Composting programs in communities and schools saves NYC taxpayer money by reducing expensive landfill costs, reduces the negative environmental impact of landfills which emit methane, a powerful greenhouse gas, offers students opportunities for public scholarship, leadership, and mentoring roles, and creates a platform for hands-on learning in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years. As a chef I see food waste more than I would like to. However, many of the schools we work with use NYC Organics and it has allowed us to put our food waste where it belongs; to collection to make compost and not in landfills where it contributes to the horror that is climate change.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;

- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;

- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and

- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will

pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our neighborhood, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Cameo Fucci

Good afternoon, our names are Cara Sclafani and Kari Docter and we are the cochairs of the District 3 Green Schools Group. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. The founders of D3 Green Schools Group spearheaded composting efforts in the New York City public schools, and have continued to help nurture this habit with all of our children, across our district. When students learn to compost at school, they take this knowledge home, share it with other friends, and inspire each other and fellow New Yorkers to begin composting in their homes and work spaces.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We would be thrilled if the Council restored all \$28 million of organics program cuts. However, we implore the Council to reconsider the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners like GrowNYC, as well as consider expansion for community outreach and education. **As a coalition of parents across School District 3 in Manhattan, we set expectations for our children and all students that caring for the planet and our environment is a priority. If we cut this program out, how can we say this is true?**

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to D3 Green Schools Group, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Good afternoon, my name is Mariana Cardoso, I am a resident of Greenpoint in Brooklyn. Over the past years I got accustomed to the brown bins for my food scraps and some leaves from a shared backyard. I understand that under the current circumstances the city has to make difficult decisions to guarantee some financial stability. I would happily go back to weekend 'peregrinations' to some Grow NYC scraps drop-off location.

A complete cut of the composting programs for the time being, that I have a hard time understanding. As the City knows a lot of the programs that do not involve direct incentives (and at times even those) have their success tied to education and require adaptation from both the population but also from the programs to adjust to how people behave and where they are, what their motivations are. As a City the decision has been that the payment for refuse disposal is made indirectly through tax payments. This means that the motivation for appropriate refuse disposal is harder to motivate, unless of course there would be a very high effort on monitoring that. The City relies that on education and incremental behavioral change to get those programs operating. After hearing of what happened with the recycling of glass and plastics in 2002, I think this lesson should not be 'unlearned' now. Unless you change the incentive systems (for something like 'pay as you go') it will be hard to recover the behavior of properly disposing of food scraps after a suspension period.

I am for now privileged enough that I can try to look for a paid program to dispose of my food scraps. I know of others that are already looking for such options. It goes not seem fair. Our taxes fund the disposal of household refuse. The locations for facilities that store and process it as disproportionately in low income areas, several of which that never had a brown bin program and some that come up with their own solutions (such as Brooklyn Rot that also provides some employment for less privileged people). These communities are already the ones most affected by pollution and we are now asking them to further increase their burden.

Landfills are recent enough that we can aim to revert the trend. They are not a solution. Not too many generations ago and it would be inconceivable to dispose of food scraps the way we are asked to do it now. Not everything that comes with

progress is positive at all times. It will take long to completely divert all food waste from happening, but it does not seem to be at all the right move to completely halt these programs at this time.

Save our environment and the people in it. One scrap at a time. One person at a time.

Thank you!

mariana

Good afternoon, name is _____ [and I am with _____]. [Insert one sentence description of your local organization]. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. [Option to add 1 sentence of importance of organics/composting to you or your organization, and/or your organization's importance to the community.]

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. [option to add one sentence at what this restoration means for you/your organization specifically]

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to us/our organization [or “neighborhood” or “family”], and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Dear Speaker Johnson,

I have recently heard that budget cuts include the elimination of the community composting subsidy. This funds the seven nonprofits that make up the NYC Compost Project in every borough, including the one that serves my neighborhood in the Bronx.

The NYC Compost Project provides essential services to me and other:

- community gardeners and urban farmers
- local and citywide greening and volunteer groups
- schools and youth organizations
- agency and institutional partners
- seniors and other residential groups

I have benefited from the Compost Project's helpline, hands-on assistance, resources, and educational efforts.

They have been crucial in helping me to use composting to reduce waste, grow food, connect to my community, and learn green job skills. Their work helps improve the health of our depleted soils and the environment at our homes and in our neighborhoods throughout NYC.

Now more than ever, we need the NYC Compost Project to continue to support our community as we work together to create a more healthy, equitable, and sustainable City.

We have already lost so much because of COVID-19. I hope I do not have to add such an important and beloved program to that list.

Sincerely,

Carol Dittbrenner

To: Honorable Helen Rosenthal
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

My name is Carol Robins and I was a devoted and compulsive composter until I could no longer do it once because composting was no longer being funded. Zero waste makes more sense now than it did back in the early 1900s when it was in effect all over the city. Yes, people actually recycled their food scraps, a huge proportion of their trash.

I am appalled that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs.

Composting is more important now because NOT doing it is a major contributor to climate change. Food scraps in landfill just sit there exuding methane into the atmosphere. Composting is one of the most basic and simple things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment.

It's also important to mention how satisfying composting is. By keeping food scraps out of our trash (in the freezer, for example, until pick-up day) I no longer had a smelly trash can. I used far fewer plastic trash bags because they took so long to get filled up with nothing but bits of Styrofoam or used tissues. And I knew I was doing something positive, something that if everyone did it, would be a major step forward to protecting our planet.

Please do what you can to save Community Composting programs and Zero Waste Programs, and even more important, to mandate city (and state) composting.

Sincerely,

Carol Peace Robins
252 West 85th Street
New York, NY 10024

Exec budget testimony -- support for compost and e-waste recycling

My name is Carol Kostik and I'm writing to advocate for continued financial support for composting and e-waste recycling. My 120-unit coop in the East Village neighborhood quickly made full use of the City's compost collection, filling 5 large containers for each pick-up. When curbside compost collection was suspended, we looked for other ways to divert our organics from the waste stream — there is NOTHING right now. The best option, which existed before the Covid-19 shut-downs, was the Lower East Side Ecology Center (LESEC) drop off program. If the City can't fund curbside collections, it should make sure the LESEC is funded to continue operations. The LESEC's e-waste recycling program — which is the resource the City refers people to — has also been hugely useful and should be funded to continue.

Proposed cuts will directly affect the LES Ecology Center together with the NYC Compost Project partners and GrowNYC Zero Waste programs. The cuts represent approximately \$7 million, and if restored can continue to provide citywide access to these crucial Zero Waste programs. It's essential to retain these programs so as not to lose the existing recycling infrastructure, knowledge and habits that will be difficult to rebuild once eliminated.

Thank you for your consideration.

Carol S. Kostik

628 East 14th Street, Apt 11

New York, NY 10009

Good afternoon, name is Carolina Zuniga-Aisa and I am with Island Bee Project and Earth Matter on Governors Island. We advocate for compost and our pollinators who are now both in danger. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Composting is essential to keeping a community together, in knowing that we each play a role in helping make a positive change to our environment and it has helped me through the most difficult times emotionally and physically. I see this as a free form of therapy, which will be much needed after this pandemic.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. This is **CHUNK CHANGE** that has more benefits compared to corporations that already suck up environmental resources and are benefitting from this pandemic by the billions. This \$28 million has the largest ROI to our health, stability, and the most ROI in our future generations of this city!

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to Earth Matter, Island Bee Project and the Governors Island educational community, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

CAROLINE SANCHEZ

music.
audio.
technology.

May 22, 2020

To: Committee on Finance
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

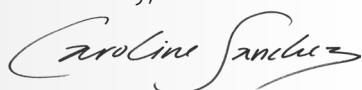
Dear Committee on Finance,

My name is Caroline Sanchez and I am writing this letter of testimony to urge the committee to vote for the continued funding of community composting programs across New York City. I was made aware of the city's plan to suspend composting programs such as the 'brown bin' and GrowNYC in mid-April via social media. This sad news intensifies how COVID-19 has threatened to fundamentally change life in New York City, but it is my hope that the committee can ensure the city's sense of normalcy and environmentally forward thinking by supporting community composting efforts.

I am proud to say that I have participated in composting programs since I moved to Bushwick, Brooklyn in Oct of 2018, most notably in two locations: BKRot (www.bkrot.org) located at 1278 Myrtle Ave, Brooklyn and GrowNYC (www.grownyc.org/compost) on Starr St and Wyckoff Ave. Having the option to compost has cut my household trash in half and provided me a sense of community and initiative – it is a small thing that I can do to benefit the city and the world.

We as a city cannot afford to reverse the positive impact we have made on the environment and community by providing a composting infrastructure. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

Sincerely,



Caroline Sanchez
17 Wilson Ave #2RH
Brooklyn, NY 11237

Members of the Committee on Finance,

I am a resident of Astoria, Queens and am submitting this testimony to request that the city include composting services (at least collection sites, if not curbside pick-up as well) in the budget. On a weekly or sometimes bi-weekly basis we drop off our household food scraps to one of the collection sites close to our home – Socrates Sculpture Park, the Astoria Library, or Hell Gate Farm and truly value being able to contribute to save our environment in this small but meaningful way.

Composting should be an essential service and plays a key role in meeting the city's goal of Zero Waste to landfill. Methane gases that are released from organics that end up in landfill are a potent contributor to climate change and are even stronger than CO₂ gas. Please consider bringing back this program as it is necessary for the city's and our planet's future.

Thank you,
Carolyn Panzarella
cjpanz@gmail.com

May 21, 2020

Dear City Council member,

I'm writing in support of reinstating City Wide compost either at drop-offs or some kind of building-wide service.

I live downtown and having been dropping off food scraps for four years. It has not only reduced my garbage but put me more in tune with what I put in my body and in landfills.

I was very pleased with the brown bins when they started although it didn't affect my neighborhood, I was proud of NYC finally becoming the kind of leadership city it claims to be. It made something that was beneficial for citizens and the environment easily accessible.

Since you stopped the farmer's market drop-offs, I've frozen my food scraps and even propagated some. My freezer is full and the only alternatives are subscription-based pick-ups which I'm hesitant to do because of financial uncertainty. If paying to be a mindful consumer is the only way, what does that say about our society? That economic class is the only way to ensure responsibility. We cannot have this.

Please re-instate some sort of drop-off system and perhaps privatize the compost if the costs are too much for the city.

Thank you for your attention,
Catherine nguyen

To: Honorable Mr. Costa Constantinides
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

My name is Katherine Robinson and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. At a time when fighting climate change is more important than ever, we need to be investing MORE in green community programs, not cutting them!

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In the months since the City has suspended Curbside Composting and Food Scrap Drop-off sites, I've had no options for composting my food waste. It breaks my heart to throw my food scraps in the trash after years of diligently composting, and it is not acceptable for the City to continue these cuts for the next year or more.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,



Katherine Robinson

28-49 46th street
Astoria, NY 11103



May 21, 2020

Good afternoon,

BK ROT is a bike-powered food waste hauling and composting service staffed by young people of color in Bushwick, Brooklyn. Our Staff and Board of Directors submit testimony strongly encouraging that the New York City Council restore the budget cuts to organics recycling, composting and youth employment programs.

The current pandemic shines a light on the unsustainable global processes that led to the emergence of COVID-19, as well as the decades of accumulated environmental injustices that place our overburdened communities at higher risk. From climate disasters to COVID-19, NYC well knows that low income communities, communities of color, and groups are hit first and worst. As the City adjusts its funding to respond to this crisis, it is imperative that we address the root causes of these crises rather than replicate them.

In this testimony, we ask that **the City maintain funding for organics recycling and composting**, instead of the proposed cuts which set NYC back from our Climate Justice and Zero Waste plan. Furthermore, as an organization powered by youth and young people of color, BK ROT **strongly encourages the City to restore funding to the Summer Youth Employment Program, DYCD, and other youth programs**. At BK ROT, we recognize the critical importance of offering professional development opportunities to young people as they build skills and leadership to become the environmental justice leaders of tomorrow. The arduous and dignified hauling and composting labor of BK ROT youth diverts food waste from methane producing landfills, replaces high emitting truck routes with bikes, and creates high quality compost that heals our toxic soils and supports our communities in growing nutrient rich foods. DYCD funding has been critical to our success in creating viable youth employment opportunities in green jobs that are rooted in environmental justice and generate positive environmental impacts. Since our inception, BK ROT has collected over 300 tons of organic waste, produced over 150 tons of high quality compost that nourished and restored local soils, and generated over \$180,000 of income for youth in good, green jobs. BK ROT alums have continued to excel in food justice careers.

The Mayor's proposed budget undercuts much of the progress the City has made in diverting food scraps, yard waste, and valuable recyclables from landfills in the past decade. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of those cuts eliminating all funding of recycling education and outreach, and composting services. This is a short-sighted move with long-term implications, and it will be a massive setback of the City's sustainability goals.

We urge the City Council to restore at least \$7M of the cuts to our partners, the NYC Compost Project and GrowNYC, with an additional expansion of funds for community outreach and education to serve communities of color previously excluded from DSNY's composting services. Furthermore, we believe the city should ensure community composting organizations and social enterprises are supported in continuing to build the systems and infrastructure to guarantee that all New Yorkers have access to organics recycling and composting. BK ROT has been overwhelmed with demands from City residents to both process food waste and provide finished compost for their growing projects. As a proud member of a grassroots network of microhaulers and composters, we continue to lay the groundwork for success even amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Expanded funding for this network is long overdue.

This comparatively small amount of funding could ensure that:

- at least 8 non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least 6 community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that New Yorkers, especially those previously left out from the City's composting program, understand why and how to compost and recycle.

Furthermore, a simple 1% reduction in the NYPD's budget would restore all of the DYCD programs. This investment will meaningfully engage youth in positions that further their learning and provide social and environmental good, while providing economic relief for many New Yorker families that face unprecedented economic hardships.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to BK ROT, and hope the Council ensures that these important priorities are included in the budget process. We ask for budget justice in restoring funds for organics recycling, compost, and youth employment programs - all of which are critical investments in our City's economic, environmental and community health.

Thank you,

BK ROT Staff

Shaquille Benn, Operations Assistant
Nicholas Cumberpatch, Operations Specialist
Sonia Fountaine, Administrative Coordinator
Victor Ibarra, Operations Specialist & Site Manager
Ceci Pineda, Executive Director
Devon Warren, Drop Off Manager

BK ROT Board

Dan Gross, *Treasurer*, The Rockefeller University
Iyeshima Harris, East New York Farms!
Annel Hernandez, NYC-EJA
Priya Mulgaonkar, *Secretary*, NYC-EJA
Guy Schaffer, *Chair*, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Felicity Slater, Boston University Law School

My name is Cecil Scheib, and I am an engineer, sustainability expert, and concerned citizen of New York City. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

In my professional and personal experience, composting is **the single most common thing people are interested in from a sustainability perspective**, with recycling close behind. If NYC demolishes its composting and recycling programs, it will lose credibility in my minds of most people that it has any coherent sustainability plan.

Unlike long-term greenhouse gas emissions goals or divestment plans, composting is something that individuals can do **today** that actually has a direct beneficial effect on their household by reducing the need to take out the trash as frequently once organic waste is removed.

I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years. If not all \$28 million of organics program cuts, at least restore the NYC Compost Project and partners, and GrowNYC.

We should not go backwards to the time when composting was considered a fringe lifestyle. It's become common behavior of so many New Yorkers. It is so difficult to make behavior change "stick" in the public – why would we take away what we have already gained?

Thank you for your work keeping our city financially secure during this time of crisis. I truly hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Good afternoon,

My name is Celia Yuen and I'm a resident of Downtown Brooklyn. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;

- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to my neighborhood, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Good afternoon, name is Chana Widawski and I am a member of the Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board, chair of West 45/46 St Block Association/ Hell's Kitchen Commons and a concerned citizen. In this testimony, I respectfully request that the City not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. I worked together with NYC Parks Department and Speaker Corey Johnson's office to bring organics collection to Mathews Palmer Park/Playground which has turned out to be an extremely successful pilot with increasing participation. Our neighborhood is devastated at the thought of losing the opportunity to divert their organic waste from landfill and recognizes the dire consequences these budget cuts will have on our environment.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Dear City Council:

I am deeply concerned about the suspension of NYC's composting program and I urge the city to reconsider! New York City has an OPPORTUNITY to set an example, to establish progressive policies around climate change and waste management, and to encourage its residents to become informed, educated, and proactive with composting and minimizing waste.

I moved to NYC for graduate school 9 years ago from San Francisco. I was shocked that no one composted and saddened to see plastic bags tangled in 100-year-old trees and struggling saplings. Rats and rat poison everywhere! Plastic plastic plastic. It was really bizarre that this city, which prides itself on being some kind of global/cultural/financial hub, couldn't catch up with the urgent need for simple and necessary changes that would create a healthier world for all.

I am reminded of Oscar the Grouch living in his garbage can and saying "I love garbage!" —Cute, but not a good look for NYC and not a good look for climate change.

When the Zero Waste plan was introduced, I was hopeful. My landlord does not support curbside composting, so I continued to freeze my food scraps and drop them off once a week to the farmers market in my neighborhood in Brooklyn, but what a chore! so unnecessary. And now it's not even an option, so all my food waste goes in the trash: the rats are thrilled, of course. I am not.

The pandemic is an opportunity for NYC to make POSITIVE CHANGES and speed up its commitment to more conscientious, forward-thinking, and inspiring policies that will have a positive long-term impact. Closing the composting site in Red Hook is an act of defeat and destruction. Create MORE jobs around this service, not less.

Suspending the composting program is a panic-driven, shortsighted impulse that will have devastating long-term effects. Please reconsider!

It's vital that NYC takes a stand to advocate for the environment and adopt better policies around waste management, composting, and recycling: the only way we can do this is by remaining vigilant and committed, no matter what. Don't give up: step it up.

Sincerely,
Charity Coleman

Good morning,

My name is Charity Vince and I am founding member of Ridgewood Community Garden, a collective organic garden which supports the Ridgewood, Queens area. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Community gardens such as Ridgewood Community Garden are heavily dependent on sources of compost such as that provided by GrowNYC's composting initiative. Our usual sources of grant funding have been cut due to COVID-19, and we no longer have the funds to purchase compost (or any other needed materials).

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;

- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to Ridgewood Community Garden and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

5-21-20

To Whom It May Concern:

As a longtime New York City resident, composting has long been a priority for me to reduce my ecological footprint while living in the urban environment. I used to volunteer for the Fort Greene Composting Project, until GrowNYC took over the drop-off site at the Fort Greene Farmer's Market. It is incredibly vital to our community. I'm sure you know of the estimates, that perhaps as much as a third of the material our city adds to landfills comes from compostable organics that could have been otherwise diverted. For me personally, after composting and recycling, I produce very little that has to go to a landfill, usually emptying my tiny gallon-sized trash bin as little as once a month or less.

Now, with compost drop off suspended due to COVID-19, it breaks my heart the high volume of compostable organics I must regularly toss into the trash, and I am forced to empty my trash multiple times a week- especially since my increased cooking due to sheltering in place has increased the amount of cooking I do and food scraps I produce. Re-opening of compost drop-off sites would also ease the pressure on our city's sanitation system, with less trash needing to be picked up.

Please do what you can to help me and the many conscious citizens of New York City to reduce their ecological footprint. It helps the health of our planet, of our communities, and our souls.

Sincerely,

Charlie Hoxie
107 Clermont Ave, Apt 3
Brooklyn, NY 11205

May 21, 2020

My name is Charlotte Phillips, a resident and homeowner in Brooklyn. I am also the Chairperson of Brooklyn For Peace. We have more than 300 members in neighborhoods throughout Brooklyn. I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate financial support for composting and e-waste recycling programs. **As a pediatrician, I am particularly concerned about the impact of our local environment on the health of children growing up here, as well as the potentially devastating and irreversible effects of the climate crisis.**

The cuts which are proposed will directly affect the LES Ecology Center together with the NYC Compost Project partners and GrowNYC Zero Waste programs. The cuts represent approximately \$7 million, and if restored can continue to provide citywide access to these crucial Zero Waste programs. It's essential to retain these programs so as not to lose the existing recycling infrastructure, knowledge and habits that will be difficult to rebuild once eliminated.

Cutting these programs will reverse the progress that we have made by diverting food scraps and toxic electronic waste from landfills. When in a landfill, food waste is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions and electronics leach heavy metals and toxins into our soil and waterways. We can't let the current budget crisis allow us to lose sight of the looming climate crisis and we must continue to divert these materials from landfills to reach our sustainability goals.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future to continue. These programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to community compost and e-waste collection programs.

Sincerely,

Charlotte Phillips, M.D.
Chairperson, Brooklyn For Peace
18 Wyckoff Street
Brooklyn, New York 11201
718-344-9913

Please keep the compost program! It's healthy for the environment and helps people become more consciousness citizens in their consumption and can be a gateway practice to more proactive environmentally friendly habits.

Chelsea Browne

Good afternoon,

My name is Chelsea Ogun and I am a resident of the Crown Heights neighborhood. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this city has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has the potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintains the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our neighborhood, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Chelsea Ogun

May 21, 2020

Good afternoon, my name is Chelsea Jane Sillars and I am a resident of Greenpoint.

In this testimony, I am joining with fellow New Yorkers to ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. I urge the City to take a long view of organics recycling and not to reintroduce millions of pounds of waste to our landfills.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council not to abandon organics collections during this crisis but to recommit to organics diversion programs that have made significant impacts in our communities. Please do not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

History shows us that temporary suspensions do not have temporary effects. In the wake of the 9/11 attacks, the City suspended plastic and glass recycling in July 2002 to close a budget gap. Plastic recycling was suspended for 12 months and glass for 21 months. Once recycling resumed, rates plummeted and they have still not fully recovered, even now in 2020.

Recycling compliance works best when practice and behavior are consistent.

I am asking that the Council restore organics program cuts including curbside collection. Though the brown bin program has yet to reach all of New York City, suspending the program will likely have grave consequences over time.

In the interest of access and equity, I am specifically asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. These programs ensure that all New Yorkers can participate in organics collection and help to raise awareness about the importance impacts of diversion and waste reduction.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;

- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our neighborhood, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

May 21, 2020

Good morning,

My name Chris Black; I am teacher at the Town School in Manhattan and a resident of Crown Heights, Brooklyn. I am writing to ask that the City maintain its commitment to Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by preserving opportunities for citywide composting. Composting has been hugely impactful in my school community, teaching my young students the value of managing our waste stream as a way of protecting the earth, and diverting thousands of pounds of organic material away from landfills each year. The same is true in my neighborhood, where weekly curbside compost dropoff has changed the way I and my neighbors relate to the materials we consume, reuse, or discard.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I join in efforts to urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. My school would eagerly partner with community organizations like these, continuing our commitment to citywide composting without putting undue strain on the budget.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;

- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to my school community and my neighborhood in Brooklyn, and I hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you,

Chris Black
Brooklyn, New York
2nd Grade Teacher, Manhattan

To: Council Member Brad Lander
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov

Re: Community Composting

My name is Chris Stadmeyer and I am proud at how much support the city council has shown over the years for expanding composting in NYC. I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs.

I have volunteered with the NYC Compost Project Hosted by Big Reuse and was encouraged to see all the job opportunities in the field of organics recycling and urban agriculture. My experience volunteering helped me secure a green job expanding the city's brown bin composting program.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Chris Stadmeyer
Big Reuse
Gowanus, Brooklyn

I have volunteered with the NYC Compost Project Hosted by **[Organization]** and was encouraged to see all the job opportunities in the field of organics recycling and urban agriculture. My experience volunteering helped me secure a green job doing **[description of work]**.

Dear Speaker Johnson,

I have recently heard that budget cuts include the elimination of the community composting subsidy. This funds the seven nonprofits that make up the NYC Compost Project in every borough, including the one that serves my neighborhood in the Bronx.

The NYC Compost Project provides essential services to me and other:

- community gardeners and urban farmers
- local and citywide greening and volunteer groups
- schools and youth organizations
- agency and institutional partners
- seniors and other residential groups

I have benefited from the Compost Project's helpline, hands-on assistance, resources, and educational efforts.

They have been crucial in helping me to use composting to reduce waste, grow food, connect to my community, and learn green job skills. Their work helps improve the health of our depleted soils and the environment at our homes and in our neighborhoods throughout NYC.

Now more than ever, we need the NYC Compost Project to continue to support our community as we work together to create a more healthy, equitable, and sustainable City.

We have already lost so much because of COVID-19. I hope I do not have to add such an important and beloved program to that list.

Sincerely,
Christine Howe
Brooklyn, NY

To: Honorable Deborah Rose

CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov

Re: Community Composting

Christ Church Community Garden calls for the restoration of funding to NYC Compost Project and Grow NYC Food Scrap Drop Off to the Fiscal Year 2021 budget. I'm disheartened to learn that the City is planning to cut the community composting and recycling outreach programs of the NYC Compost Project and GrowNYC. Although the Mayor's Executive Budget eliminates funding for these programs to address the recent fiscal shortfall, these cuts, outlined in the Citywide Savings Program, do not contribute to a public health strategy for our ongoing COVID-19 crisis.

NYC Compost Project and Grow NYC recycling programs help make the city healthier, safer, and more resilient. They make irreplaceable contributions to the measurable goals of thriving neighborhoods, healthy lives, and a livable climate as stated in the Mayor's One New York plan. If these programs are removed from the FY 2021 budget, these goals are imperiled.

The Master Composting Class and other onsite classes have given people the tools to thrive and share what they have learned in those classes. I, myself have taken the Master Compost Course and shared what I have learned with the community from the very young to the very old. It has changed my life. Making compost got me involved in growing food for myself, which meant fewer trips to the grocery and introduced me to other ways to reduce the waste in my life. I implore you to restore the cuts to recycling education and baseline NYC Compost Project funding starting in FY 2021 as part of your commitment to a healthier NYC.

Sincerely,



Constant Black
Christ Church Community Garden

May 22, 2020

Dear leaders,

Please do everything in your power to restore the NYC Compost Program and add it to the budget so that this city-smart, job creating, waste reducing, soil amending program can continue.

Thank you,
Christina

Christina Delfico
917 371 1986
christinadelfico@gmail.com

Good afternoon,

My name is Christine Campbell and my family and I live on the UWS. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Composting has created a sense of community in my building and has been very popular.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. I help run a local organization that has been working for the past year to increase composting in our neighborhood.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to me and my family, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Regards,
Christine Campbell



Lower East Side Ecology Center
Testimony to New York City Council
Executive Budget Hearing FY 2021

The Lower East Side Ecology Center is the largest non-municipal provider of electronics recycling services and the longest-running compost program in NYC. We provide e-waste and composting services, environmental stewardship opportunities, and educational programming for all New Yorkers. Today we are asking the City to support its own zero waste goals by restoring funding for community-based composting and e-waste recycling programs.

Compost

LESEC has run a community based composting program since 1990, and is the Manhattan partner for DSNY's NYC Compost Project since 2005. Funding from DSNY supports 10 organics collection sites and our compost processing yard in East River Park, as well as outreach, educational and technical assistance programming. We were extremely disappointed to learn that the Mayor's FY 2021 budget proposes a total elimination of all funding for composting organic waste. The Ecology Center lost half of its staff to DSNY budget cuts at the end of March, and will lose all staff by June 30 if the budget does not get reinstated.

New Yorkers are eager to continue composting their food waste. Each week we serve approximately 3,500 households, who drop off over 850,000 pounds of organic waste a year. The Mayor's cuts to this program, as well as its curbside collection pilot, leave New Yorkers with no options for diverting their food waste from landfills, which will lead to an increase in greenhouse gas emissions and will set the city back from its own stated goals of sending zero waste to landfills by 2030.

We join with our partner organizations in the NYC Community Compost Coalition to ask that the \$7 million in cuts to community-based collection programs be restored, with an expansion related to implementation of the CORE Act. The CORE Act will ensure that New Yorkers have the opportunity to drop off compost at sites in every community district, which is vital not only to ensure equitable access to composting, but also to fill the gaps left by the suspension of DSNY's curbside collection program.

This restoration and expansion would not only restore seven valuable green jobs at LESEC alone, it would mean New Yorkers will still have the opportunity to recycle their food waste at **at least** 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs, that at least 4,500,000 pounds of food waste is diverted from landfills every year, and that our vital education work can continue. Through this restoration community based compost infrastructure and knowledge base of existing staff will be preserved.



E-waste

LESEC also runs a citywide e-waste program year-round to provide essential recycling infrastructure to New Yorkers. We host over 60 e-waste collection events annually in diverse neighborhoods, and until recently have provided a permanent drop off location in Brooklyn. (This site recently closed and we are actively seeking opportunities to move it to another location so these services can be maintained.)

The Mayor's proposed budget also eliminates most of New Yorkers' options for e-waste recycling. It suspends DSNY's curbside e-waste collection services in Staten Island, Queens, Brooklyn and the Bronx, closes the five special household waste drop off locations serving each borough, and suspends biannual SAFE collection events.

Since 2015 it is illegal for NYC residents to dispose of their unwanted electronics in the regular trash, and sanitation is not allowed to pick up discarded electronics to put into garbage trucks. With the elimination of these free public services, the only recycling options left to New Yorkers will be with retailers that sell electronics who often either do not accept bulky items, such as TVs or charge a recycling fee. These barriers to disposing of e-waste responsibly mean it will likely end up discarded on sidewalks contributing to illegal dumping problems.

LESEC, with its 17-year track record of providing access to e-waste recycling for free to NYC residents, non-profits, and small businesses, is in a unique position to fill this void. **We are asking that DSNY funding for community-based e-waste drop-off programs be restored, with an expansion related to implementation of the CORE Act.** As with the compost program, the CORE Act will require that New Yorkers have equitable access to e-waste collection sites in the five boroughs. This funding is critical to preserving free access to responsible e-waste recycling in NYC.

The Ecology Center is a DEC registered collection site in New York City, and a vital part of community based recycling infrastructure. The e-waste program not only provides recycling services, but also has a reuse component, refurbishing donated electronics to provide access to technology at affordable prices. Additionally, the program provides green jobs for 10 staff as well as job training opportunities, community engagement through volunteer opportunities and educational programming.

Thank you for attention to these important issues. We look forward to continuing our partnerships with the City to ensure that New Yorkers have the opportunity to contribute to a more sustainable future.

Good afternoon, name is Chris Downes. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Working towards a more ecologically friendly and sustainable lifestyle is of paramount importance to me, and the City's recycling and composting programs have given all of us a wonderful opportunity to reduce our waste and climate impact.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, I am asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;

- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority is not left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

My name is Chris Gillespie. I am writing to you today because I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs.

My girlfriend and I moved to Brooklyn in Spring 2018 seeking job opportunities and a community and lifestyle that would reduce our carbon emissions. As a millennial, I am deeply concerned about the state of our natural environment as well as the health and security of my and future generations and am constantly looking for new ways to lessen our impact on the environment. Composting, I found, is a simple and easy way to reduce one's carbon emissions—especially with the support of the city.

From January 2019 to when community Green Markets closed due to the pandemic this spring, I composted my organic waste at the Cortelyou Road Farmers Market every week. Each Sunday morning, I looked forward to bringing my waste down the street and was always inspired by how many people I saw doing the same thing. Even during the winter, those community compost bins were always full, which is a testament to how many people in Flatbush take advantage of this fantastic program year-round. I am proud of how much organic waste me and my girlfriend rerouted from landfills and into those compost bins in such a brief period of time and have been having a difficult time adjusting to the current situation in which we must throw out all of this useful compostable material.

I understand that we are experiencing an unprecedented time in the history of our city and nation, however, the unfortunate reality is that one unprecedented crisis does not erase another—the threat of climate change remains as dangerous as ever and we all must take as much action as humanly possible to mitigate the consequences. City-funded composting programs are a great, commonsense way of reducing New York City's carbon footprint, which is a goal we must continue to prioritize.

Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise. In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I implore you to join me in asking that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Chris Gillespie

357 East 22nd St
Unit 2
Brooklyn, NY 11226

Good morning,

My name is Christopher Nilsson. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting. After speaking with my neighbor last year I found there was a way to recycle food waste in NYC, first at my local farmer's market, then a local park in the winter months. Before the city suspended the programs I looked forward each week to contributing to making a change in our society that has been so long overdue. In fact, at my urging, our co-op had just submitted an application for the brown bin pick up service just before it was suspended. I'm sure this would have greatly expanded the number of people contributing their organic food waste from two or three households to forty-four. I'm very saddened that the mayor has chosen to deem this program non-essential.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, I am asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;

At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;

At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and

The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle -- such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our community, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you,

Christopher Nilsson

My name is Chris Walters and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. My family has been participating in the Curbside Composting program since it began. Separating our food scraps and yard waste for composting has significantly cut down on the amount of trash we generate, made our home cleaner, and become a part of our daily lives. Furthermore, our children are learning an invaluable lesson on how we all can have a positive impact on our environment by our daily actions.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs. Our youngest generation of New Yorkers are looking to us to stand by our promises of a Zero Waste future and a city that strives to lead the way in green practices.

Sincerely,

Chris Walters

103 Diamond St. #4R

Brooklyn, NY 11222

Good afternoon, my name is Christopher X. Dougherty, LMSW, and I am the co-moderator of I A.M. Green of Archbishop Molloy High School (Briarwood, 11435). We are a High School eco-club that engages in Rockaway Beach clean-ups, neighborhood organics drop-offs near the Briarwood subway station just down the block from our school, and much more.

In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting. The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. We love our Briarwood organics collection spot!

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional

funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to I A.M. Green of Archbishop Molloy High School , and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you,

Christopher X. “Doc” Dougherty, LMSW

Co-Moderator, I A.M. Green

Archbishop Molloy High School

Thursday, May 21, 2020

Good afternoon, name is Cindy Yee. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

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- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and

- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to my Flushing community and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you,

Cindy Yee



Department of Biology

Room J526
City College of New York
Convent Ave. at 138th St.
New York, NY 10031
Tel: 212 650-6800
Fax: 212 650-8585

20 May 2020

Dear Council Members:

My name is Dr. Amy Berkov. I am a faculty member in the CCNY Dept. of Biology.

When the current pandemic is but a distant memory, we will still be struggling with the impacts of climate change. Unless we enable rigorous and farsighted policies now, these impacts will include food shortages (production, not just distribution), increases in climate refugees, and increased politic instability. Climate change will not only affect humans, but also every living organism—a global experiment with no control and no easy fix. This is why, even at a time when we are understandably trying to stem and recuperate from the devastation caused by the coronavirus, it is important to continue addressing the root causes of climate change.

I have been composting my food waste since 1996. At approximately four pounds per week, my rough estimate is that this has diverted 2.3 tons of food waste from landfill. That means that fossil fuels were not used to transport my food waste, and it did not release methane at a landfill. It was, instead, converted into nutrient-rich fertilizer that nourished local parks and gardens. These are full of plants that absorb carbon dioxide, growing in soil that absorbs water—reducing flooding, and lowering the probability that storms overwhelm our combined sewer system. These are, cumulatively, massive benefits, gained from minimal investment.

This is why I implore you to restore community composting program funding, as called for by the Save Our Compost Coalition. We all realize that the pain of lost tax revenues will be profound, but the approach that we hope to take at City College is to share the pain, but keep our program viable. Because education and training are so crucial, if we lose community composting now, it will not simple “bounce back” when the coffers refill. We will lose decades of progress towards NYC’s sustainability goals; that represents a very costly loss, in the long term.

Sincerely,

Dr. Amy Berkov
Director, CCNY Biology Master's Program
Marshak J526, Convent Avenue @ 138 Street
New York, NY 10031 USA

Request to restore cuts to funding for community composting in NYC:

My name is Claire Fontaine, I live in the East Village of Manhattan, specifically, East 10th Street, between Avenues C and D, an area deeply affected by Super Storm Sandy. I am testifying to protest the Mayor's cuts to the NYC Compost Project and Zero Waste Plan in the DSNY that provides vital financial support to community composting in New York City. It is one thing to put a 14-month moratorium on the DSNY's Curbside Collections during this pandemic, but to do the same to the community composting programs is another. At the Lower East Side (LES) Ecology Center, I earned a Master Composter Certificate, which has been extremely helpful in putting a compost program together at my apartment complex. (This training is also provided by a network of other nonprofits through the NYC Compost Project.) Defunding these operations for 14 months will disrupt the many other relationships these organizations have developed, furloughing workers with valuable expertise, and losing the learning experience that recycling demands.

There are almost 250 individual locations throughout the five boroughs where people can drop off their food scraps, run by non-profits like the LES Ecology Center, Earth Matters, Big Reuse, Common Ground, and GrowNYC, that cost about \$3.5 million from the DSNY budget to run. These nonprofits turn those scraps into usable compost, that is then shared with the communities. The amount of food scraps collected has steadily grown from 23 tons in 2012 to 2,500 tons in 2019. The LES Ecology Center each week receives 8,000 pounds of scraps from 3,500 individuals at their drop-off sites and GrowNYC collects over 60,000 pounds each week at 70 locations. These numbers show that the public supports urban composting and wants to see more of it. New Yorkers of all walks of life are concerned with the effects of climate change and want to be able to make a difference. Turning their food scraps into compost is one thing that they can do personally and see the finished results. The compost made from these collections is used in schools, gardens, and community projects like nurturing street trees. For \$3.5 million, it's a win-win situation.

In contrast the DSNY has sent 2.5 million tons of solid refuse to landfills last year to be buried at a cost of \$411 million, a practice that will only get more and more expensive in time and generate more greenhouse gases. Though the current budget shortfall is considerable and mainly due to the Covid-19 crisis, these cuts, as outlined in the Citywide Savings Program don't contribute to public health in our ongoing health crisis. The NYC Community Composting programs in partnership with the nonprofits that operate them offer a robust recycling path that has helped make the city healthier, safer, and more resilient.

Again, I cannot overstate this enough, that defunding all of NYC's community composting programs is wasteful and harmful. Because of the relatively low costs to operate them, the many benefits they provide to New Yorkers, and their communities, their almost zero carbon footprint, and their importance in rebuilding our resources, NYC's Compost Project deserves our support. Comparing this to the extraordinarily high costs of shipping to and environmental harm caused by landfills, the City needs to stop throwing good money after bad. We must preserve the options and continue to fund community composting, which will help us build a better future here.

Claire Fontaine
411 East 10th Street, #3E
New York, NY10009

Clr.fontaine@gmail.com
Phone: 917-843-7353

Claire Kirk
570 Westminister Road
D-23
Brooklyn, NY 11230

May 21, 2020

Hello,

I am writing to ask that the city compost program not be cut from the city budget.

It is my understanding that much research has been done and submitted to various city agencies and individual representatives that this is a vibrant, popular, much loved program throughout the city. The program not only helps the city environmentally but with longer program usage has shown it can pay for itself AND actually turn a profit.

Why stop a program that works?

It breaks my heart that this great city would stop such a useful forward thinking program that benefits everyone.

Thank you for listening.

Claire Kirk

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Claire Kirk". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

May 21, 2020

Written Testimony RE: NYC Budget eliminating compost/e-waste recycling

Good afternoon,

My name is Clara Schuhmacher, and I have lived in New York since 2008. I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate financial support for composting and e-waste recycling programs. For years, I collected my food scraps and carried them two miles every Saturday to the McCarren Park greenmarket for composting. You can imagine how thrilled I was when my apartment building got a brown bin—corn cobs and watermelon rinds are heavy!

In addition, as the Senior VP of Programs for the Dumbo Improvement District, I have worked for years with the Lower East Side Ecology Center to host e-waste recycling programs for the neighborhood. Over the past five years, we have diverted more than 16,000 lbs of electronic waste from landfill through these efforts.

The cuts you propose will directly affect the LES Ecology Center together with the NYC Compost Project partners and GrowNYC Zero Waste programs. These cuts represent approximately \$7 million, and if restored will continue to provide citywide access to these crucial Zero Waste programs. **It's essential to retain these programs so as not to lose the existing recycling infrastructure, knowledge and habits that will be difficult to rebuild once eliminated.**

Cutting these programs will reverse the progress that we have made by diverting food scraps and toxic electronic waste from landfills. When in a landfill, food waste is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions and electronics leach heavy metals and toxins into our soil and waterways. We can't let the current budget crisis allow us to lose sight of the looming climate crisis and we must continue to divert these materials from landfills to reach our sustainability goals.

Now is not the time to walk back our efforts to save the environment. Now is the time to leverage the silver lining that is the very modest, yet very positive, impact on the environment that the Covid-19 crisis has afforded us, and double down on our commitment to a more livable planet.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future to continue. These programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to community compost and e-waste collection programs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Clara Iñés Schuhmacher". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Clara" being the most prominent part.

Clara Iñés Schuhmacher

Senior Vice President, Programs, Dumbo Improvement District

Resident of East Williamsburg since 2008

Good afternoon, name is Clare Bruff. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

I'm not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, I'm asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to my community, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Good afternoon, name is Clare Manias, a New York City resident of zip code 11229. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and

- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.



Contact: Clare Miflin
clare@centerforzerowastedesign.org
718.306.9525
May 19, 2019

Testimony for Executive Budget Hearing to reverse suspension of organics collection. Instead make it mandatory and work to redesign it, to bring down costs and allow organic waste to feed our soils instead of fouling our streets!

Earth Day is usually a time for the mayor to announce ambitious goals to save the planet. Earth Day 2011 brought the first announcement of the city's zero waste intentions, with Mayor Bloomberg's goal of 75% reduction of waste to landfill. Earth Day 2015 Mayor de Blasio aimed higher with a zero waste goal. Earth Day 2019 brought N.Y.C.'s Green New Deal, including a plan for mandatory organic waste collection. This year, a week before the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, N.Y.C. [suspended its organic waste collection](#). It has been deemed non-essential, too expensive for the city.

Twelve thousand people quickly disagreed, telling the Mayor that [Composting is Essential to NYC](#). Over a thousand joined a virtual [Town Hall](#) with city elected officials, composters and advocates. They listed all that is at stake. Most waste passes through transfer stations in CM Reynoso's district, contributing to asthma and truck traffic. It ends up in landfills hundreds of miles away, giving off methane and contributing to the climate crisis. Local green jobs could instead convert it into compost to green neighborhoods, reducing flooding and extreme heat events. As Sandy Nurse, founder of [BK Rot](#), explained, this allows the communities which suffer most to participate in the solution, creating health and hope.

Political solutions were shared. Council Members Reynoso and Powers are working on a bill to require recycling and organic waste centers in every community district. Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer declared that the way to make organics collection affordable is to expand the program and make it mandatory. I agree with all that was said. Yet one crucial aspect wasn't mentioned, that of design.

The [Center for Architecture](#) launched the [Zero Waste Design Guidelines](#) in 2017. I led this effort. They show how design of buildings and collection systems are a crucial part of achieving zero waste and reclaiming public space. Typically, food waste is mixed with trash and stored in a bag. There it putrefies, attracting cockroaches and rats and leaking garbage juice. It's rightly named "putrescible waste". All New Yorkers are familiar with the unpleasant experience of navigating a sidewalk heaped with putrescible waste. If we redesign the system, containers can be collected from the street instead. Cleanliness and space for pedestrians will be even more essential as the city opens up again.

Redesigning a complex system in a city with diverse housing stock is not easy. But the city could pilot solutions proven elsewhere. Like Seoul or Hong Kong, the city could help buildings install equipment to start the compost process. Like Paris, they could support district scale composting and urban agriculture. Like San Francisco, they could require the use of washable dishes in restaurants to reduce disposable and compostable containers. DSNY could pilot



Contact: Clare Miflin
clare@centerforzerowastedesign.org
718.306.9525
May 19, 2019

organic waste drop-off in containers on the street. They have already collaborated with the Department of Transportation on a [Clean Curbs program](#) to allow private entities such as BIDs to store waste in the street, something common throughout Europe.

While many avid composters freeze their food waste and take it to a drop-off site, not all people are willing to do that. Research shows that to get everyone to recycle, you should make it as convenient as trash. That's why the city's building code requires recycling to be provided alongside the trash chute. The same follows for organics, and highly serviced buildings, like [many in Battery Park City](#), provide an organics bin on every story. But that isn't a viable option for most buildings. Instead the building code should be changed so all waste can be thrown out on the ground floor. Bins full of recycling can wait to be emptied for a few days, but not those full of fish bones or old cheese.

In Toronto, some buildings have made throwing away organic waste more convenient than trash. Buildings pay for the amount of trash they produce, but organics and recycling are free. So, some buildings have started using the trash chute for organic waste instead. [Mayfair on the Green](#) has done this and reduced its trash from 20 dumpsters a month to one. DSNY was ready to study a [save-as-you-throw system](#) for NYC, but the city stopped them after city council speaker Corey Johnson called [it a nonstarter](#).

As the program scales up, DSNY will need to use automated loader trucks. The current organics bins are small as DSNY empty them by hand, so they can't be too heavy. But a large residential building separating most of its organic waste [would require](#) at least fifty of the city's bins. This means a lot of work for building staff too. You can't put a small bin at the bottom of a chute.

Currently the city's organics program is expensive, costing over [five times as much](#) as trash collection. In Seattle, where many of these measures have been implemented, organic waste collection [costs less](#) than trash.

Instead of suspending organics collection, make it mandatory and work to redesign it, to bring down costs and allow organic waste to feed our soils instead of fouling our streets.

Good afternoon, name is Claudia Urdanivia and I am a member of Smiling Hogshead Ranch. In this testimony, we ask that the City not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting. Through those programs, the city has helped so many households create the good habit of saving their food scraps to be composted and contributed to the prevention of food scraps ending up in the landfill.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. Please do not undo all the hard work grassroots organizations have put into building these compost sites.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to us at Smiling Hogshead Ranch and the community of Western Queens and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

To Whom It may Concern.

My name is Clement and I am a graduate of the master composter program at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden from 2017. Since then I have aided in teaching the benefits of composting at multiple community gardens and other educational settings. I have educated people from all ages and backgrounds. I got the news of this and other composting programs losing funding and I just wanted to express what a mistake that would be for the community and the environment at large. If there is anything in your power you can do to protect the composting programs it would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Clement O

#SaveOurCompost!

Finance Committee,

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills - a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination funding for organic waste recycling. This is short-sighted and will set us back from achieving our sustainability goals.

I urge the City Council to ensure that we at least fund and maintain some food scrap recycling option for New Yorkers such as the successful community drop-off sites run by nonprofit organizations like Grow NYC, BigReuse, and the Lower East Side Ecology Center.

Our environment, our green jobs, and our shared future are too important to throw away.

Ayanthi Gunawardana

argunaw@gmail.com

437 48th Street

Brooklyn, New York 11220

Good afternoon,

My name is Barbara Beth and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate financial support for composting and e-waste recycling programs. Most of our waste is compostable and recyclable. It is important to implement a composting program that is mass advertised and enforced.

These cuts will directly affect the LES Ecology Center together with the NYC Compost Project partners and GrowNYC Zero Waste programs. The cuts represent approximately \$7 million, and if restored can continue to provide citywide access to these crucial Zero Waste programs. It's essential to retain these programs so as not to lose the existing recycling infrastructure, knowledge and habits that will be difficult to rebuild once eliminated.

Cutting these programs will reverse the progress that we have made by diverting food scraps and toxic electronic waste from landfills. When in a landfill, food waste is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions and electronics leach heavy metals and toxins into our soil and waterways. We can't let the current budget crisis allow us to lose sight of the looming climate crisis and we must continue to divert these materials from landfills to reach our sustainability goals.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future to continue. These programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to community compost and e-waste collection programs.

Sincerely,

Barbara Beth

Finance Committee,

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills - a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination funding for organic waste recycling. This is short-sighted and will set us back from achieving our sustainability goals.

I urge the City Council to ensure that we at least fund and maintain some food scrap recycling option for New Yorkers such as the successful community drop-off sites run by nonprofit organizations like Grow NYC, BigReuse, and the Lower East Side Ecology Center.

Our environment, our green jobs, and our shared future are too important to throw away.

Barbara Ross

barbaraross2@gmail.com

133 East 15th Street, 1A

New York, New York 10003

Hello,

My name is Brina Lord and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate financial support for composting and e-waste recycling programs. In addition to the environmental impacts listed below, removing compost has a very practical effect on our city's waste stream by removing additional waste and keeping our buildings and sidewalks clean (rats love black garbage bags filled with food waste).

These cuts will directly affect the LES Ecology Center together with the NYC Compost Project partners and GrowNYC Zero Waste programs. The cuts represent approximately \$7 million, and if restored can continue to provide citywide access to these crucial Zero Waste programs. It's essential to retain these programs so as not to lose the existing recycling infrastructure, knowledge and habits that will be difficult to rebuild once eliminated.

Cutting these programs will reverse the progress that we have made by diverting food scraps and toxic electronic waste from landfills. When in a landfill, food waste is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions and electronics leach heavy metals and toxins into our soil and waterways. We can't let the current budget crisis allow us to lose sight of the looming climate crisis and we must continue to divert these materials from landfills to reach our sustainability goals.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future to continue. These programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to community compost and e-waste collection programs.

Sincerely,

Brina Lord
Brooklyn, NY

May 27, 2020

Good afternoon, my name is Cara Yeates and I am a resident of Greenpoint. In this testimony, I am joining with fellow New Yorkers to ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. I urge the City to take a long view of organics recycling and not to reintroduce millions of pounds of waste to our landfills. It is extremely important that we compost for our future.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council not to abandon organics collections during this crisis but to recommit to organics diversion programs that have made significant impacts in our communities. Please do not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

History shows us that temporary suspensions do not have temporary effects. In the wake of the 9/11 attacks, the City suspended plastic and glass recycling in July 2002 to close a budget gap. Plastic recycling was suspended for 12 months and glass for 21 months. Once recycling resumed, rates plummeted and they have still not fully recovered, even now in 2020. Recycling compliance works best when practice and behavior are consistent.

I am asking that the Council restore organics program cuts including curbside collection. Though the brown bin program has yet to reach all of New York City, suspending the program will likely have grave consequences over time. In the interest of access and equity, I am specifically asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. These programs ensure that all New Yorkers can participate in organics collection and help to raise awareness about the importance impacts of diversion and waste reduction.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that: at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;

at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this

potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;

at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and

the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our community, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

City budget testimony in favor of continuing to fund community organics recycling

Good Afternoon,

My name is Carl Williamson and I am a longtime NYC resident. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress that has been made in the past few years.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, I am asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our family and countless others who are counting on city officials to consider the long term impact of short term cuts, even in the midst of a horrific health crisis. I hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Carl Williamson

Good afternoon,

My name is Catherine Cullen, and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate financial support for composting and e-waste recycling programs. These programs are one of a kind in NYC and crucial for our environment.

These cuts will directly affect the LES Ecology Center together with the NYC Compost Project partners and GrowNYC Zero Waste programs. The cuts represent approximately \$7 million, and if restored can continue to provide citywide access to these crucial Zero Waste programs. It's essential to retain these programs so as not to lose the existing recycling infrastructure, knowledge and habits that will be difficult to rebuild once eliminated.

Cutting these programs will reverse the progress that we have made by diverting food scraps and toxic electronic waste from landfills. When in a landfill, food waste is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions and electronics leach heavy metals and toxins into our soil and waterways. We can't let the current budget crisis allow us to lose sight of the looming climate crisis and we must continue to divert these materials from landfills to reach our sustainability goals.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future to continue. These programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to community compost and e-waste collection programs.

Sincerely,

Catherine Cullen

My name is Catherine McCabe and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. I have been bringing my food scraps to Union Square for many years. I am so impressed how popular the program is.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Catherine McCabe

175 Sullivan St. New York, NY

Finance Committee,

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills - a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination funding for organic waste recycling. This is short-sighted and will set us back from achieving our sustainability goals.

I urge the City Council to ensure that we at least fund and maintain some food scrap recycling option for New Yorkers such as the successful community drop-off sites run by nonprofit organizations like Grow NYC, BigReuse, and the Lower East Side Ecology Center.

Our environment, our green jobs, and our shared future are too important to throw away.

Christina Carmody

christina.carmody1@gmail.com

351 Washington Ave.

Brooklyn , New York 11238

Finance Committee,

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills - a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination funding for organic waste recycling. This is short-sighted and will set us back from achieving our sustainability goals.

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Our environment, our green jobs, and our shared future are too important to throw away.

Danielle Shepard

scherrbert@gmail.com

53 Boerum place

Brooklyn, New York 11201

Good afternoon,

My name is David Arky, and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate financial support for composting and e-waste recycling programs

I have been recycling all of our household organic materials and appreciate how much this saves landfills from the unnecessary waste and prematurely fills them with material that can otherwise be reused.

I have also been taking my electronic waste and usable electronics to the Lower East Side ecology center since the program began.

These cuts will directly affect the LES Ecology Center together with the NYC Compost Project partners and GrowNYC Zero Waste programs. The cuts represent approximately \$7 million, and if restored can continue to provide citywide access to these crucial Zero Waste programs. It's essential to retain these programs so as not to lose the existing recycling infrastructure, knowledge and habits that will be difficult to rebuild once eliminated.

Cutting these programs will reverse the progress that we have made by diverting food scraps and toxic electronic waste from landfills. When in a landfill, food waste is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions and electronics leach heavy metals and toxins into our soil and waterways. We can't let the current budget crisis allow us to lose sight of the looming climate crisis and we must continue to divert these materials from landfills to reach our sustainability goals.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future to continue. These programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to community compost and e-waste collection programs.

Sincerely,

David Arky

Honorable Council Member Lander,

My name is Eric Silver and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. I'm a board member for the co-op One Plaza West, and it was my project to bring the Organics Collection program to our building. When I tried to institute the program, I was met with a lot of resistance from life-long New Yorkers who were accustomed to the same routines in their lives, and who had misinformed ideas about what composting meant. I had to assuage their concerns about increases in rats, which never actually happened. Almost a year later, our building was composting to such a degree that we moved from the original single bin to two bins, and that was usually filled by Wednesday on a Saturday collection schedule. People were developing better habits and I could see our trash cans, of which there used to be 3, reduced to 1 for a building of 59 units. It was truly one of the most heartening things I've seen, and it was such a blow to hear that it would be stopped.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Eric Silver

Vice President, One Plaza West

1 Plaza Street West
Brooklyn, NY
11217

Finance Committee,

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills - a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination funding for organic waste recycling. This is short-sighted and will set us back from achieving our sustainability goals.

I urge the City Council to ensure that we at least fund and maintain some food scrap recycling option for New Yorkers such as the successful community drop-off sites run by nonprofit organizations like Grow NYC, BigReuse, and the Lower East Side Ecology Center.

Our environment, our green jobs, and our shared future are too important to throw away.

Gabrielle Engh

hello@urbanbeesanctuary.com

2200 Tiebout Avenue Apt 5H

Bronx, New York 10457

Hello Mr. King -

Hope you and the family are doing well at this time.

I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community compost and recycling outreach programs. As you know, Rivers Run Community Garden has been fortunate to have graduates of the composting program maintain our composting system at the garden. These proud Master Composters (with the help of members of the outreach program) taught many children and adults of Co-op City the importance of recycling in a fun and engaging way. The outreach program also helped us build a substantial composting system in our open-air classroom/garden. We are proud to boast that we've taught hundreds of people how to turn their waste into black gold and with the help of the community composting and recycling outreach programs, we can teach so many more. We have so much more work to do to reach the goal of Zero Waste in Co-op City. Please help us.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Gail Sharbaan, Co-Founder and Steering Committee President

Rivers Run Community Garden

100 Casals Pl #32K

Bronx, NY 10475



To NYC City Council Members,

I am writing to implore you to preserve Department of Sanitation funding in the amount of \$3.5 million for the Community Composting Subsidy in FY21. Without this funding, the venerable NYC Compost Project will cease to exist in its seven locations throughout the Five Boroughs.

As a longtime Vinegar Hill resident, I have been fortunate to benefit from many of the city's composting services. While they are all of tremendous value, it is the work of the NYC Compost Project that truly shines. Even though my building had the curbside organics pickup program, I still made use of the food scrap drop-off sites operated by the Compost Project and GrowNYC to ensure that the compost was made in and used to benefit my local community. My local volunteer-led greening initiatives like Vinegar Hill Community Garden and Bridge Plaza Community Garden can operate in part due to the technical assistance that community greening programs like the Compost Project provide.

Furthermore, the Compost Project based at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden has provided me with an in-depth education in all aspects of composting and gardening which has allowed me to grow my own fruits and vegetables on my balcony at home. During this time of COVID-19 when I am trying to limit trips to the store, this education in self-sufficiency has become truly valuable. It would be a shame if other New Yorkers were deprived of the opportunities to learn these skills now when they're most need.

It is entirely understandable that an expensive municipal program like curbside organics pickup would be cut during a crisis, but why eliminate community-building environmental programs whose costs amount to a rounding error in the city's budget? Please reconsider these cuts.

Sincerely,
Jared Siegel
Vinegar Hill

Save our Compost!!!

Please SaveOurCompost!!!
Continue to fund curbside residential pick up, the nonprofits like
GrowNYC and the NYC Compost Project. We can't afford to regress.

Thank you,
Jean Forman

Finance Committee,

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills - a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination funding for organic waste recycling. This is short-sighted and will set us back from achieving our sustainability goals.

I urge the City Council to ensure that we at least fund and maintain some food scrap recycling option for New Yorkers such as the successful community drop-off sites run by nonprofit organizations like Grow NYC, BigReuse, and the Lower East Side Ecology Center.

Our environment, our green jobs, and our shared future are too important to throw away.

Jessie Anderson

jessienellanderson@gmail.com

167 Java Street 1A

Brooklyn, New York 11222

From: [Jessie Stuart](#)
To: [Powers, Keith](#)
Cc: [financetestimony](#); [Speaker Corey Johnson](#); info@nyccommunitycompost.org
Subject: Community Composting
Date: Thursday, May 28, 2020 12:15:26 PM

Hello Honorable,

I recognize that you are dealing with many issues right now and I truly appreciate your service and time.

My name is Jessie Stuart and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for

community compost and recycling outreach programs. NYC has the ability to look back at this time and

be proud of being innovators in how we dealt with making decisions that impact our city long term.

Cutting programs that truly have multiple benefits to the environment should not be where these cuts are

focused. I ask if you can please help to find ways to innovate to keep these programs.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent

need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-

19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the

larger, longer-

term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person

can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining

funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for

New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-

based networks and tapping into local

expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The

City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual

choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs

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Sincerely,

Jessie

Finance Committee,

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills - a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination funding for organic waste recycling. This is short-sighted and will set us back from achieving our sustainability goals.

I urge the City Council to ensure that we at least fund and maintain some food scrap recycling option for New Yorkers such as the successful community drop-off sites run by nonprofit organizations like Grow NYC, BigReuse, and the Lower East Side Ecology Center.

Our environment, our green jobs, and our shared future are too important to throw away.

Jordan Sandke

magicmollusk@aol.com

84-22 113th St.

Richmond Hill, NY 11418

Hello,

I am writing to request the resumption of composting in NYC. I reached out to city government last week on this issue, and only now found out that there is actually a broader push to get it resumed. That is why I am writing here, again.

This is a pivotal time where we have the conscious choice to decide to move forward towards what we and the world needs, rather than fall back into old ways of doing things. Composting is a small act in the larger scheme of things, but one that New Yorkers have show a willingness to do because they understand that the climate crisis looms large. Please allow New Yorkers to do the right thing by resuming composting services in the city. In this way, we can set an example not only for other New Yorkers, but for the world.

Thanks for your support, and hopefully your action to make sure that composting resumes swiftly in NYC.

Stay safe,
Katie Wepplo
225 East 4th Street
New York, NY 10009

Reinstating citywide composting and residential organics collections

Why make it mandatory?

It's really all about health and resilience, something that's very much at the forefront of people's minds at the moment. Without focusing on the important ideas behind the movement for food equity and environmental justice could mean average New Yorkers are left without the ability to participate in climate initiatives. Now is the best time to confront the important questions about our discarded resources.

Why source separate and compost organics?

Programmatic efforts to eliminate our toxic trash burden and divert recoverable resources makes us more resilient to shocks like pandemics by improving the overall health and quality of life in neighborhoods.

The benefits and solutions?

Through innovative design we can clear trash bag choked sidewalks, consolidate collection routes to reduce carbon emissions, and in the process of doing this start to contain vermin and airborne particulates. In underserved communities high rates of asthma and diabetes have been cited as key comorbidity's in the poor health outcomes of coronavirus infections.

Converting food scraps to useful energy (it is a recipe after all) by mixing 1:1 nitrogen and carbon and rendering it into a useful product completes the cycle for the next round of consumption. In effect closing the loop.

The city can tap into a large network of trained stewards and master composter's to support diversion projects through public parks and gardens and fund hyper-locally targeted green deals. There's always a cost to shutting down programs not just in money but in projecting cynicism toward those who can be better served by our current system.

The food we discard is a snapshot of our lives at any moment. It could represent a day we had to explain the word pandemic to a child, video happy hour with family and friendships or mourned with virtual strangers over the loss of someone vital. Source separating food waste also forces us to confront our daily addictions and nutrition choices and perhaps through mandatory participation will help us to improve our health and well-being.

Marc Shifflett
Member, Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board
Master Composter
Earth Matter Apprentice

2041 5th Avenue
New York, NY 10035
(917)570-7079

All views expressed are my own and do not necessarily reflect the viewpoints of the organizations I belong.

--

email marc@marcshifflett.com | mobile 917-570-7079

Finance Committee,

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills - a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination funding for organic waste recycling. This is short-sighted and will set us back from achieving our sustainability goals.

I urge the City Council to ensure that we at least fund and maintain some food scrap recycling option for New Yorkers such as the successful community drop-off sites run by nonprofit organizations like Grow NYC, BigReuse, and the Lower East Side Ecology Center.

Our environment, our green jobs, and our shared future are too important to throw away.

mariel.anaise@gmail.com

124 Meserole Avenue Apartment 3R

Brooklyn, New York 11222

Good afternoon,

My name is Matthew Eshed, and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate financial support for composting and e-waste recycling programs. Without your support, the only option for myself and my neighbors is to participate in a fee-based service, which I am not opposed to, but at \$20/week, that's \$80/month, and that's another bill, which most of us really don't need right now. So what we have is a situation where the only option is to dump our food scraps in the river, because if there's one thing food scraps are not, it's garbage. And e-waste, as well, the LES Ecology Center provides an essential service by supporting e-waste collection. Stalling the collection of compost and e-waste actively works against our City's commitments to a clean and healthy environment.

These cuts will directly affect the LES Ecology Center together with the NYC Compost Project partners and GrowNYC Zero Waste programs. The cuts represent approximately \$7 million, and if restored can continue to provide citywide access to these crucial Zero Waste programs. It's essential to retain these programs so as not to lose the existing recycling infrastructure, knowledge and habits that will be difficult to rebuild once eliminated.

Cutting these programs will reverse the progress that we have made by diverting food scraps and toxic electronic waste from landfills. When in a landfill, food waste is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions and electronics leach heavy metals and toxins into our soil and waterways. We can't let the current budget crisis allow us to lose sight of the looming climate crisis and we must continue to divert these materials from landfills to reach our sustainability goals.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future to continue. These programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to community compost and e-waste collection programs.

Sincerely,

Matthew Eshed

Hello,

My name is Meg Kettell and I am so sad to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. NYC had a wonderful compost program that many of us were participating in and now to scrap the whole thing was be a disaster to our NYC environment and all environmental awareness.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs. We cannot go backwards now!

Sincerely,

Meg Kettell
Brooklyn, NY 11222

Good afternoon,

My name is Melissa Papalcure and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate financial support for composting and e-waste recycling programs. These programs allow me to compost and do my part, they are very important to me.

These cuts will directly affect the LES Ecology Center together with the NYC Compost Project partners and GrowNYC Zero Waste programs. The cuts represent approximately \$7 million, and if restored can continue to provide citywide access to these crucial Zero Waste programs. It's essential to retain these programs so as not to lose the existing recycling infrastructure, knowledge and habits that will be difficult to rebuild once eliminated.

Cutting these programs will reverse the progress that we have made by diverting food scraps and toxic electronic waste from landfills. When in a landfill, food waste is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions and electronics leach heavy metals and toxins into our soil and waterways. We can't let the current budget crisis allow us to lose sight of the looming climate crisis and we must continue to divert these materials from landfills to reach our sustainability goals.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future to continue. These programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to community compost and e-waste collection programs.

Sincerely,

Melissa Papalcure

Hello.

My name is Melissa Sobel, and I live on the upper west side. In this testimony, I ask that the City not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. My building has been a participant in the city's organics program, and the continuation of its environmental and educational benefits is important to our resident shareholders and their families.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City maintain at least some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress that has been made in the past few years.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, I am asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, that amount could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate how meaningful composting is to our community, and I hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Melissa Sobel

Esteemed Council Members,

I sincerely hope that the Council will ***strongly reconsider*** the damaging cuts of \$3.5 million for the Department of Sanitation's Community Composting Subsidy. The community gardens in my Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood depend on the assistance this subsidy provides via the NYC Compost Project.

My family has been fortunate to frequent the 462 Halsey Community Farm where neighborhood volunteers have transformed an empty lot into a beautiful source of fresh food and environmental stewardship. Throughout the years, this site has worked closely with the Brooklyn Botanic Garden's leg of the Compost Project to build a high-functioning community composting program that has been crucial in helping Halsey Farm remediate its soil for growing fruits and vegetables. In addition to training a host of Master Composters, the Compost Project even helped them building compost bins on-site. Their success as a beautiful and welcoming site has even allowed them to partner with GrowNYC to open a food pantry for feeding New Yorkers in need.

Put simply, now is not the time for the City to cut the tiny amount of support it provides for volunteers who work hard to make their city a better place to live. People are losing their jobs, fearful for their health, and looking forward to the moment in which they can re-engage with their neighbors. Make sure community composting will still be there for them!

Sincerely,
Nathalie Sommer
Bedford-Stuyvesant

Dear Speaker Johnson and staff,

Thank you for being a champion for green jobs, our shared environment, and for our City's composting programs in particular.

I am writing to ask for your continued leadership to ensure that our community drop-off sites at Greenmarkets around New York City can be maintained and expanded. Although I recognize the urgent need for budget cuts due to Covid-19, we cannot reverse course and lose all the progress we have made on the larger, longer term crisis of climate change. In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

Thank you in advance for fighting to fund this essential service and offering New Yorkers an alternative to throwing our food scraps into the trash and exporting them to landfills.

Sincerely,
Paola Sokayeva
196 Clinton Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11205

Good afternoon,

My name is Peter Nauffts and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate financial support for composting and e-waste recycling programs. These programs are critical to making NYC a healthier and most sustainable city for all.

These cuts will directly affect the LES Ecology Center together with the NYC Compost Project partners and GrowNYC Zero Waste programs. The cuts represent approximately \$7 million, and if restored can continue to provide citywide access to these crucial Zero Waste programs. It's essential to retain these programs so as not to lose the existing recycling infrastructure, knowledge and habits that will be difficult to rebuild once eliminated.

Cutting these programs will reverse the progress that we have made by diverting food scraps and toxic electronic waste from landfills. When in a landfill, food waste is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions and electronics leach heavy metals and toxins into our soil and waterways. We can't let the current budget crisis allow us to lose sight of the looming climate crisis and we must continue to divert these materials from landfills to reach our sustainability goals.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future to continue. These programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to community compost and e-waste collection programs.

Sincerely,

Peter Nauffts

Finance Committee,

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills - a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination funding for organic waste recycling. This is short-sighted and will set us back from achieving our sustainability goals.

I urge the City Council to ensure that we at least fund and maintain some food scrap recycling option for New Yorkers such as the successful community drop-off sites run by nonprofit organizations like Grow NYC, BigReuse, and the Lower East Side Ecology Center.

Our environment, our green jobs, and our shared future are too important to throw away.

Phillipe St Luce

Pgstluce@yahoo.com

230 Park Place

Brooklyn, New York 11238

Good Day,

I hope this finds you safe and well. I live in Amalgamated Houses in Van Cortlandt Village, District 11, Bronx. In this testimony, I ask that our City not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. I had taken full advantage of our City's wonderful organics recycling program, and am now loathe to have to throw away food scraps with non-recyclable trash. I am desperately seeking ways to recycle food waste, finding the alternatives burdensome, inefficient, and restrictive with respect to the number and variety of acceptable items; especially compared with what our City's previous large-scale municipal recycling program could handle.

Our Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress our City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a main source of greenhouse gas emissions. Our Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has the potential to have long-term implications, setting our City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today, I am urging City Council to ensure that our City, at the very least, maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years. I am not asking that City Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, I am asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and GrowNYC be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. This would mean that I could resume separating food scraps for recycling either in our community or at a site nearby.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners, and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and if reinstated, along with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separated food scraps, thus preventing this major waste stream from entering landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City funding — to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education — could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs could continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities could continue their work of processing food waste — turning it into usable compost to help grow food in community gardens and urban farms — during a time of food insecurity; and
- our City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle. Such training in the schools is a small investment that would pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this request, to me and our entire City, and hope City Council ensures that this important priority will not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you very much for your time, dedication, commitment and service,

Robert H. Scott
3980 Orloff Avenue Apt 2D Bronx NY 10463
646-842-6611

MUST READ: We DEMAND organics pickup to be reinstated.

Dear Council Persons,

We DEMAND organics pickup to be reinstated. It should be a mandatory part of recycling. Rotting organic waste in the landfill is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. Why end a program that has been working so well in training everyone to think mindfully about waste. Reinstating it in June 2021 means that we have to start all over again, that just doesn't make any sense.

We will be left with no public option to keep their food scraps out of landfills. The momentum to reach the City's zero waste goals, must not be halted. We must keep community composting programs live and reinstate the curbside collection program with mandatory participation.

Thank you,
Sanaa K. Chakour

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Sanaa Chakour 21chakour@friendsseminary.org

Compost

Please bring back Organics composting. Brown bins need to come back.
It's such a shame that all that material gets put in regular garbage.
Composting is valuable and economical

Thanks

Sara Baerwald

Nyc 10010

Dear Esteemed New York City Council Members,

I was heartbroken to learn that the city is eliminating Sanitation Department funding for community composting. I understand that trying times lead to difficult decisions but *I implore you to reconsider this matter*. As a longtime Flatbush resident I have witnessed firsthand the positive impact of city funded compost programs on our neighborhood - in particular at Q Gardens on East 18th street, where a vacant lot on a heavily trafficked street has been transformed to a vibrant community oasis. The metamorphosis of this space could not have occurred without the compost made on site thanks to partnerships with city-funded institutions. Every day I see neighborhood families and community members making use of this new space.

It's a small space but it's had a BIG outsized impact.

Here's the thing - we all want to live in a New York City that is affordable and sustainable for EVERY family. And composting is part of the path forward. We NEED to support sites that are growing food, beautifying our streets, and serve as valuable neighborhood landmarks and meeting points.

When I was a little girl enrolled in NYC public schools, I wrote to then mayor (and now national embarrassment) Rudy Giuliani to institute citywide recycling in our schools. Kids today are EXCITED to take part in community composting, just like I was once excited about recycling.

Now is not the time to be eliminating these sources of hope and joy in our communities so I ask you to please PLEASE reconsider! I'll be watching.

Thank you!

Seiji Carpenter independence@gmail.com

Finance Committee,

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills - a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination funding for organic waste recycling. This is short-sighted and will set us back from achieving our sustainability goals.

I urge the City Council to ensure that we at least fund and maintain some food scrap recycling option for New Yorkers such as the successful community drop-off sites run by nonprofit organizations like Grow NYC, BigReuse, and the Lower East Side Ecology Center.

Our environment, our green jobs, and our shared future are too important to throw away.

Shannon1204@gmail.com

103 Java St, Apt 1L

Brooklyn, New York 11222

Finance Committee,

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills - a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination funding for organic waste recycling. This is short-sighted and will set us back from achieving our sustainability goals.

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Our environment, our green jobs, and our shared future are too important to throw away.

Stephanie Sowell

stepsowell@aol.com

380 Malcolm X Blvd

New York, New York 10027

Dear Speaker Johnson,

I have recently heard that budget cuts include the elimination of the community composting subsidy. This funds the seven nonprofits that make up the NYC Compost Project in every borough, including the one that serves my neighborhood in the Bronx. I have lived in the Bronx for many years now and having a composting program available to us is extremely important. This program provides us with knowledge about ecology, sustainability, and most importantly, it teaches our people to be more sustainable and conscious about minimizing food waste and landfill issues.

The NYC Compost Project provides essential services to me and other:

- community gardeners and urban farmers
- local and citywide greening and volunteer groups
- schools and youth organizations
- agency and institutional partners
- seniors and other residential groups

I have benefited from the Compost Project's helpline, hands-on assistance, resources, and educational efforts.

They have been crucial in helping me to use composting to reduce waste, grow food, connect to my community, and learn green job skills. Their work helps improve the health of our depleted soils and the environment at our homes and in our neighborhoods throughout NYC.

Now more than ever, we need the NYC Compost Project to continue to support our community as we work together to create a more healthy, equitable, and sustainable City.

We have already lost so much because of COVID-19. I hope I do not have to add such an important and beloved program to that list.

Sincerely,
Sylvia Moya

Finance Committee,

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills - a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination funding for organic waste recycling. This is short-sighted and will set us back from achieving our sustainability goals.

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Our environment, our green jobs, and our shared future are too important to throw away.

Tanya Leet

tanya.leet@gmail.com

1030 Park Place

Brooklyn, New York 11213

Hi Council Member Cumbo -

My name is Tim Donnelly and I was bummed to hear that the city has eliminated funding for curbside composting and other zero-waste programs. Curbside composting is one of the best ideas the city has had in years, and it has already gone a long way to changing people's waste habits for the better. It is such a shame to pull the plug on it now right when many residents had taken to understanding how much organic waste is tied to our overall waste footprint, carbon-reduction efforts as a city, and had changed their habits to accommodate the program. Our household now grimaces every time we have to throw organic waste into the regular trash -- we can see the wasted nutrients and organic matter that would be better spent going back into the earth that are instead sent to a landfill.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The city's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs, or find other ways to provide at least temporary compost drop off points while the pandemic continues. We must think big if we are going to be a city that truly leads the way into a cleaner, healthier future for the planet.

Thank you!

Tim Donnelly 468 Carlton #1

--

@timdonnelly
timdonnelly.com
240.481.0639

Finance Committee,

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills - a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination funding for organic waste recycling. This is short-sighted and will set us back from achieving our sustainability goals.

I urge the City Council to ensure that we at least fund and maintain some food scrap recycling option for New Yorkers such as the successful community drop-off sites run by nonprofit organizations like Grow NYC, BigReuse, and the Lower East Side Ecology Center.

Our environment, our green jobs, and our shared future are too important to throw away.

Zoe Mills

zoe.pearl@gmail.com

383A 6th St

Brooklyn, New York 11215

I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate financial support for composting and e-waste recycling programs.

These cuts will directly affect the LES Ecology Center together with the NYC Compost Project partners and GrowNYC Zero Waste programs. The cuts represent approximately \$7 million, and if restored can continue to provide citywide access to these crucial Zero Waste programs. It's essential to retain these programs so as not to lose the existing recycling infrastructure, knowledge and habits that will be difficult to rebuild once eliminated.

Cutting these programs will reverse the progress that we have made by diverting food scraps and toxic electronic waste from landfills. When in a landfill, food waste is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions and electronics leach heavy metals and toxins into our soil and waterways. We can't let the current budget crisis allow us to lose sight of the looming climate crisis and we must continue to divert these materials from landfills to reach our sustainability goals.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future to continue. These programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to community compost and e-waste collection programs.

Sincerely,

Anita

Anita B Haravon, PhD
Founder, Director
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646-251-0730

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=06VcrPyO6mU>

Good evening.

Thank you Chairs Dromm and Gibson,

and all members of the Finance Committee, for this opportunity.

I'm Marisa DeDominicis, co-founder of Earth Matter NY, a non-profit, located on Governors Island.

We seek to reduce the organic waste misdirected into the garbage stream, by encouraging neighbor participation, and leadership in composting.

□ We see that there is one soil, one air, and one water, all commonly held and stewarded by one people, the nurturance of which is critical to a verdant world.

□ We see that organic waste should not be part of modern landfills because the waste of any process is food for other processes.

□ We see that transportation of waste far beyond the source unnecessarily despoils the soil, air, and water.

□ We see that society needs to alter the way waste is treated as part of an integrated, long term solution to food, climate, and energy issues.

□ We see that the power to manifest global social change lies within each of us. The challenge to take action rests on our shoulders.

On April 2, Earth Matter's staff nose-dived, from 8 people, to 2.

Restoration of our \$6.4 funding in FY 21 will provide our passionate, effective staff, and our sister organizations - 6 other Compost Project sites and GrowNYC, the means to build the bridge needed now, over the gap created by the suspension in citywide composting services.

This bridge will ensure success of larger proposed compost initiatives, later on.

Thank you Margaret Chin, all other members of the Compost Caucus, and members of our City Council, for your support in restoring the community composting budget line.

--



**SAVE COMMUNITY
COMPOSTING** in NYC

bigreuse.nationbuilder.com

#SaveOurCompost

Help save NYC Community Scale Composting! **click here** to sign our petition to NYC Council

Marisa DeDominicis
Executive Director
Earth Matter NY Inc.

e: marisa@earthmatter.org
c: [917.447.7256](tel:917.447.7256)

Website | [Newsletter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#)

Mission: to encourage neighbor participation and leadership in composting

The [NYC Compost Project](#) works to rebuild NYC's soil, neighborhood by neighborhood

Recycling

Though we will struggle with funding, our recycling has been extremely effective in Carroll Gardens, Brooklyn and other communities. We are well trained and know the value of this program. An adoption to community gardens of whatever issues need to be considered should be done to avoid a complete shut down. We are already experiencing rats and other rodents at a higher degree, the ongoing cost of landfill and complete waste of resources. I urge you to reinstitute this needed program for all New Yorkers and for all to comply.

Debra Pearlman

Dear City Council:

Please restore citywide community composting and zero waste programs provided by the NYC Compost Project and Grow NYC for FY21 until other compost efforts have been established.

I am a Master Composter trained by the NYC Compost Project in Queens. I've greatly valued my experiences educating members of the public about composting, directly supporting my community garden in Harlem, and building connections with like-minded people who are fighting for a more sustainable NYC.

Our city has an opportunity to be a leader in waste reduction and reuse through our innovative community-based approaches. A centralized top-down approach to organic waste collection without securing community buy-in, educating people about organic waste, and honoring the work of long-time activists is a recipe for failure.

I would hate to see the progress made by NYC in creating opportunities for municipal compost shot down by a short sighted attempt to save money and alter the nature of the program.

If City Hall is committed to equity, then they need to acknowledge the important role community partnerships play in bridging government programs/resources with communities that lack trust in government support due both to historic bias and environmental injustice.

What has been so special about NYC's approach to composting is this combined approach leveraging Sanitation, large non-profits, and small community-based organizations by providing different opportunities to compost organic waste.

The NYC Compost Project united non-profits and activists from all five boroughs while also leveraging local knowledge and connections to build back trust, especially in communities that have faced serious environmental injustice. NYC's innovative multi-pronged collaborative approach is so exciting and made possible, in part, by the work of the NYC Compost Project! All of our approaches (the brown bin pilot, community garden and neighborhood food scrap collection sites, NYC Compost Project workshops that empower community garden, home, and school composting) are all working together to raise public awareness and build coalition around composting - enabling a mix of strategies that not only reduce organic waste, but redirect organic waste processing into urban soil building, science education and job opportunities.

While large scale municipal collection efforts may be the easiest to quantitatively measure, programs that encourage home and school compost systems, community garden compost systems, and innovative approaches to composting should not be discounted in the value they provide.

Just as gardens are spaces of healing and civic empowerment in addition to growing food and supporting urban ecosystems, composting in NYC is as much about building up the people of

our communities through education and collective action as it is about reducing our waste and building up the quality of our soils.

Sincerely,
Andrea Lieske

work on education and training.

- Other citywide community programs from the same contract category.
- There is also curbside organics, which is also cut.

First, we ask that the Council reinstate funding for the three above stated programs. You should be against laying off people during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Second, instead of viewing composting as garbage to get rid of, consider reinstating the NYC Compost Project, a public-private partnership combining thousands of community-based organizations, community gardens, horticulture societies, colleges and schools with other agencies like DEP, DPR, DOT, DOHMH, EDC, MOER, and the Mayor's Office of Sustainability.

Finally, it is time to baseline composting as a valuable asset that should be recycled in the City of New York, and never be on the short list when it comes to budget cuts. Restoring the NYC Compost Project contract is a first step in creating a comprehensive, economically feasible project.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,
Rachel Mojica

2405 1st Ave Apt 15C
New York, NY 10035

May 13, 2020

New York City Council Joint Committee on Finance and
Committee on Sanitation & Solid Waste Management

To the Members of the City Council:

In the FY21 Mayor's Executive Budget, the Department of Sanitation and Solid Waste Management cut three composting budget programs – all of which have no impact to DSNY head count. They do however, cancel contracts where people have jobs and will lose them.

- The NYC Compost Project contract with the Botanica Gardens has experienced a cut of 43 people who have been, or will be, laid off by June 30, 2020. The NYC Compost Project involves community groups and the botanical gardens who work on education and training.
- Other citywide community programs from the same contract category.
- There are also curbside organics, which is also cut.

First, we ask that the Council reinstate funding for the three above stated programs. You should be against laying off people during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Second, instead of viewing composting as garbage to get rid of, consider reinstating the NYC Compost Project, a public private partnership combining thousands of community-based organizations, community gardens, horticulture societies, colleges and schools with other agencies like DEP, DPR, DOT, DOHMH, EDC, MOER, and the Mayor's Office of Sustainability.

Finally, it is time to baseline composting as a valuable asset that should be recycled in the City of New York, and never be on the short list when it comes to budget cuts. Restoring the NYC Compost Project contract is a first step in creating a comprehensive, economically feasible project.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,
Leicy Ortiz-Jupiter

--

Leicy Ortiz-Jupiter '20

*President of the New York Water Environment Association
Manhattan College Chapter
Civil Engineering Major*

Dear City Council:

It really bothered me to learn that the NYC Compost Project is being discontinued. Please restore this citywide community composting program for FY21.

I am a Master Composter trained by the NYC Compost Project in Manhattan and the Bronx. I've greatly valued my experiences educating members of the public about composting, directly supporting community gardens, and building connections with like minded people who are fighting for a more sustainable NYC.

Our city has an opportunity to be a leader in waste reduction and reuse through our innovative community based approaches. A centralized top-down approach to organic waste collection without securing community buy-in, educating people about organic waste, and honoring the work of long-time activists is a recipe for failure. I would hate to see the progress made by NYC in creating opportunities for municipal compost shot down by a short sighted attempt to save money and drastically alter the nature of the program.

If City Hall is committed to equity, then they need to acknowledge the important role community partnerships play in bridging government programs/resources with communities that lack trust in government support due both to historic bias and environmental injustice. What has been so special about NYC's approach to composting is this combined approach leveraging Sanitation, large non-profits, and small community based organizations by providing different opportunities to compost organic waste.

The NYC Compost Project unites non-profits and activists from all five borough while also leveraging local knowledge and connections to build back trust, especially in communities that have faced serious environmental injustice. NYC's innovative multi-pronged collaborative approach is so exciting and made possible, in part, by the work of the NYC Compost Project! All of our approaches (the brown bin pilot, community garden and neighborhood food scrap collection sites, NYC Compost Project workshops that empower community garden, home, and school composting) are all working together to raise public awareness and build coalition around composting - enabling a mix of strategies that not only reduce organic waste, but redirect organic waste processing into urban soil building, science education and job opportunities.

While large scale municipal collection efforts may be the easiest to quantitatively measure, programs that encourage home and school compost systems, community garden compost systems, and innovative approaches to composting should not be discounted in the value they provide.

I have used my Master Composter experience to support people in setting up compost systems that support friendship building, science education, and a sense of civic empowerment in addition to waste reduction. My training has directly led to my employment in the "green jobs" sector and has been an asset for others also seeking to broaden their skills in garden management and environmental education. I even use my

training and connections as a Master Composter to teach college students about the important roles of community gardens and urban farms.

Just as gardens are spaces of healing and civic empowerment in addition to growing food and supporting urban ecosystems, composting in NYC is as much about building up the people of our communities through education and collective action as it is about reducing our waste and building up the quality of our soils.

I really hope that the City reconsiders disbanding the program and finds a way to keep it going. It would be a real loss to all the environmental activists, students and community leaders who have benefited from the training and networking opportunities the borough NYC Compost Project offers.

Best regards,
Catherine Ponte
Master Composter since 2016

May 13, 2020

From: John Abbatangelo
Resident of North Riverdale

New York City Council Joint Committee on Finance and
Committee on Sanitation & Solid Waste Management

Re: FY 21 Mayor's Executive Budget – Sanitation Hearing 5/14

To the Members of the City Council:

In the FY21 Mayor's Executive Budget, the Department of Sanitation and Solid Waste Management cut three composting budget programs – all of which have no impact to DSNY head count. They do however, cancel contracts where people have jobs and will lose them.

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- Other citywide community programs from the same contract category.
- There is also curbside organics, which is also cut.

First, I ask that the Council reinstate funding for the three above stated programs. You should be against laying off people during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Second, instead of viewing composting as garbage to get rid of, consider reinstating the NYC Compost Project, a public private partnership combining thousands of community-based organizations, community gardens, horticulture societies, colleges and schools with other agencies like DEP, DPR, DOT, DOHMH, EDC, MOER, and the Mayor's Office of Sustainability.

Third, it is time to baseline composting as a valuable asset that should be recycled in the City of New York, and never be on the short list when it comes to budget cuts. Restoring the NYC Compost Project contract is a first step in creating a comprehensive, economically feasible project.

Finally, while still in graduate school for engineering in New York City, it was the Compost Project that helped guide me in my career choice and explore waste management. I understand now that the two sustainable, best management practices for food waste are either composting or co-digestion. In order to best utilize its resources, New York must continue both large and small scale compost operations to remain competitively sustainable in the future. I will say the public's exposure to friendly and knowledgeable compost staff is critical to this City's long-term environmental management and planning goals.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

John Abbatangelo, E.I.T.

Dear City Council Members,

I'm so upset to learn that the community composting drop-off sites that I use in my neighborhood have been cut from the budget. For many years I've used the NYC Compost Project 7th Ave drop-off in Prospect Heights and the greenmarket drop-off at Brooklyn Borough Hall. Not only was I able to reduce my household trash, but I learned so much from the friendly staff at these sites. They even gave me free compost made from the food scraps I provided.

I use the compost to grow vegetables on my roof and I'd love to continue doing this especially when going out the market is so difficult these days. It's hard to believe given the terrible crisis in this city that you'd even think of cutting these community programs!

Regards,
Ashley Golub
Brooklyn Heights

--

Ashley D. Golub, Psy.D.
Child and Adolescent Psychologist

Save Community Compost Funding!

Hi there,

I'm writing to express my hope and desire that you'll save the funding for community composting that will be cut from Sanitation's budget this year. As a regular volunteer at Green Acres Community Garden in Bed Stuy, I've had the privilege to work alongside my neighbors and collect the neighborhood's food scraps and process them into compost that we use on-site for growing fruits and vegetables. We even feed the compost worms to our chickens!

This, and all community composting and garden programs in the city, are so important and enriching to our communities. They bring people together who otherwise might not have or might not take the opportunity to meet their neighbors, and they serve as a model for what a cooperative community program can bring to our many beautiful neighborhoods. Additionally, they serve as an example of how we as a population can more thoughtfully and effectively dispose of waste, in this case by turning it into something that can feed the garden, which in turn can feed the community.

Many of our garden's members are trained Master Composters through the NYC Compost Project, a Sanitation partnership with 7 non-profits in each of the boroughs. Their kind staff have provided us with a lot of advice and materials throughout the years and it would be a terrible shame if these resources were no longer available to us.

Please ensure that our ability to compost, garden, and grow food is maintained during this crisis, when it is needed now more than ever! After this global crisis is over we'll need programs like this even more to rebuild and sustain our communities. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Christopher Lebron
Bedford-Stuyvesant

Save Composting Drop-off Sites!

Dear City Council Members,

I was very dismayed to hear that the city is considering eliminating compost drop-off sites in my neighborhood to meet budget shortfalls. It's a low-cost and useful program that makes sense in so many ways.

Previously I've used the NYC Compost Project 7th Ave drop-off in Prospect Heights and now drop off scraps to the greenmarket drop-off at Brooklyn Borough Hall. Thanks to the composting program I was able to reduce household refuse going to landfill, learned so much from the friendly staff at these sites and used free compost made from the food scraps I provided to grow herbs and vegetables at home.

With supermarkets harder to access and with factory farming collapsing in the COVID-19 crisis we need more help and resources to grow and sustain independent food sources such as home gardens and farmers markets offering local crops. That the city would cut the budget in this time of need is unconscionable. Eliminating this program sets back food security and puts people out of work at a time when jobs and food are harder and harder to access. It's bad public policy! **SAVE COMPOSTING!!!**

Regards,
Josh Appelbaum
Downtown Brooklyn

Testimony of the
Bronx Council for Environmental Quality
Submitted to the **New York City Council Joint Committee Hearing of**
Finance and Sanitation and Solid Waste Management on the
FY21 Mayor's Executive Budget, May 14, 2020

INTRODUCTION

The Bronx Council for Environmental Quality (BCEQ) calls for restoration of planned multi-year budget cuts to composting, organic recycling, and recycling education programs as part of a renewed commitment to community health and environmental justice for Bronxites.

Just as our nation confronts the consequences of public health disparities and its underlying environmental causes, the Mayor's Executive Budget adopts a "manage by budget" solution to revenue shortfall that will walk our city back from any lessons that can be learned from the COVID-19 crises. Indiscriminate budget cuts spread across multiple years and multiple city services shrinks the ability of the city as a whole to respond and recover from this crisis by ending key environmental programs.

BCEQ (www.bceq.org) is an all-volunteer 501c3 organization whose mission is "to establish — as an Inherent Human Right — a sound, forward-looking environmental policy regarding an aesthetic, unpolluted, environment protecting a natural and historic heritage." We adopt composting and organic recycling as budget priorities because they are central to the Bronx's environmental quality.

Before this crisis, Bronxites suffered the highest asthma rates in the United States, a wide disparity in the distribution of green space throughout the borough, and underinvestment in parkland and recreational access, particularly along its 200 miles of waterfront. As Bronxites struggle to recover from the recent devastating health crisis, they deserve and will require environmentally sustainable policies that address underlying community health conditions. Restoring budget cuts to NYC Compost Project and restoring organic recycling represents an essential investment towards this goal. Dr. Paul Mankiewicz of the Gaia Institute explains this:

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FY21 Mayor's Executive Budget, May 14, 2020

“Compost has been documented to bind lead in soils. Square miles of green space in NYC are likely to contain legacy lead concentrations in the hundreds to thousands of parts per million. The application of compost to these soils would significantly drop the significant liabilities the City may hold on these properties. Vegetation and soil surfaces are sinks for particles, including virus. The application of compost to support plant growth in the City will likely contribute to the wellbeing of New Yorkers on this front as well.”

PROPOSALS

BCEQ proposes two measures for FY 2021 as part of an “budget by managing” approach to key resources and needs:

Baseline funding for NYC Compost Project that recognizes its success as the city’s composting policy body and community-based education program since 1993. Composting transforms waste into a valuable soil amendment, saves space in landfills and money on trash disposal, and helps citizens reclaim the green spaces that sequester carbon, clean our air, and filter our water. NYC Compost Project’s decentralized, community-based composting program helps us reach these goals by training community members to keep and process organic waste on site, reducing hauling costs and air pollution of “compost miles.” NYC Compost Project fund programs and outreach in over 200 partner sites in the Bronx alone, creating a network of green spaces throughout our borough.

Community-based organizations serving the most vulnerable Bronxites depend upon the compost outreach and training offered by NYC Compost Project to sustain their community gardens, which reduce the impact of food deserts on their vulnerable communities and provide essential health benefits. The Bronx’ community garden network has and continues to make important contributions to New York City’s racial and class equity; endangering them through the

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elimination of DSNY subsidies will make the city less equitable. Rather than eliminating community-based composting programs of NYC Compost Project by eliminating its single source of funding, its annual DSNY subsidy, BCEQ recommends that the City Council and the Mayor's Office on Resiliency adopt community-based composting metrics and models as a city-wide priority and shared fiscal responsibility.

BCEQ calls for the restoration of funding for organic curbside pickup and processing as a refocused program that “closes the loop” and turns compostable organic material back into soil amendments for New York City's network of parks, golf courses, green roofs, reservoir areas, bioswales, brownfields, waterfronts, and community gardens. NYC has made organic recycling vulnerable to budget cuts by funding the voluntary program only as a contribution to waste stream diversion. It has not reduced the waste stream sufficiently because: 1. It is voluntary program, with self-selected participants; and 2. it does not show or provide New Yorkers any real benefits. Organic waste is shipped to out of state compost processing centers, encumbering DSNY with hauling costs and fees. A citywide leader in advocating for green solutions to CSO outfall and a green urban infrastructure, BCEQ recommends the integration of an organic recycling system with a community-based composting program – the public-private partnership that adds value to the New York City environment and increases the productive capacity of all our green spaces, especially those that provide fresh air, clean water, and locally grown food, for our most vulnerable populations.

Restoring the NYC Compost Project contract is a first step in creating a comprehensive, economically feasible project. Just as the Philadelphia Horticultural Society helps Philly in the greening and sustainability of their communities, we can follow that model. Philly's Parks

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FY21 Mayor's Executive Budget, May 14, 2020

Department has a program¹ that charges fees for services such as grass disposal or mulch pickup. They even have a list of uses² for compost, including stormwater erosion control filter socks.

CONCLUSION

The proposed cuts to DSNY subsidies for community composting and services for organic recycling put New York City on a backward path toward sustainability, environmental justice, and public health. BCEQ opposes these proposed cuts as bad environmental policy that will damage the national standing of New York City and its already underserved populations. They make the city less sustainable by withdrawing support for community composting, adding to our waste stream, and adding tonnage and costs to garbage removal.

Our current fiscal crisis does not call for conventional austerity budget policy but a strategic focus on the programs and policies that make the city and its people healthy. BCEQ holds up the success of NYC Compost Project, its model of community-based composting, and a closed-loop organic recycling program as strategies for a healthier New York City and calls upon the Mayor, the City Council, and Borough Presidents to work together to fund the essential environmental policies necessary for our recovery.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment. For more information, contact us at communications@bceq.org

80 Van Cortlandt Park South, Ste. E1,
Bronx, NY 10463



www.bceq.org

¹ https://www.phila.gov/media/20190512150443/2019-ORC-Price-Update-Flyer_V3.pdf

² https://www.phila.gov/media/20171115162327/Compost_Use_Direction_Sheet.pdf

KAREN ARGENTI
kabx101@gmail.com – (c) 646-529-1990
May 11, 2020

New York City Council Finance and
Sanitation & Solid Waste Management Committees
testimony@council.nyc.gov

Re: FY 21 Mayor's Executive Budget – Sanitation Hearing 5/13

To the Members of the City Council:

In the FY 21 Mayor's Executive Budget, the Department of Sanitation and Solid Waste Management cut composting out of the budget. Composting transforms waste into a valuable soil amendment, saves space in landfills as well as money on trash disposal, and slows climate change. NYC needs compost to build sustainability along the 500 miles of NYC waterfront. We need compost to manage uplands with green infrastructure, on right of ways and highways. Compost will help to capture and treat more rain fall, while filtering through the soil to the rivers and streams – which also lower flooding risks. Altogether, compost cools the heat island effect, cleans the air we breathe, the water we drink, the rivers and oceans we swim or fish in, and the carbon that needs to be sequestered!

Composting is not just a DSNY project. While this is the project that keeps on giving, we throw it away. We should, instead, share it with our Community Based Organizations/Societies as they can, and do, provide Horticulture training and assistance; and/or other City/State agencies like DEP, DPR, DOT, DOHM, DEC, MOER, and the Mayor's Office of Sustainability. Composting is not just garbage that you have to get rid of. But that is what DSNY is doing. We need to think of it as a valuable asset that should be recycled in the City of New York. It should never be on the short list when it comes to budget cuts.

As Fred Rogers, a television personality stated: *"Often when you think you're at the end of something, you're at the beginning of something else."* Now is time to start thinking of other ways to make composting more successful, equitable, and useful in our City. Composting involves many of our city's agencies. With this, I propose we start from this point, move composting to the Mayor's Office of Sustainability, and begin to integrate the different aspects of composting to the benefit of one and all.

One final point, we should take the time to understand what Governor Andrew Cuomo said speaking of how the feds should not fund just any corporation: *"There should be no subsidy for any corporation that lays off employees."* Toward that end, the City Council should reject any proposal that lays off people – no matter how bad off the budget is. This is exactly what the Sanitation Department is proposing for the NYC Compost Project contract with the Botanical Gardens. It goes against what we are trying to do in our COVID19 recovery.

As Leaders, you all can be a part of the *new* New York City. *"The greatest threat to our planet is the belief that someone else will save it."* – Robert Swan, Author. Try hard. Think outside the box. Stay Safe. Protect Nature. Together we can do it. Thank you for this opportunity to comment. If you need any more information, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Karen Argenti

Save NYC Compost Project & GrowNYC

To NYC City Council,

I'm dismayed to learn that the City is planning to cut the community composting and recycling outreach programs of the NYC Compost Project and GrowNYC.

As a longtime Crown Heights resident, myself and my neighbors have benefitted enormously from the NYC Compost Project classes and community gardening outreach at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. I was fortunate to participate in one of their community street tree care events a couple years ago and it was empowering to learn how easy and fun it was to make my community a brighter and more welcoming place. Given the health and economic crisis affecting our city, it will be extremely important that citizens feel motivated to continue this work as storefronts become vacant and construction projects idle.

I've also been able to participate with hundreds of my neighbors in the community composting drop-off program on Eastern Parkway. Each week it's incredible to see the spirit of so many people going out of their way to recycle their food scraps. It's the friendly and knowledgeable staff at these sites that are key to this participation. These sites also play a necessary role in public health. My neighborhood has a terrible rodent problem and this is only likely to grow with the aforementioned vacating of buildings and the increased amount of residential food waste placed unsecured at the curb.

I implore you to please reverse these cuts and ensure that worthwhile community programs will survive our current crisis.

Thank you,
Keshia Coe

To: testimony@council.nyc.gov, financetestimony@council.nyc.gov,
speakerjohnson@council.nyc.gov, areynoso@council.nyc.gov, acohen@council.nyc.gov,
fcabrera@council.nyc.gov

Re: FY 21 Mayor's Executive Budget – Sanitation Hearing 5/14

May 14, 2020

New York City Council Joint Committee on Finance and
Committee on Sanitation & Solid Waste Management

Re: FY 21 Mayor's Executive Budget – Sanitation Hearing 5/14

To the Members of the City Council:

In the FY21 Mayor's Executive Budget, the Department of Sanitation and Solid Waste Management cut three composting budget programs – all of which have no impact to DSNY head count. They do however, cancel contracts where people have jobs and will lose them.

- The NYC Compost Project contract with the Botanica Gardens has experienced a cut of 43 people who have been, or will be, laid off by June 30, 2020. The NYC Compost Project involves community groups and the botanical gardens who work on education and training and communal drop off sites.
- Other citywide community programs from the same contract category.
- There is also curbside organics, which is also cut.

First, we ask that the Council reinstate funding for the three above stated programs. **In 2018, the last year with available data, (data.cityofnewyork.us) 468 tons of organics was collected vs 2,064 tons dropped off in non DSNY collection. Cancelling both the curbside pick up and the ability of NYers to drop off organics adds 2,600 tons of organic waste to the waste stream.**

Second, instead of viewing composting as garbage to get rid of, consider reinstating the NYC Compost Project, a public private partnership combining thousands of community-based organizations, community gardens, horticulture societies, colleges and schools with other agencies like DEP, DPR, DOT, DOHMH, EDC, MOER, and the Mayor's Office of Sustainability.

Finally, it is time to baseline composting as a valuable asset that should be recycled in the City of New York, and never be on the short list when it comes to budget cuts. Restoring the NYC Compost Project contract is a first step in creating a comprehensive, economically feasible project.

The numbers speak for themselves: Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Jessica Haller

Bronx, NY 10471

Restoration of Funding for the NYC Composting Project and Related Programs

Dear Honorable Chairs Reynoso and Dromm,

The Evergreen Community Garden strongly supports the restoration of funding to the NYC Compost Project, organic recycling curbside pickup, and recycling outreach in the Fiscal Year 2021 budget. Although the Mayor's Executive Budget eliminates funding for these three programs to address the recent fiscal shortfall, these cuts, outlined in the Citywide Savings Program, do not contribute to public health in our ongoing COVID-19 crisis. NYC Compost Project and robust recycling help to make the city healthier, safer, and more resilient. They make irreplaceable contributions to the measurable goals for thriving neighborhoods, healthy lives, and a livable climate as stated in the Mayor's One New York plan. If these programs are removed from the FY 2021 budget, these goals are imperiled.

NYC Compost Project, sited at the Queens Botanical Garden, is the decentralized, cost-effective environmental program we need right now more than ever. The NYC Compost Project Hosted by Queens Botanical Garden composts 35 tons of SSO per year and an additional 30 tons of leaves, wood chips, and horticultural waste. While doing so we engage the public in the process with certification training programs, workshops, tours, SYEP, CUNY Culture Corps, and Americorp. Without NYC Compost Project, the CORE legislation proposed will have no means of successful implementation by June of 2021 or by June of 2022. We encourage you to restore the funding line for Community Composting that saves 170 FSDO's through-out the city, 5.3 million lbs of food scraps and green waste from the landfill, support for 409 community gardens and 207 community compost sites and the distribution of 1.1 million lbs of compost (this number is quickly growing!).

Further, it is so important at this moment of health crisis, with millions of residents at home, that we continue to fund the program that empowers residents to practice domestic environmentalism and teach their children to do the same. Cutting NYC Compost Project cuts the civic and the program infrastructure of all of its community partners and removes resources from residents and a time when they need them most.

Our community garden's 300 members will gratefully appreciate your support of Community Composting in NYC.

Sincerely,

Tod Jorgensen
Acting Secretary
Evergreen Community Garden
47-32 Colden St.
Flushing, NY 11355

Dear Mr. Mayor, Speaker Johnson, and City Council-

I encourage you to help New York City reduce its waste by maintaining AND EXPANDING the NYC Compost Project.

Chaos creates opportunity. Let's use the upheaval the coronavirus has created to make a meaningful, positive impact on our communities. This isn't just for today--it's also for tomorrow and the next generation of New Yorkers.

Thank you,
Courtney
(Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn)

PS--

I have recently heard that budget cuts include the elimination of the community composting subsidy. This funds the seven nonprofits that make up the NYC Compost Project in every borough--**and while my Brooklyn neighborhood isn't included in the NYC Compost Project, it should be.**

The NYC Compost Project provides essential services to New Yorkers:

- community gardeners and urban farmers
- local and citywide greening and volunteer groups
- schools and youth organizations
- agency and institutional partners
- seniors and other residential groups

The Compost Project's been crucial in helping me to use composting to reduce waste, grow food, and connect with my community. Their work helps improve the health of our depleted soils and the environment at our homes and in our neighborhoods throughout NYC.

Now more than ever, we need the NYC Compost Project to continue to support our community as we work together to create a more healthy, equitable, and sustainable City.

We have already lost so much because of COVID-19. I hope I do not have to add such an important and beloved program to that list.

--

Courtney Streett Reynolds

SAVE COMMUNITY COMPOSTING in NYC

To: Honorable Laurie A. Cumbo

CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov

Re: Community Composting

My name is Cristina M. Pastore and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. My husband and I have been using the organics drop-off sites for over three years now since we live in a multi-family building that was never part of the Curbside Composting program. We have educated many friends about the issue and let them know about these amazing services we could find here in NYC. We are committed to separating our food scraps and yard waste for composting, and that has significantly cut down on the amount of trash we generate, made our home cleaner, and become a part of our daily lives.

I also come to you as an expert in waste management and the circular economy. I did my master's degree capstone project in Sustainable Solid Waste Management for the Villages of Painted Post and Riverside in Upstate New York, where it was recommended to the authorities to implement a community compost system, similar to ours here in NYC. NYC has been an example and it is leading the change all around the country!

I now serve as the co-chair of Sure We Can's Board of Directors. Sure We Can is a non-profit recycling center in Bushwick that empowers canners, one of the most vulnerable communities of NYC. Since 2015, we have had our own small scale composting program, collecting and processing food scraps from local restaurants and cafes. This program has enabled our own members as well as local volunteers to take ownership in the process of composting, which is an extremely efficient way to gain awareness of their own personal footprint and empower them to reflect upon their future choices. In addition to this program, we also have been serving our local residential community as an organic waste drop-off site, due to the fact that this district was not served by the voluntary City program.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Cristina M. Pastore

Co-chair of Board of Directors - Sure We Can, Inc.

139 Emerson Place, Apt 202, Brooklyn, NY 11205

To Whom It May Concern,

Please do not cut the budget for the Lower Eastside Ecology Center. It's services are vital and needed. From composting to electronics recycling there is nothing like it in our neighborhood. The program nourishes our gardens and parks and saves the planet with e-waste recycling which is so needed. Both on a local and universal level there is nothing else like it in NYC. As a resident of the East Village I urge you to retain funding for the LES Ecology Center!

Sincerely,

Dale Goodson
441 E 12th St #5H
NY, NY 10009

My name is Dan Hanson and I am a retired Law Librarian from Jamaica, Queens. I would like to address the proposal for eliminating funding to the NY Compost Project and GrowNYC for food scrap drop off and processing.

Taking the food scraps dropped off at farmers markets and subway stations across the city, which, by the way, decreases the amount of waste put into landfill by over 30%, the member organizations of the NY Compost Project mix these scraps with dead leaves and return the mixture to soil to be used in city parks and community gardens across neighborhoods.

I am a graduate of the Master Compost program at Queens Botanical Gardens, class of 2016. As part of our training our class visited Earth Matter on Governors Island, worked building a compost pile at the NYC Farm Museum, staffed tables at community events, and volunteered at food scrap drop off sites. After graduation I continued to staff the food scrap drop off at the Briarwood Subway stop from 7:30 to 9:30 every Tuesday morning. I got to meet my neighbors, talk about growing things, and troubleshoot their issues in their gardens and balcony grow boxes. GrowNYC has taken over the responsibility for the drop off sites and I know that the number of folks dropping off at Briarwood has only increased.

The NYC Compost Project provides education, outreach, technical assistance, and free finished compost to residents and community groups. NYC Compost Project programs have prepared people for green jobs across the city. MCs are now staff with DSNY, Parks, Botanical Gardens, DEC and are owners of micro hauling businesses. There are likely many more in private sector green jobs

The compost community is strong, welcoming, involved in local civics, and results oriented. In these times of great change in our city, our connection to our neighbors and across communities is vital. Please budget the necessary funds for these programs to continue. Thank you.

Hello,

I am writing in support of investing in making NYC a more sustainably green city, primarily through free compost services. If I lived in any other location than NYC, I would be composting at home but with such limited space and lack of personal green space having composting services in the city is crucial for being able to keep food waste out of the waste system. The environment is really important to be for preserving the planet for future generations to come. I don't want to see increase carbon emissions and Manhattan going underwater. I implore you to please increase budgeting for free composting services around the city. Thank you.

Dana Lee

To: Honorable Brad Lander
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

My name is **Dana Triwush** and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. I started composting over 15 years ago when I realized it could reduce my trash by almost 75%.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Dana Triwush
540 Ocean Parkway, #5S
Brooklyn, NY 11218

Daniel Levitan
530 First Street, #6
Brooklyn, NY 11215

May 21, 2020

Dear Council Member Lander,

I'm a resident of your district, writing in support of restoring funding for separate compost collection by the Department of Sanitation.

Although the city budget will be tight for the foreseeable future, I think it would be a fiscal mistake to suspend this program any longer, even temporarily. New Yorkers have just begun to get into the habit of separating organics from the remainder of their waste. The city stands to save huge amounts of money as they do so in increasingly larger numbers, as increasingly less waste will go to our landfills. Moreover, as we are able to make our parks and city gardens increasingly lush and healthy without having to purchase soil enhancers from outside vendors, we New York will become an increasingly attractive place to live and work.

I urge you, then, not to support the short-sighted step of cutting funding for this program. A small investment in composting today stands to pay large returns to the city in the future.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D. Levitan', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

22 May 2020

Subject: Testimony to Save Community and Municipal Composting

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Daniel Michalik and I am a resident of Congressional District 12 in Brooklyn NY. I write today to give my testimony to the value of municipal composting in New York City, and to urge you to save it as an essential public service.

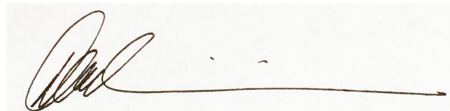
I have been composting as a resident of my neighborhood as well as a volunteer since 2008, over 12 years. I began as a corev volunteer with the North Brooklyn Compost PProject, then worked with GrowNYC, and I now am proud to have and use the "brown bin" service in my neighborhood, which grew out of the previous efforts.

Composting is key to the health of our neighborhood, our climate and our families. The methane released from organic waste is a far more destructive force to our climate than CO2, and municipal composting is the most effective method for combating this type of greenhouse gas. What's more, active composting reduces the amount of garbage bags placed on the street on a daily basis, easing the load of an already overstretched Department of Sanitation. Lastly, effective methods of composting reduce vermin from our streets and our backyards and homes.

I urge you to keep composting as one of the services that puts New York City as a leader in fighting climate change. I realize the dire economic straits our city is placed under as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, but we mustn't move backward on this issue.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Daniel Michalik', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Daniel Michalik
185 Kingsland Avenue
Brooklyn NY 11222
347.556.1906

To: Honorable Corey Johnson
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

My name is **Dani Cardia**, and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. As both a New York City resident and landlord, I rely on my community composting program to keep my apartment and building clean. Myself and all my tenants have consistently used Grow NYC's food scrap collection both to mitigate unwanted rodent visits and also maintain a degree of sustainability in our day-to-day lives. Especially while quarantined and cooking all of our meals, the amount of food waste we are currently producing is disconcerting, given its environmental impact (and how stinky it gets between collection days!).

Community composting programs are essential in NYC. We've fought long and hard to make gains in our efforts to combat climate change, and composting is an important piece. While recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis of climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Dani Cardia
281 W 12th Street, NY, NY 10014

Additional Information about the Proposed Cuts

The Mayor's proposed FY21 budget eliminates all funding for Community Composting (\$3.5 million) and Zero Waste Outreach (\$2.9 million). These budget lines fund NYC Compost Project at Big Reuse, Brooklyn Botanic Garden, Earth Matter, Lower East Side Ecology Center, NY Botanical Garden, Queens Botanical Garden, and GrowNYC Zero Waste Programs.

Examples of Personal Stories

- My **[family/household]** has been participating in the Curbside Composting program for **[X]** years. Separating our food scraps and yard waste for composting has significantly cut down on the amount of trash we generate, made our home cleaner, and become a part of our daily lives.
- I have been taking my food scraps to the **[Your Food Scrap Drop-off Site Here]** for **[X]** years. I live in a **[high rise building / neighborhood]** that didn't have access to the Curbside Composting program, and I was happy to have another option for keeping my food waste out of landfills.
- In the months since the City has suspended Curbside Composting and Food Scrap Drop-off sites, I've had no options for composting my food waste. I have been storing it in my freezer in the hope that these programs will return, but I have long-since run out of space. It breaks my heart to throw my food scraps in the trash after years of diligently composting, and it is not acceptable for the City to continue these cuts for the next year or more.
- One of the things I love most about the City's composting programs is that I've been able to use the finished compost that I helped make. I received finished compost from **[Organization]** that I used to **[grow food/grow flowers/care for a street tree...]** in my **[apartment/terrace/backyard/community garden/neighborhood]**.
- I have volunteered with the NYC Compost Project Hosted by **[Organization]** and was encouraged to see all the job opportunities in the field of organics recycling and urban agriculture. My experience volunteering helped me secure a green job doing **[description of work]**.
- I am a Master Composter certified by NYC Compost Project Hosted by **[Organization]**, and have been volunteering at my community compost site **[name]** for **[X]** years. It has changed my life. Making compost got me involved in growing food for myself, which meant fewer trips to the grocery store and introduced me to other ways to reduce the waste in my life.
- I am a member of **[Community Garden]**. We have a small composting initiative that's been overwhelmed since the City suspended the Curbside Composting and Food Scrap Drop-off programs. People in our neighborhood are desperate for a way to compost, and we can't safely keep up with that demand. We need the City to step up and honor its commitments to Zero Waste by funding community composting rather than leaving this essential work to volunteers like me.

To the City Council,

I'm writing on behalf of all New Yorkers who have enjoyed the benefits of city-funded community composting programs. I implore you to maintain this funding in the next fiscal year.

As a resident of Far Rockaway, I have been able to visit beautiful Floyd Bennett Garden where dozens of my neighbors have created a community garden of great beauty and educational value. Central to their horticultural success has been their use of compost made on-site by hand and used to grow crops that feed families in the area. Multiple members are Master Composters certified by the Brooklyn Botanic Garden and whom have used the skills they learned to benefit the garden. My family has learned about soil conservation and vegetable growing from these Master Composters. In these times of Covid-19, we are grateful for the self-sufficiency they help us achieve in our lives and backyards.

In the Rockaways, we do not have access to the same variety of green spaces and community programs as those in more central locations. Without programs like the NYC Compost Project we will see the few that exist near us without the resources they need. Don't rob the outer boroughs of needed resources!

Sincerely,
Danielle & Matt Drori
Far Rockaway

Dear Council Members,

My name is Danika Lam and I am a former Compost Coordinator with GrowNYC as well as a current member of the Compost Committee at the Roosevelt Island Garden Club. In this testimony, we ask that the City hold true to its climate justice and zero waste goals by preserving opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Composting not only brings city residents closer to the ecological systems that produce our food and give us life, but is also essential for combating climate change, which remains a crisis even amidst a global pandemic. As most New York City residents live in small apartments with little access to outdoor space, many were wholly reliant on both GrowNYC and DSNY's compost collection programs to divert waste from landfills.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills—a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is shortsighted and has the potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today, we urge the City Council to ensure that the City maintains the ability to continue organics recycling and composting. At a fraction of the total cuts to organics programs, we ask the Council to, at minimum, restore the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and prevent this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;

- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle—such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask for the health and safety of our planet and our community, and hope the Council ensures that organics recycling remains a priority in the budget process.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

With appreciation,

Danika Lam

To: Honorable Mark Levine
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov

Re: Community Composting

May 20 2020

Dear Council Member Levine:

My name is David Walker and I am extremely disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs.

My building, 400 Convent Avenue HDFC, has been participating in the DSNY's Organic Waste Collection voluntary scheme for the past two years. We have also received pallets of bagged compost from DSNY for our building's community garden. We believe this cancellation to be a shortsighted and retrograde step which will undermine all our efforts to educate our residents as to the benefits of composting their organic waste. Instead of cancelling organic waste collection, there should be an expansion of the program, making it compulsory citywide (since one of the main complaints from DSNY is that trucks sent out return only partially full). Expansion of the program would make it a revenue generator, not a loss maker, and would help the City to return to financial stability after this unprecedented, chaotic period.

Now more than ever, community-composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change.

Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask emphatically that the City restore full funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Yours Sincerely,

David Walker, Secretary
400 Convent Avenue HDFC
400 Convent Avenue
New York, NY 10031

I am writing to request the restoration of funding to community-based composting programs.

As a resident of Roosevelt Island, my family and I – along with thousands of other families on Roosevelt Island – have been fortunate enough to have our composting picked up by Big Reuse. We all notice the waste that we now generate that could have gone towards better use. We would love for the City to restore our and other families' access to composting.

The signs so far indicate that this pandemic was attributable to our failure to look after nature. The removal of composting is a step back on the road to becoming a more sustainable and equitable society.

I hope that in the long term, the City will also consider passing the CORE Act, and making composting mandatory in NYC. These would be steps in the right direction, and if done correctly, would be a source of income, rather than expense, for the City.

Thank you for your time. Again, I am writing in support of the immediate restoration of funding to community-based composting programs.

My name is Deanna D'Onofrio and I'm a teacher and homeowner in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn. My husband and I have been successfully and happily participating in curbside composting for at least 4 years. We easily adapted to using the bins the city provided and we loved seeing how much less trash we were now throwing out. When we moved into the building where we purchased our home, I traveled to Coney Island to get a composting can for our building, and we have continued to compost all of our food waste. I even have a neighbor who uses our can because her building does not participate. Composting made us feel good because we knew that our waste was being disposed of in a way that beautifies our city and even helps fight climate change. I believe our city should be a leader when it comes to fighting climate change and adopting policies and practices that allow us to be more self-sufficient, and handle our own waste and emissions responsibly.

I was shocked, disappointed, and angry to learn that New York City and the Department of Sanitation have suggested suspending composting in our city for a year and a half. I completely understand that these extraordinary circumstances and this public health crisis require cuts and sacrifices from all sectors. However, it is unreasonable to suspend the city's composting program for such a long period of time, and to make this important program bear the brunt of the cuts. Please consider alternatives to suspending this program for so long. Please find a way to balance the financial needs of our city right now with the need for us to continue moving forward in terms of our long-term sustainability and our efforts to manage our city's waste in a responsible way.

I was delighted when composting arrived in our city, but I have been disappointed by the city's lack of initiative and direction in expanding the program and requiring people to participate. The program has not received the prioritization, outreach, and care that it needs in order to grow and become a true part of our city's life. The roll-out of composting in our city reeks of environmental racism and raises questions of which neighborhoods are deemed worthy and capable of managing their own food waste. However, obviously some composting is better than none at all, and I am proud of our city's efforts to turn our food waste into soil that can grow our parks and gardens. My middle school students who are part of the Green Team (environmental club) at my school, MS 447, have been working to try and get our school on the organics collection, and to improve our school's recycling and waste habits. They are very disappointed and upset in the city's decision to suspend composting and feel that it shows the city is not truly committed to fighting climate change.

I ask that you reconsider the plan to suspend composting for a year and a half in New York City, and identify options to keep this program functioning in our city. One suggestion is to reduce the duration of this suspension. Several months of suspension seems much more reasonable than 18 months. Another suggestion is to empower communities to continue composting, by setting up community compost sites and widely distributing self-composting bins. There are many parks and local gardens that I believe would be happy and willing to start producing their own compost. There are so many of us who want to continue composting and doing what we can to protect and improve our environment. To eliminate a program that is helping fight climate change and reduce the burden of landfill waste in our city is just self-defeating!

We need to move quickly towards making composting mandatory so that it makes good financial sense for the city AND maximizes the environmental benefits of the practice. Just like countless other public health initiatives, it will become second nature to most people and they will get into the practice of separating food waste for composting. By participating in composting people are actually engaging in a much more responsible way with their waste, acknowledging that nothing really goes “away” so we might as well honestly deal with the waste we’re producing. By composting, slowly, my husband and I have developed a greater awareness of all the trash we’re producing, and we find ourselves making many other positive decisions.

Please do what you can to preserve and expand composting in New York City. As a NYC educator and citizen I stand ready to help grow and expand this important practice. Please let’s not waste the opportunity to have the nation’s largest composting program. NYC needs to lead, not follow!

May 21, 2020

Good afternoon.

My name is Deanna Lee, and I am a resident of Greenpoint, Brooklyn, where my neighbors and I had been actively participating in the DSNY's curbside compost-collection program until it was cancelled in early May of this year. I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting. For us, the practice of composting (separating organic-waste collection) greatly improved the olfactory conditions of our neighborhood sidewalks, not to mention the significant value that composting provides for environmental sustainability.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and will have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, I am asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. In light of the cancelled DSNY composting program, this will allow residents to have opportunities to learn about the value of composting and to compost their organic waste.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and

- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

For my neighborhood, this request is of urgent importance, and I hope the Council ensures that this priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Regards,
Deanna Lee



A Project of Fund for the City of New York

*Creatively working with youth to achieve zero-waste,
climate smart school communities and a plastic free biosphere,
teaching citizen science, civic action, arts & media*

Cafeteria Culture Testimony to:

**New York City Council and the New York City Office of Management and Budget
May 21, 2020**

Good afternoon,

Cafeteria Culture urges the City Council to ensure that the City's residents can continue to engage in some form of organics recycling and composting by immediately restoring the funding to our community-based composting programs. The Administration's decision to slash the DSNY budget, including cutting the \$28 million for composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach, is one giant step backwards in our efforts to mitigate the climate crisis. What we "save" now, will surely cost us dearly in the very near future, negatively impacting the lives of our most vulnerable communities and all of our children.

Cafeteria Culture (CafCu), founded as Styrofoam Out of Schools, works with youth to creatively achieve zero waste, climate smart schools communities and a plastic free biosphere. We teach innovative environmental education that fosters youth-led solutions by merging citizen science, civic action, media and the arts. Students in our programs, overwhelmingly from lower income communities of color and living in public housing, are providing an urgently needed voice to our City's zero waste and climate movement. **CafCu's unique partnerships with schools and student leadership opportunities in the cafeteria helped the City with the launching the first school composting pilot programs.**

The Mayor's proposed budget to cut funding for citywide composting is short sighted and dangerous. The long-term implications of such budget cuts will no doubt set the City way back on our hard earned progress towards zero waste, as well as sustainable behavioral changes for many of our City's residents. We are still recovering from similar setbacks caused by the recycling cuts after 9/11. The climate crisis may soon overshadow the pandemic and we cannot risk another 20 year recovery period to rebuild the groundwork for ensuring a sustainable composting culture for ALL City residents.

Food scraps and organics account for roughly a third of our waste stream. Our rapidly rising price tag of almost 1/2 a billion tax dollars annually to export our garbage to (mostly) out-of-state incinerators and landfills is not disappearing. In fact, these proposed budget cuts to the organics collection can only drive this cost higher and more rapidly, while simultaneously increasing our City's greenhouse gas emissions.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together, approximately \$7 million, allows New Yorkers to continue diverting food scraps, thus preventing a meaningful percentage of our City's waste stream from going to landfills, where it is destined to emit methane, a powerfully destructive greenhouse gas or to an incinerator in Newark NJ, that has negatively impacted that community for over 20 years.

The restoration of this funding, a very small percentage of the DSNY budget, would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education will continue their waste reduction efforts;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to decrease methane emissions; and

Debby Lee Cohen, Executive Director/Founder, **CafeteriaCulture.org** DL@cafeteriaculture.org 917-282-0253
% The Lower Eastside Girls Club NY, 402 East 8th Street, NY, NY 10009



Creatively working with youth to achieve zero-waste, climate smart school communities and a plastic free biosphere, teaching citizen science, civic action, arts & media

- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing food scraps to invaluable compost that supports the growing of food locally in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity.

Additionally, restoring and maintaining City Council funding for zero waste education and outreach at this time is critical. We must ensure that all New Yorkers, especially our children, are able to bridge the connection between food as garbage and the climate crisis. We have no time to waste and hope the Council prioritizes this urgent need in the budget process.

Cafeteria Culture also requests that the Council restore and *increase* funding for residential and school organics collections, the next step to be focused on passing the CORE Act, introduced last week by Council Members Antonio Reynoso and Keith Powers. **This should be followed by the long term, climate smart solution of mandating citywide composting, allowing us to reap the full benefits of an organics collection program that will provide a source of income to the city while benefiting our city for future generations.**

Thank you,
Debby Lee Cohen

Cafeteria Culture, Executive Director/ Founder, CafeteriaCulture.org

Co-Director/Producer, MicroplasticMadness.org - a movie and impact campaign for a plastic free future

c: 917-282-0253, dl@cafeteriaculture.org

Youtube: CafCu Media [twitter @cafeteriacu](https://twitter.com/cafeteriacu) Instagram: [@CafCu](https://www.instagram.com/CafCu) [FaceBook](https://www.facebook.com/CafCu)



Photo: Fifth grade students from Cafeteria Culture's Zero Waste Schools Program at PS/MS 34 Franklin D Roosevelt trenching thier school food scraps at the 12th Street Children's Garden.

Debby Lee Cohen, Executive Director/Founder, CafeteriaCulture.org DL@cafeteriaculture.org 917-282-0253
% The Lower Eastside Girls Club NY, 402 East 8th Street, NY, NY 10009

Composting Testimony for City Budget Committee

Dear Council Member Lander and Councilmembers,

My name is Deborah Herdan and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. My neighbors and I here in Kensington and Windsor Terrace have been composting using our brown bins for most of the last 10 years and we feel it is an essential way to reduce waste and reduce cost. Our compost is processed locally in Brooklyn and Staten Island and we see no reason to send it to pollute other places in New York or outside.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Deborah Herdan

Member of Brooklyn Families Fighting for our Future

100 Ocean Parkway, 1M

Brooklyn NY 11218

To: Honorable

CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov

Re: Community Composting

My name is **Dena Lenard** and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Dena Lenard

Dear Speaker Johnson,

I have recently heard that budget cuts include the elimination of the community composting subsidy. This funds the seven nonprofits that make up the NYC Compost Project in every borough, including the one that serves my neighborhood in the Bronx.

The NYC Compost Project provides essential services to me and other:

- community gardeners and urban farmers
- local and citywide greening and volunteer groups
- schools and youth organizations
- agency and institutional partners
- seniors and other residential groups

I have benefited from the Compost Project's helpline, hands-on assistance, resources, and educational efforts.

They have been crucial in helping me to use composting to reduce waste, grow food, connect to my community, and learn green job skills. Their work helps improve the health of our depleted soils and the environment at our homes and in our neighborhoods throughout NYC.

Now more than ever, we need the NYC Compost Project to continue to support our community as we work together to create a more healthy, equitable, and sustainable City.

We have already lost so much because of COVID-19. I hope I do not have to add such an important and beloved program to that list.

Sincerely,

Thank you for your time and attention in this matter.

We are pleased to provide all our guests with a non-smoking environment.

Bronx Guest House

Office: 718-881-7022

Fax: 718-231-4269

www.bronxguesthouse.com

Moving Forward

Denise

Thank you for choosing to contact the Bronx Guest House



Dear Speaker Johnson,

I have recently heard that budget cuts include the elimination of the community composting subsidy. This funds the seven nonprofits that make up the NYC Compost Project in every borough, including the one that serves my neighborhood in the Bronx.

The NYC Compost Project provides essential services to me and other:

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Now more than ever, we need the NYC Compost Project to continue to support our community as we work together to create a more healthy, equitable, and sustainable City.

We have already lost so much because of COVID-19. I hope I do not have to add such an important and beloved program to that list.

Sincerely,

Denise M

<chefdenisey@me.com>

I've been involved in composting and informal compost education since the pilot Zero Waste program started at my son's school, PS 372 in Brooklyn, in 2016.

Reducing food waste is very important to me, and composting is a way my family and I can take positive action every single day to reduce food waste. What's more I am very concerned about rodent control when food scraps go back into regular trash.

Please return funds to composting in Brooklyn! Thank you.

Denise Maher

Good afternoon,

My name is Derek Rusinek and I am a resident of Brooklyn. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to the residents of NYC, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Derek Rusinek

My name is Domingo and I am concerned that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. For the last five years, I have worked with the NYC Compost Project. I work for the Brooklyn Botanic Garden thanks to the New York City Compost Project funding provided by DSNY. My job is to manage the compost Operations located at the Red Hook Community farm. The Red Hook Compost site is the largest compost site in the Country that processes it's organic waste using 100 percent renewable energy. Solar, wind, and human power. Over 2,500 volunteers contribute their time year after year, helping to recycle residential food scraps as a community. Ultimately, giving (local gardeners, food growers, schools gardens, residents, etc.) access to finished compost, allowing them to feed and educate their communities. With the proposed budget cuts, the Red Hook Compost site and sites just like it will lose 100 percent of their funding. The NYC Compost Project does more than just haul and process food waste, we actively teach residents about all forms of sustainability. Reduce-Reuse-Recycle. Through the action of composting by hand people from different communities can interact, network, and form bonds that they never knew they could. I have witnessed hundreds of people change the way they live once they learn about all the cool ways they can reduce waste. Composting is the gateway to a more sustainable City.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: air pollution. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. A third of NYC's waste that gets sent to landfill is compostable, compostable materials produce methane gases when they decompose in landfills. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis. Let us continue to make the world a better place, one food scrap at a time!

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero waste initiatives

Sincerely,

Domingo Morales

Red Hook Compost Site

67 4th PL FL2

Brooklyn, NY 11231

Dear Ms. Hartzog and the NYC Office of Management and Budget,

My name is Rachel Duffié, and I am a member of **Drawdown New York City (DD NYC)**, which organizes individuals to mount sustainable, well-researched practices locally in order to reverse global climate change. We have been devastated by the recent decision to suspend ALL funding for organics recycling and composting in New York City, as this is a huge step backwards in our collective efforts to reduce our city's impact on climate change.

The COVID-19 crisis has devastated our city, both emotionally and economically. We understand that city funding has been stretched and decisions must be made about which programs will be cut. We do not think that the city's forward-thinking Climate Justice and Zero Waste goals should be adversely affected by these cuts. A report published yesterday, led by researchers at Yale and George Mason Universities, demonstrates that even amidst the COVID-19 crisis, **Americans feel more strongly than ever that climate change is a crisis that will affect them and their communities** (Leiserowitz et al, May 2020).

I am a resident of Washington Heights and since the city has banned organic waste collection, neighbors have reached out to me to try to find **community solutions to redirect our food and yard scraps**. We have begun trying to pull together small efforts – one in a community garden and one in a church garden to be able to collect and compost organic waste. These collaborations demonstrate acute interest in maintaining composting, but **our efforts will always pale in comparison to the city's organic waste collection program**. Small community-organized composting can never take on the volume that the city could, thanks to the help of eight non-profit organizations with established techniques and trained employees. Second, community composting cannot handle the same types of food waste, and thus, a large portion of food waste (meat, dairy, citrus, etc.) that was once accepted by city composting programs is now incinerated or directed to landfills where, due to anaerobic conditions, it cannot decompose naturally and instead produces methane gas. Third, the space and motivation to maintain small-scale community composting is not available to all New Yorkers.

Beyond my neighborhood, **poorer districts** in the city disproportionately suffer from the increase in organic waste in mainstream trash. Trash holding centers in poorer neighborhoods including the Bronx, now filled with increased organic waste, become attractants for rodents and other pests. This reduces the quality of life for New York's poorer residents. These residents have suffered immensely during the COVID-19 crisis for both health and environmental reasons, and also because they are our city's front-line, essential workers. **Protecting their health and quality of life should be of utmost importance to the city now, and ensuring composting options for all New Yorkers contributes to this.**

As you know, the Mayor's proposed budget cuts \$28 million dollars from the DSNY budget which was previously used for recycling and composting. Today I and DD NYC urge the City Council to **restore at least the \$7 million** previously given to the NYC compost project and partners, and to GrowNYC. These funds would go a long way to ensure that

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

COVID-19 has devastated our city and our economy, but **we cannot be short-sighted as we work to rebuild together**. The global climate crisis will be even more disastrous to our world and our well-being if we do not take action NOW to reduce emissions. DD NYC hopes that the City Council will recognize the urgency of the climate emergency and ensure that the proposed budget be amended to include these essential programs.

Thank you,

Rachel Duffié, PhD

Drawdown New York City
Drawdown-NYC.org

Good afternoon, name is Janice Ducate. I'm a Greenpoint, Brooklyn resident who believes in the importance of the City's Compost project. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. In this tenuous time we are living in, it has become especially clear how interwoven our lives and lifestyles are with the greater world and how our actions affect our environment for better or worse. We need ways to relieve the heavy burden we put on our landfills. Organics recycling and composting is an effective and sustainable way to ease our carbon footprint.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills—a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, I am asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;

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- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to Greenpoint and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Janice

Good afternoon,

My name is effie bowen and I'm writing to let you know that my family, community and I are extremely disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate financial support for composting and e-waste recycling programs. As long-time Brooklynites, we know how absolutely CRUCIAL and NECESSARY these programs are for functional, healthy communities - especially in these times of extreme climate chaos and being the 'ground-zero' of a global pandemic.

*These cuts will devastatingly and directly affect the LES Ecology Center, together with the NYC Compost Project partners and GrowNYC Zero Waste programs. The cuts represent approximately \$7 million, and if restored can continue to provide citywide access to these crucial Zero Waste programs. **It's essential to retain these programs so as not to lose the existing recycling infrastructure, knowledge and habits that will be difficult to rebuild once eliminated.***

Cutting these programs will destructively reverse the progress that we have made by diverting food scraps and toxic electronic waste from landfills. As you know, when in a landfill, food waste is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions and electronics leach heavy metals and toxins into our soil and waterways. We absolutely cannot let the current budget crisis allow us to lose sight of the looming climate crisis and we must continue to divert these materials from landfills to reach our sustainability goals.

In this time of great uncertainty, we desperately need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future to continue. These programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

We demand that the City immediately restore funding to community compost and e-waste collection programs. We can't afford to build back participation from square one. Thank you.

Sincerely,

*effie bowen
Brooklyn, 11237*

Hi, my name is Johanna Klein. I am student at Columbia University and the co-president of Columbia EcoReps.

In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

We have seen how impactful it has been to expand composting options in getting students to adopt better food waste practices. Convenience is very important in changing habits. On the flip side, changes such as taking away programs are always met with confusion, and it makes it hard to get buy-in if they aren't sure it'll continue. Without a ton of education, these changes are very counterproductive.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals. Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

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- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

Sincerely,

Johanna

When I moved from NJ to Washington Heights, my husband and I were thrilled to learn that the complex we were moving into was part of the pilot program for NYC composting. We have been here 3 years now and ALWAYS used the composting. We know that my neighbors in my building and in the other buildings were greatly disappointed to see the program suspended.

We understand that the virus has wreaked havoc in so many ways and budgets are always tough. But we cannot ignore one crisis when a new one comes along. If anything, this virus has once again sounded the alarm around climate change and has reinforced the idea that we MUST move forward with sustainability efforts, renewable energy, etc. That is something we absolutely CANNOT AFFORD to ignore.

This is a time for us to lead the way forward and to double down on our efforts to create new ways of dealing with our garbage. We cannot continue to fill the landfills and the oceans. All of us, not just the children, deserve better. We ARE better. We CAN BE better.

I am a co-lead of the Justice Team at Fourth Universalist Society of NYC and we compost there as well. It is in keeping with our Unitarian Universalist principle: Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Please restore the funding for the NYC composting program.

Sincerely,
Eileen Jarrett

My name is Eileen Quigley and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs.

I care about this deeply on a personal and professional level. I've been working in the sustainable real estate industry for a decade and I've been composting for that amount of time as well. For the majority of those years, I've been a NYC resident (except for 2 years in Seattle where I was able to take advantage of a thriving city-wide organics collection program) and I've never had a brown bin at my NYC home. I've been outside of the collection area and currently just 1 block from it. That means I rely heavily on community composting options at Greenmarkets around the city for years. Separating my food scraps and composting has significantly cut down on the amount of trash I generate, made our home cleaner, and become a part of our daily lives. I've had no options for composting my food waste. I have been storing it in my freezer in the hope that these programs will return, but I have long-since run out of space. It breaks my heart to throw my food scraps in the trash after years of diligently composting, and it is not acceptable for the City to continue these cuts for the next year or more.

On a professional level, I've worked with my past employers (Natural Resources Defense Council and WeWork) to add and maintain composting in our NYC offices. I've seen how challenging that can be for a commercial company to maintain, primarily because composting is not mandated city wide and therefore not a habit of residents and it costs much more than it should.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs. I appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

Eileen Quigley
Sustainability Consultant
422 Franklin Ave #2, Brooklyn

Good afternoon, my name is Elana. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting. To me, composting is one of the easiest ways we can reduce our impacts on the environment and the accessibility of community composting and education is easily one of the best things about NYC.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to me and my community, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Elana Frank

Good Afternoon.

My name is Eleanor B. McGrath, and I live at 110 Riverside Drive in Manhattan. I was head of the 110-118 Riverside Drive Co-Op Board's Green Committee when our building joined the pilot composting program with the Department of Sanitation in 2014. Many members of our community worked hard to educate and enlist people living in our building to compost their organic waste, rather than throwing it in the trash. As a result, the rat population diminished, our streets were cleaner, and we had the satisfaction of knowing that organic waste was being turned into fertilizer for our parks.

While I understand the need to divert personnel during a pandemic, I would hope that the composting programs would be resumed as soon as possible. The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This is an important quality-of-life issue for our city and the planet. I hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Elena Cromeyer
256 Henry Street, Apt. 4
Brooklyn, NY 11201
(347) 419-5485
ecromeyer@gmail.com

21 May 2020

Dear Honorable Members of the NYC Council,

Good morning. My name is Elena Cromeyer and I am a resident of Brooklyn, New York. I've lived in this city for nearly 15 years, in the boroughs of Queens, Manhattan and Brooklyn (and yes, Brooklyn is the best!). I'm a public health practitioner and a Brooklyn Team Leader with the Sierra Club, primarily organizing to move the city to 100% renewable energy. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not eliminate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting.

I am sure you are already aware of the benefits of composting but I thought I would put them in writing for your reference to reiterate my advocacy to save composting in our great city:

- Reduction in garbage volume
- Compost is a rich, natural fertilizer cuts back on use of chemical fertilizers
- Improves soil aeration and drainage
- Helps control weeds
- Decreases the need for costly watering
- Puts wasted food to good use
- **Mitigates climate change**

I grew up economically poor and came to this country as a young child from El Salvador. My mom, a Mexican immigrant in the US, taught my siblings and me not to waste food. Never to waste food – the little food we had to put on the table. That is one of the earliest memories and teachings I have of my mom. I will admit I hated liver and used to hide pieces of it in our potted plants. I guess that was the first time I ever composted so it was not technically “wasting” food. That principle has stuck with me for life and it's one I live by and teach others to live by. Unfortunately, over 51 percent of the trash that goes to landfills (food scraps, paper, yard trimmings and wood) is compostable. Globally, we throw away roughly 1.3 billion tons of food each year, an amount worth nearly \$1 trillion. Equally important, throwing food in the trash means we are not only wasting valuable resources, but we are also contributing to climate change.

Scores of NYC residents like myself were enthusiastic and proud of our city starting a curbside composting program. When I heard that Mayor deBlasio's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this city has made in repurposing food scraps and yard waste from landfills – a major source of greenhouse gas emissions, I was gutted. The Administration is slashing the City of New York's Department of Sanitation budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting our city back further from its sustainability goals.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, I am asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. We want curbside composting service and we want it to be available not only to certain neighborhoods but all NYC residents. Composting should be woven into the fabric of our city and included as a requirement of waste to be recycled.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this request to our communities and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Fighting climate change does not always have to be an expensive or complicated enterprise. Sometimes supporting the environment is as simple as starting and maintaining a community curbside compost program. Sometimes it is about only

buying as much food as you need, finishing what is on your plate and eliminating your contribution to packaging as much as possible. Sometimes, it is just about putting yourself back in the natural nutrient loop and circular economy as much as you can. By doing so, you pull the whole world a little bit more back into balance.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Elena C. Cromeyer, MPH

Hello,

In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting. We have had composting in our building for a number of years and the initiative has been – not only successful for the environment – but has been an excellent tool for teaching our children about protecting our Earth.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our family, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Elisabeth Gordon

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Elise Fiala and I am disappointed to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. When I moved to NYC a few years ago, I bragged to my friends in the Midwest about how here there is publicly funded community composting. For the years that I've lived here, I have been so proud to take my compost to the local drop off site each week. It never occurred to me that after being such a leader in this area, the city would just dump the whole program.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise. I think that the idea that we "have to" cut costs by cutting climate mitigation programs like composting is extremely short-sighted and ignores the much larger long-term costs that will be paid due to the climate crisis. To imagine that this cut is saving us money is insulting to future generations who will have to pay for our inaction.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Elise Fiala
31-19 33rd St. #3
Astoria, NY 11106

Good afternoon, name is Elissa Iberti and I am Co- Chair of the Oak Street Neighborhood Association; a block association that includes multiple streets in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. The members are both homeowners and rental tenants. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. In the interest of keeping the organic waste composting program as well as other recycling programs alive, our neighbors support keeping this waste out of landfills as well as keeping us on track to a greener NYC by 2030.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. This focus on education will help move us toward a successful mandatory city-wide Compost program for everyone, young and old, across all communities.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

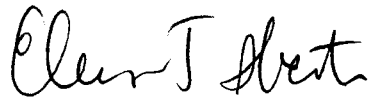
This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;

- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our local neighborhood groups, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Clever T. Hest". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

My name is Elizabeth Aceituno. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Organics recycling and composting is an effective way for citizens to directly contribute to address climate change by generating significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions that would otherwise happen from sending organic waste to the landfill.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. Restoring this budget would not only contribute to save jobs but would allow to support the infrastructure for citizens to be concretely engaged in the fight against climate change.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to me and my family, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Elizabeth Aceituno

Good afternoon,

My name is Elizabeth Arce and I am a New York City resident volunteering my time in neighborhood greening efforts through the Tree Ambassador program sponsored by the Gowanus Canal Conservancy. We ensure our neighborhood street trees are taken care of and survive the harsh urban conditions. Trees are a vital part of the city's infrastructure and a key component to balancing emissions in the fight against Climate Change. We rely on the supply of compost we receive from the NYC Compost Project hosted by Big Reuse which we apply to the street trees every year.

In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask in continuing the important work we do to maintain the street trees, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you
Best,
Elizabeth Arce

Thursday, May 21, 2020

Good afternoon, my name is Elizabeth Hollander, a resident of Jackson Heights, Queens, writing in support of the #SaveOurCompost Coalition. In this testimony, we ask that the City restore some crucial funding to maintain opportunities for organics recycling and composting in the city.

The Mayor's proposed budget would effectively nullify much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste, effectively abandoning its long term sustainability goals.

We understand the acute demands on the budget at this time of pandemic, and are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. We asking only to restore funding to the NYC Compost Project and its partners, and to Grow NYC, two organizations committed to community outreach and education, the most essential elements of effective change in public awareness of the need for sustainability. Neighborhood composting is an extraordinarily powerful mechanism for strengthening community ties and creating communication.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together amount to approximately \$7 million. This fraction of the original recycling and organics budget would go a long way to keep New Yorkers separating food waste and empowered to prevent this stream from going to landfill and emitting the greenhouse gases that threaten us all.

It's a small but powerful tool for maintaining the City's commitment to sustainability, ensuring that

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot overstate the value and potency of these community programs and urge the Council not to let this important priority be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you



Elizabeth Lee
804 Bergen St. Apt 4F
Brooklyn NY 11238

Councilmember Laurie A. Cumbo
1 Hanson Pl.
Suite 201
Brooklyn, NY 11243

Subject: Funding for community composting

Dear Councilmember Cumbo,

My name is Elizabeth Lee, and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. The value of U.S. food waste each year is estimated to be \$162 billion¹. 40% of that waste happens at the home². And currently, 97% of that waste goes to landfills³, where it produces methane, a greenhouse gas that is 28-36 times more effective at trapping heat within our atmosphere than CO₂⁴. Landfills are the third largest source of methane in the United States⁵, and composting is a critical intervention point where we have an ability to impact this environmental burden by diverting food waste into more productive uses.

Many families in rural areas across the U.S., including the one I grew up in, can compost on their own without any aid from their local government. It's a fairly easy way to take individual action against climate change. But as New Yorkers, living in this city where real estate is precious and access to a spare spot of grass is limited, we have no choice but to rely on our elected officials and our municipal infrastructure to put composting within our reach.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.
Sincerely,

Elizabeth Lee

¹ [USDA](#)

² [EPA](#)

³ [EPA](#)

⁴ [EPA](#)

⁵ [EPA](#)

Good afternoon, my name is Ella Wynn and I am a private citizen and environmental activist living in the East Village. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. The zero waste plans are essential for New York City to have a chance to create a climate resilience future for the people that live here, and now more than ever these composting and community gardens give a moment of community that is essential to our city's well being.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress the City has made in diverting food scraps, yard waste, and valuable recyclables from landfills. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach, and all composting services. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications and will be a massive setback of the City's sustainability goals.

Today I'm writing to urge the City Council to maintain residents' ability to continue recycling and composting, and not toss the significant progress we have made in diverting valuable materials from landfills and incinerators in the past few years.

I am asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with an additional expansion of funds for community outreach and education.

Composting is now the only way we will be able to divert tons of food scraps from landfills, which is a serious source of greenhouse gas emissions. I studied at Columbia's School of Environmental Science and Policy and did a capstone project working with important community garden groups and realized just how fundamental these organizations are to the city's resilience.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners, and to GrowNYC, together represent approximately \$7 million. Restoring this \$7M to the budget, plus some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to reduce their impact on the environment, reduce long term costs for the City, and live lives that are more environmentally responsible, without massive behavioral change (which we know can be challenging to instill!) With this funding, organic material that makes up at least 34% of the residential waste stream will be diverted from landfills. We should not waste the value of the nutrient resources in our food, and should not waste money and resources shipping this heavy and wet material far from the City, instead of keeping it close by in composting facilities.

Restoring \$7M+ would ensure that:

- at least 8 non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as essential community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to serve their communities, allowing individuals to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least 6 community composting facilities can continue their work of processing organic waste, turning it into usable compost to amend soils and grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity;
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living; and
- individual New Yorkers who are already stressed by economic collapse and fear of infection during a global pandemic can continue to take a small daily action, making them feel connected to the world, and recognizing that small actions can make a difference.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask for myself as a dedicated environmentalist living in the East Village, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you

Ella Wynn

Good afternoon, name is Ellen Osuna, a lifelong New Yorker.

The importance of healthy soil, and utilizing compost for regenerative purposes was always important, but never more so than now. I ask that the City continue to fund the forward-thinking efforts into organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. It would also add an additional obstacle to achieving Climate Justice and Zero Waste Plans.

The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This short-sighted act will likely have long-term negative implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

I respectfully ask the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and discard the progress we have made in the past few years.

Please do the right thing for health, communities, climate science and ecology, and restore the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could mean significantly less landfill burden, and greenhouse gas emissions.

This comparatively small amount of funding would enable these positive long term goals:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;

- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

With sincerity and urgency, I ask that the Council ensures this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you,

Ellen Osuna

73-63 260th St

Glen Oaks, NY 11004

May 26, 2020

To: The Honorable Council Member Dromm, Speaker Corey Johnson

Re: Community Composting and Recycling Programs (6.4 million dollars)

Dear Chair Dromm, Vice Chair Gibson and Speaker Johnson:

The public hearing on March 21st, was no doubt one for the history books. The confluence of a dire budget due to the pandemic and a Zoom hearing brought out so many advocates making the entire proceeding a great educational experience. Congrats to surviving us all!

There are two budget lines under the Sanitation cuts that I address in this testimony:

- 1) 3.5 million for Community Composting. This line is the New York City Compost Project hosted at seven non-profits and in all five boroughs. The seven host sites consist of all four botanical gardens and three additional non-profits. There are six DEC registered compost facilities run by five of these host sites.
- 2) 2.9 million for recycling programs. This is Grow NYC Food Scrap Drop-offs and recycling programs.

NYC Compost Projects initially ran all the Food Scrap Drop-offs except the Farmer's Markets. Then we transitioned them to GrowNYC in October of 2019. GrowNYC brought the food scraps collected to five of the seven host sites to process in to compost until the shutdown due to COVID-19.

Restoring these two funding lines will achieve continued service in most Council Districts for food scrap drop-offs. It will insure NYers continue to receive compost, have easy inexpensive access to compost bins and access to free education about composting.

It will allow for technical assistance for community compost sites. Community Compost sites receiving less than 1000 lbs of organics per week do not have to register with the DEC. It is highly unlikely that the DEC wants to go around checking their volume. We serve as technical assistance providers, educators, and a bridge to other community support for all of these community compost sites and partners managed food scrap drop-offs.

Restoration of these two budget lines will go a long way to meeting the requirements of the Community Organics Recycling Empowerment legislation being introduced by CM Powers. It also insures that our City continues to leverage the national attention received by the NYC Compost Project as evidenced by letters you have received from the United States Composting Council, Institute for Local Self-Reliance, Bio-Cycle and Cornell University. Most importantly, restoration of these budget lines assures that our City continues on its path to zero waste.

Elsa Higby
Resident of Chelsea, NY

Project Manager to NYC Compost Project Hosted by Queens Botanical Garden.

SAVE COMMUNITY COMPOSTING in NYC

Testimony of Emily Bachman
Member, NYC Community Composting Coalition
Before the NYC Council Committee on Finance
Thursday, May 21, 2020

Thank you Chair Dromm and members of this committee for allowing me to share an update about the groundswell of community support to **restore funding for community composting in NYC**.

I write this testimony as a representative of the NYC Community Composting Coalition on behalf of over 5,800 New Yorkers who have signed our petition to Save Community Composting in NYC. The NYC Community Composting Coalition is an informal, rapid-response group of composting practitioners dedicated to protecting and providing community-based composting services to NYC residents throughout the COVID-19 crisis and beyond.

The proposed cuts to the FY21 budget include suspension of the community composting subsidy (\$3.5M) in FY21 and reduction in funding for recycling outreach programs (\$2.9M) for FY21 and outyears. The result is a complete elimination of funding for GrowNYC Zero Waste Programs and NYC Compost Project: eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide public composting and recycling services and education to New Yorkers citywide.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

The NYC Community Composting Coalition is advocating for a restoration of City funding for community composting and Zero Waste outreach that would make it possible to:

1. Maintain citywide access to composting for NYC residents through a network of food scrap drop-off sites operated by GrowNYC and other partners.
2. Process residential food scraps at existing community composting facilities, including the following DEC-registered sites:
 - Queensbridge (Big Reuse)
 - Governors Island (Earth Matter NY)
 - East River Park (Lower East Side Ecology Center)
 - Gowanus Salt Lot (Big Reuse)
 - Queens Botanical Garden (Queens Botanical Garden)
 - Red Hook Farm (Brooklyn Botanic Garden)
3. Provide education, technical assistance and overflow processing capacity to neighborhood and community garden-based compost sites.

SAVE COMMUNITY COMPOSTING in NYC

What's at stake:

The proposed FY21 budget cuts include suspension of the community composting subsidy (\$3.5M) in FY21 and reduction in funding for recycling outreach programs (\$2.9M) for FY21 and outyears. The result is a complete elimination of funding for **GrowNYC Zero Waste Programs** and **NYC Compost Project**: eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide public composting and recycling services and education to New Yorkers citywide, including:

- 170 Food Scrap Drop-off Sites across all 5 boroughs
- 6 Community Composting Facilities
- Compost Distribution for urban agriculture and stewardship
- Zero Waste Education and Outreach

We urge City Council to support:

- 1 Maintaining **citywide access to composting** for NYC residents through a network of food scrap drop-off sites operated by GrowNYC and other partners.
- 2 Processing residential food scraps at existing **community composting facilities**, including the following DEC-registered sites:
 - Queensbridge (Big Reuse)
 - Governors Island (Earth Matter NY)
 - East River Park (Lower East Side Ecology Center)
 - Gowanus Salt Lot (Big Reuse)
 - Queens Botanical Garden (Queens Botanical Garden)
 - Red Hook Farm (Brooklyn Botanic Garden)
- 3 Providing **education, outreach, technical assistance, overflow processing capacity, and free finished compost** to residents and neighborhood groups.

2019 Impacts



Hosted **97,510** participants at Zero Waste workshops & events



Supported **409** Community Gardens & **287** Community Compost sites



Engaged **7,704** volunteers in over **30,000** hours of volunteer service



Trained **91** Master Composters & **174** Community Composters



Distributed **1.1 million** lbs of finished compost to over **12,000** recipients



Employed **45** full-time & **52** part-time staff



Operated **87** Food Scrap Drop-off sites
Supported **106** volunteer-led sites



Diverted **4.6 million** lbs of food scraps from landfills



Composted **5.3 million** lbs of food scraps and garden waste locally

The NYC Community Composting Coalition is an informal, rapid-response group of composting practitioners dedicated to protecting and providing community-based composting and education services to NYC residents throughout the COVID-19 crisis and beyond.

Here's what New Yorkers are saying about Community Composting in NYC (p.1)

"We have to retain our composting program! The climate crisis is real, and won't pause for COVID-19. We have made progress in NYC, let's not go back, we may not be able to return!"

- Paula Walzer, Inwood, Manhattan

"Climate change is the emergency that won't disappear with a vaccine and we cannot ignore the need to keep investing in programs like community composting. It's absolutely crucial."

- Laura Nesci, Rockaway Beach, Queens

"Folks have learned the value of composting and there's a huge interest in gardens right now. Please reinstate these valuable programs."

- Gert Coleman, Prince's Bay, Staten Island

"We need an option to compost. We can't let our kids and future generations down because we didn't do the right thing. Food in the landfill creates methane, which is a powerful greenhouse gas."

- Michele Fox, Kensington, Brooklyn

"I strongly urge you to retain the composting budget for NYC. Living in Queens most of my life, I have benefited from the drop-off site in my neighborhood and then was able to put out my bin for DSNY pickup. As a dedicated professional in health, it is critical that we retain this program for our city. It is a guarantee that future generations will benefit from it on an environmental level as well as in having a respect for our planet."

- Maria Lefkarites, Kew Gardens, Queens

"Please please bring back our composting! It is shocking to see how much more trash I have than usual! It's a tragic waste!"

- Alice Johnson, Greenpoint, Brooklyn

"Composting connects us to the most basic part of both the end and beginning life cycle of our food system. It turns food scraps into earthy fertilizer, ready to return the nutrients back to the growing soil. If it's not used for fertilizer, it can be used as biofuel. Isn't this a no-brainer? Do we really want to "pause" this momentum? A lot of hard work has gone into these composting sites and programs, and the public funding needs to continue."

- Cynthia Lamb, Sunset Park, Brooklyn

"Our budget requires sacrifice, yes, but climate change continues to be the big picture. Please do not completely cut composting."

- Shannon Threatt, Concourse Village, Bronx

"New York needs to keep momentum on promised climate change solutions! This is not a time to regress!"

- Virginia Little, Harlem, Manhattan

"We need composting for a just and sustainable future! We need more green jobs, less waste, limited greenhouse gas emissions, and more urban soil to grow food and support healthy lifestyles. Composting is an essential service if we want a healthy future!"

- Sara Perl Egendorf, Crown Heights, Brooklyn

"We must continue composting to protect the future of our city for all citizens now and for all future generations. I very much miss walking my composting down to the Greenmarket every Saturday. It gave me a sense of fulfillment that I was making a contribution, even in this small way. I watched as the number of bins grew over the years and as more and more of my neighbors did their share to keep our environment from further destruction. Do not cut this out of the budget."

- Susan Sherman, Upper East Side, Manhattan

Here's what New Yorkers are saying about Community Composting in NYC (p.2)

"This can't be something we put off. Please keep these programs that are helping our environment, we can't go backwards."

- Tabitha Allen, Washington Heights, Manhattan

"If NYC is to focus on community health, we need healthy soils to help achieve that goal. With compost we can build localized food sources where there is little to no access to fresh healthy foods. We can also use compost to reduce strain on our aging sewer systems through green infrastructure. And finally, composting programs help reduce strain on environmental justice communities that have the disproportionate burden of transfer stations among other high truck activity businesses that impact the health of these communities by reducing waste tonnage and growing trees/plants to improve air quality. To have an equitable future, we have to do away with linear thinking, and come up with a holistic approach that ties in multiple issues. Compost is one way we can have that future."

- Rosalia Lucero, Jackson Heights, Queens

"PLEASE continue to fund composting!! Especially in these times, cleanliness is critical. Compost allows us to do something USEFUL with waste! Thank you."

- Heidi Bota, Pelham Bay, Bronx

"Everything about these programs is critical for the health of our city system. Keep it!!!!"

- Jonathan Cousins, Downtown Brooklyn

"Composting is an essential service. It helps combat climate change and is a critical piece of the City's goal to send zero waste to landfills by 2030. Communities that never had access to the curbside pilot depend on community-based drop off sites."

- Lacey Tauber, New York City

We need to keep and continue composting sites, as this is one of the ways to mitigate the rapid Climate Change. Reversing these programs is a short-sighted remedy with far-reaching losses to humanity."

- Ena K. McPherson, Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn

"I have noticed so many positive changes because of the city composting program. Least of which my daily garbage has been reduced dramatically. It is a good program that also connects the community. Please do not discontinue it."

- Jayne Chu, Chinatown, Manhattan

"Composting is not a luxury. Composting is one of the most effective ways of bringing down greenhouse gas emissions. Composting on a large scale and based in already existing community programs will only save the city money and benefit all city residents."

- Natalia Sucre, Midwood, Brooklyn

"As a homeowner, longtime Brooklyn resident, and public school teacher, I am SO disappointed that the Department of Sanitation is taking this moment to move us BACKWARDS in sustainability in New York City. This crisis is a shock to all systems and I do understand the need for cuts, but to cut such an important program for A YEAR AND A HALF is just mind boggling. It is disappointing that the City of NY has not been able to rise to the challenge of handling our waste in a way that is good for our planet. I strongly oppose this decision and I hope that DSNY will consider changing the conditions."

- Deanna D'Onofrio, Bay Ridge, Brooklyn

"I've been composting my scraps for over 20 years! It's vital to our community!"

- Beth Sopko, East Village, Manhattan

Here's what New Yorkers are saying about Community Composting in NYC (p.3)

"Expand composting to other neighborhoods, don't curtail it."

- Naomi Allen, Flatlands, Brooklyn

"Composting is the future of our planet. If we keep adding waste to our planet, garbage will consume the Earth. We have to continue making a community effort to make a difference."

- Marilyn Omdahl, Chelsea, Staten Island

"Please save and expand city composting!! It is morally imperative that we take care of our environment. NYC always sets the example for the rest of the country."

- Tessa Mecham, Long Island City, Queens

"Composting is so integral in our fight against global warming! Please don't interrupt this initiative. You're sending the WRONG message to the children in NYC. Give them one less thing to worry about in the future!"

- Jane Cyphers, Gramercy Park, Manhattan

"Composting is the best thing that happened to our family's waste - we throw away only one small bag of trash a week!"

- Margaret Blachly, Inwood, Manhattan

"Save composting! I cannot fathom why this program was selected as dispensable, given that the city already pays to have its trash hauled out of state. Cutting composting services is terrible for the planet, terrible for the city, and terrible for the states that take our garbage and dump them in their own sites. Please let's work to keep composting accessible to the millions of New Yorkers without yards, but with a sense of urgency about the planet."

- Katie Gray, Downtown Brooklyn

"Composting has become an extremely important part of the NYC waste removal ecosystem! NYC's compost program, beyond making our city a more sustainable and desirable place to live, is a living model for how other major cities in the US and around the world can start and scale sustainable food waste removal in the long term. If the program is shuttered, it will take years (if ever) to get the systems back in place, both on a municipal level and an individual routine level. Please don't cut this program of critical, long term importance!"

- Luke Harrison, Upper West Side, Manhattan

"We need healthy soil in the city! Please consider all the benefits and beauty that healthy soil brings to the city!"

- Secundina Garcia, Fordham Heights, Bronx

"Please please keep the composting alive especially at times like this! Filth and smell will increase at dump sites because everyone is at home cooking and more residential food waste is being produced. Initiatives like these is what is helping counterbalance the effects of global warming. Every small amount of good matters!"

- Mansai Patel, Rego Park, Queens

"This can't be something we put off. Please keep these programs that are helping our environment, we can't go backwards."

- Tabitha Allen, Washington Heights, Manhattan

"This pandemic is not the time to reverse course on important steps to reduce climate change and pursue a zero-waste NYC. If anything we need to push harder. Composting is important to me as a way to keep excess food scraps out of landfills."

- Caryn Audenried, Astoria, Queens

Here's what New Yorkers are saying about Community Composting in NYC (p.4)

"These shortsighted cuts that results in minor savings mean bigger costs for waste removal, soil and fertilizer purchasing and lets New Yorkers forget their connection to the earth--bring back composting!"

- Eve Baron, Kensington, Brooklyn

"I am a local resident physician and appreciate the burden of COVID-19 on the city and I believe it would be a shortsighted to stop composting. Please allow the community input on how we reduce spending. This crisis is going to last for years, we need to figure out sustainable pathways through that nourish our community. Composting is a part of that. Pausing to assemble adequate PPE and protections for those involved in the work makes sense. Figuring out what is the lowest cost and highest yield to maintain equitable access to compost (eg Greenmarket drop-offs) makes sense. But closing down for the foreseeable future sets back significant progress in sustainability."

- Julia Agee, Kipps Bay, Manhattan

"Our ecology in our community is crucial - compost is so crucial to all of this - no more waste!"

Mariana Miller-D'Alessandro,
Van Cortlandt Village, Bronx

"A few stats: The USDA estimates Americans waste 30-40 percent of the food supply. Food occupies 22% of space in landfills, which in turn produces 20% of the methane (a more powerful greenhouse gas than CO2) the US sends into the atmosphere. Composting should not be an optional service; it's an investment in the future for all NYers. And many New Yorkers in particular don't have the option to make compost at home. Please preserve and protect these important programs."

- Jennifer Bogo, Park Slope, Brooklyn

"With major budget cuts threatening DSNY's curbside compost program, we need leadership to ensure that our community drop-off sites can be maintained and potentially even expanded. The loss of composting programs would be such a huge step back for the city, and also other cities who look to New York as a model for ethical governance and progressive environmental values. I understand the stresses, the near impossibility, of balancing the budget in the economic climate created by the COVID-19 pandemic, though maintaining Greenmarket compost drop-off seems so basic and doable."

- Sabine Rogers, Williamsburg, Brooklyn

"Please save composting. NYC Compost Project hosted by Snug Harbor taught me how to compost. I now have my own compost bin. I rely on them for help -- and for teaching others and encouraging others to compost."

- Debora Schwartz, Silver Lake, Staten Island

"Composting is not a luxury issue. Collecting compost prevents tons of food and yard waste from being trucked to waste processing facilities. Those facilities are located in some of the poorest sections of NYC, where people already suffer from respiratory conditions due to pollution. More composting means fewer trucks and less pollution for those neighborhoods. The long-term public health benefits for under-served communities and communities of color are clear."

- Margaret Samu, Manhattan

"Not only is it crucial to divert waste from landfills, but the NYC Community Compost Project allows us to rebuild the depleted soils of our city for future generations."

- Carolyn England, Astoria, Queens

Here's what New Yorkers are saying about Community Composting in NYC (p.5)

"Funding support for all composting efforts should be consistent and sustained as an essential service."

- Patrice Kleinberg, Little Neck, Queens

"Keep composting! As we take care of ourselves during this crisis we need to continue to support the Earth. It should not be a matter of choosing between what's best for people versus the Earth - we are all one, we are connected. Save composting!"

- Ciana Barnaba, Upper East Side, Manhattan

"Please please please save our compost programs!!! It truly is the easiest way for the individual to add value to collective positive impact! Mindset matters to change our habits to be more eco conscious."

- Marcela Acosta, Washington Heights, Manhattan

"Please, what we need to do for Mother Earth is sustainability. Don't stop community composting programs, which help us to move forward for a better planet and communities."

Thalita Mercado, Kingsbridge Heights, Bronx

"In NYC we need some form of a composting program even if it does not operate weekly. An absolute abandonment of the program shows us how incompetent this city/state is. I am sure California has not abandoned their program nor their plastic bag ban."

- Marie Romano, Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn

"GrowNYC Zero Waste Programs and NYC Compost Project host sites should definitely be continued, its not so expensive and creates a lot of jobs, even if brown bin pick up has to be suspended for cost reasons."

- Clare Mifflin, New York City

"Composting has reduced my family's landfill additions to an amazing extent. It has also helped to mitigate the rat issue on the block and made a more livable neighborhood."

- Rachel Cohn, Fort Greene, Brooklyn

"When I throw food scraps in the garbage, I have to take my trash out once a week. When I am able to drop off my food scraps, I only have to take out the trash every 3 weeks...please reinstate community drop-off sites for food scraps!"

- Sam Sittenfeld, Crown Heights, Brooklyn

"Composting is important! Yesterday. Today. Everyday."

- Cyndi Chu, Chinatown, Manhattan

"Invest in green jobs and a sustainable city that will fight climate change and create a better future for NYC. This is an opportunity to rise to the occasion rather than getting side-tracked from our Zero Waste Goal and the health of our citizens."

- Lydia Hallett, Lincoln Square, Manhattan

"Composting is essential and much-needed in our fight to mitigate the worst effects of climate change. Please allow composting and the NYC Compost Project to flourish."

- Tenzin Tsomo, Elmhurst, Queens

"NYC Community Composting provides a cycle of debris management that is vital for parks, gardens, and natural areas around NYC. As a worker in a NYC Park and as a New Yorker, I cherish the value of these services, and the need for our green spaces in adding to our quality of life."

- Cyndi Chu, Chinatown, Manhattan

Here's what New Yorkers are saying about Community Composting in NYC (p.6)

"We are at a loss without our beloved Union Square composting drop-off. What a natural, easy, and economical way to help our environment. Please restore funding; this is so important to our city and planet."

- Paula Grande, East Village, Manhattan

"Please reconsider these funding cuts. I am a Queens resident and a business owner in Greenpoint. The food waste composting program in NYC is a huge step forward for our growth and the health of the city. It is a service I use daily and see the benefits of in every way, fewer waste problems in my neighborhood, less vermin and food waste on streets, lower volumes of trash, and an ability to turn the food I recycle into compost for my garden. I consider these programs absolutely essential to our city and our progress towards a healthier living environment."

- Carol Johnson, Woodhaven, Queens

"Please do not end the composting programs. Our environmental health is at stake."

- George Trivizas, Great Kills, Staten Island

"This pandemic is bringing to light how unprepared we are for disasters, how we don't take care of our planet and the people living on it. By canceling the city's compost we are taking steps BACKWARDS when we need to be moving forward together."

- Lehuanani DeFranco, Williamsburg, Brooklyn

"Composting is an essential part of reducing landfill waste and allowing New Yorkers to be stewards of our land. It has to stay!"

- Sam Sundias, Sunnyside, Queens

"My family and I were dropping off food scraps at GrowNYC's Parkside Avenue location for over a year. We made a space in our freezer for our food waste (which is NOT garbage) and I loved teaching my daughter about how we were reducing the amount of trash going to landfills and helping make new dirt to help grow the plants on our balcony. Especially now, when we need to reflect on our place within the environment, impact minimization is paramount. Composting represents something that every citizen can do to help reduce their carbon footprint and should be expanded to every borough immediately to reduce landfill usage, help people connect their actions to their waste streams and educate the children! PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE expand compost collection!"

- Eric Sherman, Flatbush, Brooklyn

"It takes time to change behavior. It's working! Residents in my NYC building are slowly adopting composting as a normal part of their trash routine, just as they took to recycling years ago. My trash has been cut dramatically since I started composting! Please don't take it away! Redouble education efforts instead."

- Sabrina Peck, Upper West Side, Manhattan

"The community composting programs are important and useful, as they affect the stability and well-being of our community. The program allows the Department of Sanitation to know about the problems and needs of people."

Elena Lyashenko, Riverdale, Bronx

"Please do not let short term crises hurt our long-term goals, we can do this!"

- May Yeung, Lower East Side, Manhattan

Here's what New Yorkers are saying about Community Composting in NYC (p.7)

"I have composted my food scraps for at least the last 20 years. First, traveling to Union Square Greenmarket when they were the only place collecting food scraps, then to other Greenmarkets closer to my home. A few years ago I signed my residential building up for composting and it has been a big success. Please realize how vital composting is for the earth, and for New Yorkers."

- Pamela Koch, West Harlem, Manhattan

"We can't let this pandemic set us back in our strides to improve our environment!"

- Jenna Aurelia, St. George, Staten Island

"Let's not go backward for the environment during this pandemic. Let's go forward. Composting was something everyone could do in NYC to pitch in for the environment. People were just starting to change their habits. Taking it away makes people feel defeated. SAVE COMPOSTING IN NYC."

Emily Dolson, Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn

"Let's not destroy good human behavior because of a very bad virus"

- Michael Singer, Upper East Side, Manhattan

"I used to walk almost a mile every Sunday - and gladly - to drop off my compost at the Cortelyou Greenmarket. Please keep this access open."

- Corinna Snyder, Flatbush, Brooklyn

"This is not the time for NYC to be more wasteful than it already is."

- Windy White, Glendale, Queens

"Throwing my food scraps in the garbage is so sad. Now that we're all home, and doing more with less, composting seems even more important."

- Lydia Gerthoffer, Gowanus, Brooklyn

"We cannot abandon our environmentalism in the face of crises, doing so will exacerbate the frequency and severity of crises to come."

- Ellen Obrochta, Bushwick, Brooklyn

"Please please please save our compost programs!!! It truly is the easiest way for the individual to add value to collective positive impact! Mindset matters to change our habits to be more eco-conscious."

- Marcela Acosta, Washington Heights, Manhattan

"Community composting brings people together around sustainability and helps to build up a future where zero waste practices become habit for all NYers. Composting has a way of connecting people to their neighborhoods, parks and green spaces and further supporting community stewardship and does so in a holistic way to keep NYC on a path towards zero waste and maintaining our climate change prevention goals."

- Renee Crowley, Clinton Hill, Brooklyn

"One of my favorite parts about this program was how easy it was. Two access points in my neighborhood. The folks who took my compost were always the kindest people, and out there no matter the weather. I still haven't deactivated my calendar reminder. Save this program!"

Matty Greene, Crown Heights, Brooklyn

"Composting is essential, too, as part of a fully-realized sanitation & waste management program to insure the health & welfare of all New Yorkers."

- Karen Winer, Hell's Kitchen, Manhattan

"This is the perfect time to change behavior and launch our city into a clear, more sustainable, and more equitable future!"

- Arthur Sprogis, Upper West Side, Manhattan

EMILY ALIX FANO

Box 932, New York, NY 10024 | satyacaroti@gmail.com | 917-301-8830

May 21, 2020

To New York City Council and Office of Management and Budget,

As one of five parents that launched the school food composting pilot in 2012 that became a model for the citywide school composting program, I am writing to you today as both a lifelong New Yorker, an avid composter, and someone who cares about the City honoring its publicly stated climate and zero waste goals. I am also writing as a parent and an educator with the National Wildlife Federation, who has worked for over a decade to educate our children about why it's important to live sustainably and honor the Earth's systems and limits.

As such, I find it unconscionable that New York City, which touts itself as a sustainability leader, and has published its climate commitments in various policy documents like OneNYC2050, 1.5 Alignment With the Paris Agreement, and others, would even consider eliminating organics collection and backing away from its sustainability goals in times of crisis. It is precisely in times of crisis that we must commit even more fervently to those goals. If the COVID crisis has taught us anything, it's that our (mis)treatment of the Earth is at the very root of our current suffering and that we must rethink the way we live.

Indeed, In California, organics collection is seen as an essential service. Cities like [Denver](#) and states like [DC](#) and [California](#) are maintaining organics collection during COVID. Before COVID hit, City Council Speaker Corey Johnson was preparing to mandate composting in New York City. The decision to end organics collection in NYC is short-sighted and sends the message that sustainability is an after-thought rather than an essential service.

A [recent article in a local Upper West Side newspaper](#), showed that garbage collection was down by 24% on the Upper West Side and 28% on the Upper East Side from last year as a result of New Yorkers fleeing the City. Couldn't those savings be applied to keep the Greenmarket collections operating during the COVID pandemic? Could the city use special legal provisions to negotiate lower rates with certain private carters (i.e. Action, IESI, Royal, Waste Management) for one year to allow them to continue collecting food waste until the program can resume and expand, so we don't lose momentum? Could the city give private companies or individual donors who contribute to keeping composting going tax breaks and have the funds funneled through DSNY's non-profit arm, NYC's Strongest? I'm certain that – with creative and visionary thinking - fiscal solutions could be found.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and

outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals. When Mayor Bloomberg cut recycling in 2002 it took us a decade to get rates back up to 18% - still the lowest rate of any big city.

Today, I urge the City Council to not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years and immediately restore community composting drop-offs at Greenmarkets (). [DC is maintaining dropoffs at Farmer's Markets](#)) through GrowNYC and NYC Compost Project partner sites as well as an expansion of community outreach and education.

Together, this would represent a mere \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask and sincerely hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you,



Emily A. Fano, MA

Good afternoon, my name is Emily Grubman and I am a concerned NYC resident.

In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to

compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you,

Emily Grubman

Dear Honorable Council,

My name is Emily and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and brown bin collection.

Composting programs are part of less than 6% of the city's budget, yet they have the potential to reduce greenhouse gases and toxic sludge that can enter the water table. With NYC accounting for 5.7% of the U.S. population and with landfilled food waste accounting for 8% of greenhouse gases globally, this city's trash has a major impact on the health of the planet and its inhabitants.

Expanding these programs city wide is a key part of NYC's Green New Deal plan, set forth by the Mayor, and I encourage you to continue with this plan as wisely and carefully as possible at this time.

Considering that the expansion of recycling in the late 80's cost the city a tremendous amount in property taxes, and considering that people cannot afford rent at this time, a slower and more strategic roll-out may be necessary.

Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, there are certainly compromises to be made, though **environmental programs do not need to take this full burden while other programs take none.**

Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for the widest number of New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Emily Kichler

Zero Waste NYC

2172 43rd St / Astoria, 11105

Good afternoon, my name is Emily Pilkington. I am a resident of Ridgewood, Queens and I have previously worked with many local organizations such as GrowNYC on compost initiatives. In this testimony, I beg that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. So many of our citizens rely on this as their only opportunity to recycle or compost, and without it will be unable to. THIS IS THE ONLY PLANET WE HAVE!! We have a duty to care for it.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. GrowNYC has offered me, personally, not just valuable job and learning opportunities, but the chance to connect to my city and meet a vast number of others who want to see it thrive.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;

- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to New York City, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Good afternoon,

My name is Emily Simpson, volunteering with the Lower East Side Ecology Center. The LES runs a compost yard by the East River. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills, a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

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- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this for our organization, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.
Emily

Emily-Bell Dinan
41-41 41st Street Apt 3C
Sunnyside NY
11104

May 20th, 2020

Dear Esteemed Members of the NYC City Council,

I am writing to you today to testify to the importance of the NYC Compost Project. This nearly 30 year old network of environmental non-profits, esteemed science institutions, community volunteers, and NYC Department of Sanitation comes with a long list of positive impacts to the five boroughs. Recycling organics not only reduces carbon emissions, conserves financial resources the City formerly used for hauling waste, reduces methane and CO2 production (the two most problematic greenhouse gasses), and creates in-house materials used by NYC Parks, Dept. of Transportation, Green Thumb Gardens, and neighborhood organizations stewarding street trees planted by Million Trees NYC to lower the urban forest's mortality rate. The list of priceless positive impacts and environmental services provided by this low-cost program does not stop there, however. From hands-on organics collection and recycling, to science education, to community-volunteer trainings, to resource sharing with communities around the globe, the NYC Compost Project is also our City's premier green collar job training opportunity, engages neighborhoods with positive civic engagement, stimulates economic activity by helping up lift valued non-profit organizations, is a foundational tool in how NYC is implementing its climate impact goals, and has an incredible track record of creating good jobs for women and people of color in the sciences at a time when younger generations are inheriting a climate crisis and need a well-trained, intersectional workforce to address our challenges. For this last point, I know first hand how the NYC Compost Project develops local talent and is a job creator. I myself am a fourth generation New Yorker from Sunnyside, Queens, the first in my family to receive a degree from a four year university (Hunter College), and my role at the NYC Compost Project at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden was my first job out of college wherein I honed my skills in project management, science education, web development, volunteer training, train-the-trainer skills to bring NYC pilot schools into alignment with waste reduction goals - all to build capacity throughout Brooklyn using three employees housed and co-managed by a non-profit partner. Not only this, but while at Hunter, I spent two years interning at the Lower East Side Ecology Center to teach community members about waste reduction, soil science, urban sustainability, and climate change impacts. Without this professional development opportunity, I would not be the environmental science professional I am today working to usher in the environmental policies our city, state, and country need in order to reduce and slow the economic, physical, psychological, and health impacts of a changing climate. I am but one of hundreds of New Yorkers that the NYC Compost Project changed the life of.

Today the Compost Project has grown by leaps and bounds to help collect municipal organic waste. The infrastructure built to do this, even on the "small scale" that NYC is collecting from, is monumental. It is one of the largest organics collection programs in North America and growing - if we let it. This is something New York City can be and should be incredibly proud of. There is a real economic impact to returning to shipping methane generating waste to far off states. There is a real economic impact to breaking down the network of highly talented professionals this Project assembled over the decades. There is a real economic impact to taking those supporting funds from the large number of important environmental organizations that this Project helps fund. Beyond all of these economic impacts, there are incredibly real social, environmental justice, and community-based impacts from removing this resource and avenue for community members, young people, women, minorities in the sciences, and job training programs away from NYC. We cannot, in 2020, destroy the forward thinking infrastructure that NYC needs when hurricanes and novel viruses predicted by climate experts are killing us. Taking a pause on this program is taking major steps back in terms of environmental solutions, will waste millions of dollars already spent through decades of development, and will hurt NYC's future and present environmental sector. There are a vast number of ways that the City Council, Mayor, and Governor can reassess how to generate revenue by looking at the large companies that do not generate good paying, quality jobs, but do generate wealth for the folks on top. Please use this time wisely to consider how to help New Yorkers, not hurt New Yorkers for generations to come while we are already hurting so much.

Thank you for your consideration,

Emily-Bell Dinan

Dear NYC City Council Members,

The suspension of community composting and curbside organics for FY 2021 is a terrible loss for New York City. These programs directly fight climate change through the diversion of organic waste from landfills and they should be preserved. I feel strongly that this is a short-term solution that will have long-term harmful effects on NYC residents. It also contradicts the City's ambitious Zero Waste sustainability goals.

I am calling on you to support the thousands of New Yorkers who are fighting to keep community-based composting programs alive. Your action today has the power to affect change for decades to come.

Please restore funding for NYC Compost Project, GrowNYC, and their partners. These organizations make up a fraction of the \$28 million organics funding being cut from DSNY's budget, but have massive impact on the daily lives of residents. They divert millions of pounds of organic waste from landfills each year, process scraps at a scale beyond that of any backyard compost system, and distribute finished compost to community gardens, urban farms, and other food access programs.

In the face of an unprecedented crisis, you are given the opportunity to make a critical decision. Please restore funding for these organizations.

Thank you,
Eric Norris
Brooklyn, NY

To: Honorable Costa Constantinides
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

My name is Erica I have been living in Astoria, Queens since 2011. I was upset to learn that the City has halted funding to the community composting that so many of us have relied on for years. While I understand that we are facing challenges, financial and otherwise, like never before, we only have one world to live on. It will still be here once this crisis is over, and we should treat it accordingly.

While I cannot find the exact numbers of how much organic waste these programs have diverted from the landfills, I'd like to give an example of a local .. Dog .. who is stepping up to the plate. The Instagram user @astoriapug and their owners have taken it upon themselves to collect compost around the neighborhood so that it doesn't go to waste. They have gone from collecting 60lbs on week one to 520lbs during week 4. If this is being done by one very small team, imagine how much is still going to waste.

I, and many of my neighbors, ask that the City restores funding to these essential composting programs.

Sincerely,
Erica Wells
23-09 33rd St. Apt. 1R
Astoria, NY 11105

Good morning,

I am Erik Bonadonna from Crown Heights Mutual Aid. **I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Composting is vital to the future of Crown Heights and the city. It is also important to my personal beliefs and mission as a New Yorker.**

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. **This will also ensure that additional funding for garbage disposal from added organics waste is not required.**

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that composting can continue, and that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our organization and the city, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority is not left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Erik Bonadonna

Erin Boyle and James Casey
34 Livingston Street, #8
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Good evening:

Our names are Erin Boyle and James Casey. We have been residents of Brooklyn for the past decade and we're sending this written testimony to ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting. Since first moving to Brooklyn ten years ago, my family and I have been able to keep our food waste out of the landfills through both drop-off locations at the city's farmer's markets and through the city's curbside pickup program. We are proud and honored to do our part to keep this valuable waste out of the landfills and to send it back to the earth as compost.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;

At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;

At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and

The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children

develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our family and our entire community. We hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Erin Boyle, James Casey and our children, Faye, Silas, and Calder

Good afternoon, my name is Erin Carter, and I am a New Yorker living in the beautiful borough of Brooklyn. In my testimony, I ask that the City continues to offer opportunities for composting in accordance with our terrific leadership with the Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans. Today I write to urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

Mayor DeBlasio's proposed budget cuts would erode the City's progress in diverting food scraps and yard waste away from landfills, thus reducing a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is a short-sighted motion, and has potential to have long-term implications, setting a path away from important sustainability goals.

I ask that any budget cuts impacting the NYC Compost Project (and partners), and to GrowNYC be restored. Provisions for future expansion for community outreach and education would be ideal, and in accordance with the City's amazing leadership in these areas in recent years. Altogether, the proposed cuts to the NYC Compost project et al. and to GrowNYC represent approximately \$7 million. These monies, with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to make a difference at home by source-separating food waste, preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

Sometimes the things that should go without saying are, in fact, the most important things to state. In that spirit, I will note that this (comparatively small) amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that at least:

- 8 non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills; and
- 6 community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity.

Education and outreach are vital, necessary components of any program to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle. Such training in the schools is a small but worthwhile investment that will pay off for decades; by planting the seeds of sustainable living for our children, society will reap the benefits for a lifetime to come.

The urgency of this request cannot be understated. I hope the Council makes the right decision for today, tomorrow, and our children's tomorrows to ensure that this important priority will not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you for your consideration, time, and service to all us, your constituents, the intrepid New Yorkers.

To Whom It May Concern:

Accessible composting is one of the best parts of living in New York City. While I'm lucky enough to have curbside pickup at my South Slope (11215) home, I realize that even just having access to community drop-off sites is an amazing resource and something that makes living in NYC special. I estimate that 70% of my "trash" is actually compostable—in just the few weeks since composting has been suspended, I've filled my trash bag four times; normally I have to take out my trash about once a month. Compostable take-out containers, paper towels, pizza boxes, food scraps, chicken bones... so much of what's considered trash is actually compostable material. And keeping that compostable material out of landfills is a crucial tool in the battle against climate change.

I implore you, please, bring back community composting in SOME way.

Thank you,
Erin Scottberg

May 21, 2020

**Collective for Community, Culture and Environment
Testimony Regarding NYC Budget**

Good afternoon, my name is Eva Hanhardt and I am the Coordinator of the Collective, for Community, Culture and the Environment. The Collective for Community, Culture and Environment, LLC (CCCE) is a women-owned consulting business and interdisciplinary professional network based in New York City - with projects throughout the NY-NJ-CT region. We work with communities, clients and partners that share our mission of developing a sustainable and equitable world.

In this testimony, we ask that the City not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. We also urge the NYC Council to prioritize the implementation of Local Law 97, continue solar installations, and to push for infrastructure projects from the NYC Climate and Community Stimulus Platform.

1) City Composting Programs

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills that are a major source of greenhouse gas emissions and involve poorly managed transfer stations in Environmental Justice neighborhoods. The Administration's plan is to slash the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million coming from the total elimination of all funding for the recycling and composting of organic waste. This is a short sighted action that has the potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

While this program needs to be expanded to include a mandatory organics program inclusive of environmental justice communities and NYCHA residences, **today we are urging the City Council to ensure that the City continues organics recycling and composting, and not destroy the progress we have made in the past few years.**

Today, we are also asking that the approximately 7million dollar cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, and expand to include funding for community outreach and education, and that there be equitable distribution of organics and e-waste drop-off sites throughout the City. We also request that in the near term the City's organics collection become a mandatory residential organics program for everyone. These programs could go a long way toward allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and prevent this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases. **The Collective believes that full funding for composting programs is necessary if NYC is to meet its Sustainability and Environmental Justice goals and be prepared to address and mitigate the impacts of Climate Change**

In the big picture this comparatively small amount of funding would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle. Such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this request to the Collective and to the communities and clients with whom we work. **We ask that the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.**

2) Climate Works for All

The COVID-19 crisis has impacted our climate and jobs at the same time, necessitating that we invest in green infrastructure projects to put our communities back to work in good union jobs that move us towards our climate goals.

First, the City must fully fund the implementation of Local Law 97 in order to tackle the biggest source of carbon emissions in the most polluting buildings, and create 40,000 good jobs in the process. The City must also press on with its solar goals and prioritize environmental justice communities for solar jobs.

In addition, in the very near future, a citywide composting program is an essential service that would also provide good jobs for impacted communities while reducing our waste burden.

The City should tap into available resources, including those authorized via the federal CARES Act, existing FEMA funds, municipal liquidity grants, as well as State and Federal workforce development grants.

Thank you for considering these urgent budget items - we do not have any more time to waste in meeting our climate goals.

Hello, my name is Fannie Ip and I am a resident in the Gouverneur Gardens complex and am also the founder of the Friends of Montgomery Triangle Park in the Lower East Side. Both my complex and the Triangle Park use the compost provided by the Lower East Side Ecology Center in our gardens and sidewalk tree pits to help them thrive.

I have been dropping off my food scraps to my neighborhood drop-off site for a few years now and in addition to recycling other paper and plastic products, I have seen my garbage output decreased by more than half. Not only does composting is good for the enviroment by helping trees grow and sending less waste to the landfill, it also helps urban farms to grow healthy vegetables during such times of food insecurity.

It is incredibly hypocritical how "zero waste to landfills" is written on every one of those free bright orange shopping bags that many Councilmembers recently gave away while at the same time, the City is cutting the very service that can actually make this happen. I am urging the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years towards the initiative.

I would also like to take this opportunity to remind you that there is currently close to a billion dollars being budgeted for the East Side Coastal Resiliency project that involves the destruction of East River Park. While social distancing will be necessary for the foreseeable future, the destruction of the Park should be delayed and these funds should be diverted to much pressing issues such as helping small businesses survive and feeding the families who had fallen on hard times during this pandemic. It also costs a lot less to supply us with immediate flood protection as soon as possible. It has been 8 years since Sandy and we were one of the hardest hit neighborhoods and we still don't have any type of flood protection.

So please, I ask that the City to please restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs. This is a request of utmost urgency and will have irreversible negative effects down the line if this is left out of the budget.

Thank you.

Fannie Ip
25 Montgomery St. #12B
New York, NY 10002

fipper@gmail.com

Good afternoon, name *is Fatima Khawaja, a concerned New Yorker*. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting. I am a Chef and being able to Compost means i as an individual who works with food all the time can make my work more green, more sustainable, and less wasteful. My work produces an alarming amount of food waste/scraps and needs composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to the city, to my profession and to all New Yorkers, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Organics Recycling/Composting Testimony

I am writing to urge you to preserve the city's collection of organic waste and composting program. We so rarely feel empowered by our daily choices, and this gave us a chance to feel that we were really making a difference in our own lives and in the lives and well-being of others. The composting program was such a hard-won accomplishment, and it serves both a practical use of reducing waste and fighting global warming as well as a psychological purpose of engaging people with environmental issues and changing habits for the long term good. Not only will stopping the program be damaging to the environment, it will waste the years and efforts that have gone into the building of this program. Please do everything you can to have it reinstated!

Sincerely,

Judith E. Fletcher



Officers

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Patrick Geraty
St. Louis Composting

Interim Past President

Bob Yost
A-1 Organics

Vice President

Brian Fleury
WeCare/Denali

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NatureWorks

Pierce Lewis

Dirt Hugger

Sarah Martinez

Eco-Products

Robert Michitsch, Ph.D.

University of Wisconsin
Stevens Point

Bob Schanz

Barnes Nursery

Jennifer Trent

Iowa Waste Reduction Center
University of Northern Iowa

Executive Director

Frank Franciosi

May 21, 2020

The Hon. Corey Johnson, Speaker
New York City Council
250 Broadway
New York, NY 10007

Dear Speaker Johnson:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the city's plans for organics recycling and composting under consideration at this hearing.

The US Composting Council is a national organization dedicated to the development, expansion and promotion of the compost manufacturing industry, established in 1990 to promote best management practices, establish standards, educate professionals and the public about the benefits of composting and compost use.

Community composters, microhaulers and grassroots and nonprofit composters are all members of our organization. The Mayor's proposed budget would decimate these organizations, who we have watched as they built momentum in New York City for significant diversion of food scraps from landfills to soil enriching compost. New York is now seen as one of the cities leading in composting and healthy soil development through these efforts.

Accompanied by the severe cuts to the DSNY (also a longtime member of USCC), these moves risk the progress the City has made in diverting food scraps, and yard trimmings—a significant loss since organic material that makes up at least 34% of the residential waste stream will be diverted from disposal.

The USCC urges the New York City Council to retain programs that the NYC Compost Project and GrowNYC nurtured over the years and that funds for community education be re-instituted to keep composting active in the city until DSNY's program can be funded in 2021.

Sincerely,

Frank Franciosi, Executive Director

Gabriel Coleman
615 Gates Ave Apt. 4B
Brooklyn, NY 11221
507-649-7282
gcoleman.mn@gmail.com

20 May 2020

Members of the New York City Council Committee on Finance,

The city of New York and people across the planet are facing two defining crises. Coronavirus threatens the health and the lives of our neighbors and well as our city's economic solvency. At the same time, the effects of climate change are felt in New York City with record summer heat, warmer winters, rising seas, extreme weather events like superstorm Sandy, and climate refugees arriving to our teeming shore from the global south where the climate crisis has already begun to tear livelihoods, ecosystems, and societies apart.

The need for cost-saving measures due to the incredible expenses incurred by the city as a result of COVID-19 is not lost on me, but cutting Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs in order to make up COVID-19 costs is analogous to cutting the budget from New York Health and Hospitals to fund the fight against rising seas. When organic material like New York City's 3.9 million annual tons of food waste decomposes anaerobically as it does in a landfill, it generates methane, which has 86 times the warming potential as CO₂. In order to meet the City's goal of **zero waste to landfills by 2030** and to *flatten the ever-steepening curve* of emissions reductions required to prevent the worst of the climate catastrophe, **funding for Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs should be sharply increased, not slashed**. Funding these composting programs also creates thousands of green jobs that are *essential* to our transition to a sustainable economy.

Of course, the money to fund New York City's response to these crises has to come somewhere. I believe [Councilor Helen Rosenthal's proposal](#) to strengthen the financial transaction tax on Wall Street is worth considering to say the least. I hope this finds you all safe and healthy and I truly appreciate your time and attention. **I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs** to help us do our part to work towards a healthy and sustainable future.

Sincerely,
Gabriel Coleman

Good morning,

My name is Gabriel Husain I am a high school senior. I go to the LFNY on 76th and York but live in the Heights. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Composting introduced me to organic agriculture. A city boy my entire life, I interned at Randall's Island Park Alliance where I learned about composting and the insane utility of the process. Not only does it offer better waste management, but products essential for preserving our city and its flora.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. Where and how I learned about compost, (I'm headed to university studying Environmental Economics and Policy) has essentially redirected my life path. The benefits and importance must be taught.

Just as I did to East Harlem summer campers on Randall's Island, and even Minecraft does through their inclusion of composters, teaching and establishing an ecological precedent, developing good habits might be just what saves us in this seemingly hopeless world. It kills me to see New York City, the city that raised me ever since I was delivered at Lenox Hill, and where I lived from Peter Cooper to West 145th, educating me at Queens College summer camps, and Riverbank State Park sports lessons, it kills me to see the city that raised me giving up on the environmentally-conscious future young New Yorker's deserve.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;

- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;

- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and

- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to the city's kids, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you,
Gabriel Husain

Good afternoon.

My name is Gabriel Thomas and I am a long-time NYC resident. I was born here and have lived here almost half of my life.

Today I implore the City Council to reconsider the City's path toward decimating its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals. Eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting will have a devastating, multi-faceted impact on the health of New Yorkers.

Each year, NYC composting saves an estimated FIVE MILLION POUNDS of food scraps from the waste cycle. By composting food scraps, we create nutrient-dense soil which is used to enrich our parks and public gardens. Without formal composting programs our food scraps wind up of festering in our landfills, releasing toxic gasses which affect the air we breathe and propagating swarms of vermin en masse.

Climate Justice is also an issue of social justice as environmentally hazardous waste systems disproportionately affect black and brown neighborhoods.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress that our City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills - a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is cutting the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million coming from a total elimination of all funding for organic waste composting and recycling education and outreach. This is incredibly short-sighted as this move will certainly have long-term implications, irrevocably damaging the City's sustainability goals.

It is absolutely crucial that the City maintains the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we've made in the past few years.

I'm not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts – but I am asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners, and to GrowNYC, together represent approximately \$7 million. That money would go a long way to allow New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to our landfills – which will be incredibly harmful to our fellow New Yorkers.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;

- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

The urgency of this action cannot be understated. On behalf of all of my fellow New Yorkers, I hope that the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process. We will remember who was on our side at election time.

Thank you and stay safe.

Gabriel Thomas

Good afternoon,

My name is Gabriela Faria Woellner and I'm with Faria LLC, a sustainable design company in Brooklyn, NY. I create custom pieces for clients using deadstock and/or sustainable fabrics, and upcycle most of my own production waste.

In this testimony, I come to ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting. I have been composting for over 11 years between San Francisco and New York, during which time I've observed first-hand just how much waste could be composted instead of simply being thrown on a landfill to create harmful greenhouse gases. Seeing those quantities with my own eyes made me a life-long proponent of composting, and on several occasions I've even taken the subway across the city with my compost bin when the pickup service wasn't yet widely available near me.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases. This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in

community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity;
and

- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to my community and myself personally, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Gabriela Faria Woellner
Faria LLC

NEW YORK COVID-19 FOOD COALITION

FY2021 Budget Requests

**Testimony Submitted by
Gabrielle Blavatsky, Co-founder and Policy Director of Equity Advocates
Before the NYC Council Committee on Finance**

**Executive Budget Hearing
May 21, 2020**

My name is Gabrielle Blavatsky and I am the Co-Founder and Policy Director of Equity Advocates. Thank you to Chairperson Daniel Dromm as well as the members of the NYC Council Committee on Finance for holding today's hearing and the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Equity Advocates builds the capacity of nonprofit organizations to address the underlying causes of food inequity through policy and systems change. We partner with New York-based organizations working to alleviate hunger and poverty, providing them with the tools they need to be more civically engaged—including policy education, advocacy training and coalition building services.

New York is the epicenter of the Covid-19 pandemic. This crisis is causing major disruptions to our food system and is exacerbating poverty and food inequity across the state. In response, Equity Advocates organized the New York Covid-19 Food Coalition: a diverse multi-sector group of food system stakeholders. Our Coalition is advocating for resources to ensure that the local food system and supply chain remains intact, that all families are able to access the food and support they need, and that front line community embedded organizations can respond effectively to the crisis. We call upon our representatives and policy makers across New York City to work strategically, quickly and collaboratively with our community to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic and to direct resources and support towards the following recommendations:

1. Provide additional resources to food banks and pantries to meet the unprecedented demand for their services

- **We support the City's decision to allocate \$25 Million in Emergency Funding for Food Providers and encourage the administration to increase funding for the Emergency Food Assistance Program as well.** Allowable expenses should include personnel costs, shelf stable food and Personal Protective Equipment for staff.
- **Reinstate and fund the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) in the FY21 Budget, ensure program participants are protected from Covid-19.** SYEP provides much-needed income to families, work experience for 75,000 youth ages 14 to 24 and critical support to community-based organizations (CBOs). We urge the Administration to fully fund this program in FY21 and prioritize placing participants with EFPs, youth farmers' market

For more information please contact:

Gabrielle Blavatsky, Policy Director at Equity Advocates: gabrielle@nyequityadvocates.org

NEW YORK COVID-19 FOOD COALITION

FY2021 Budget Requests

CBOs and community garden groups to help build the City's capacity to respond to Covid-19. In addition, we ask that the City allow CBOs to use SYEP funds for PPE for participants, issue guidance to CBOs on how to protect the health of participants and offer SYEP participants remote working opportunities when being on-site is not possible or safe.

2. **Invest in NYC businesses and infrastructure to support local economy, jobs and get food to vulnerable populations**

- **Provide additional funding to the NYC Small Business Continuity Fund and prioritize food businesses.** Bodegas, greencarts and other street food vendors are often the only available fresh food retail outlets in many low income communities of color throughout the City. Due to overwhelming demand, NYC's Small Business Services is no longer taking applications for its Small Business Continuity Fund. The City should provide the Fund with additional resources to meet demand and provide technical assistance and outreach in all the major languages to small food retailers to help them access these City loans. This is especially critical as bodegas and other small businesses owners have reported problems trying to access and apply to federal loans through the Small Business Administration (SBA).
- **Providing additional funding to food access and nutrition education CBOs that already have contracts with the City to do this work.** The City recently awarded a contract to Sodexo—one of the world's largest multi-national corporations, headquartered in France—to supply meals to NYC Hotels that are housing first responders. City food service contracts like this should instead be awarded to New York based food distributors, farmers and hospitality groups to preserve local jobs and keep more money circulating in the local economy. The New York City Council should also consider providing additional funding to food access and nutrition education CBOs that already have contracts with the City to do this work.

3. **Allocate additional resources to HRA to promote access to food through federal nutrition programs.** In response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the unprecedented loss of jobs that have resulted, a lot of federal money is being poured into the SNAP and WIC programs. We would like to see additional funding from the City allocated to HRA to promote these programs and enroll people safely online to help reduce the demand on emergency food providers. In addition, as HRA takes responsibility for disseminating information about the Pandemic-EBT program, the City should allocate additional funding to the agency to ensure it has enough resources and staff to do this important work.

For more information please contact:

Gabrielle Blavatsky, Policy Director at Equity Advocates: gabrielle@nyequityadvocates.org

NEW YORK COVID-19 FOOD COALITION

FY2021 Budget Requests

Platform Signatories

21 in '21	Hunger Free America
A Place at the Table	Hunger Solutions New York
Bread for the World NY	La Familia Verde Community Garden Coalition
Brownsville Community Development Corporation	Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food, Education and Policy, Teachers College, Columbia University
Bronx Eats, Inc.	Los Sures/Southside United
Bronx Health REACH/Institute for Family Health	New York City Community Garden Coalition
Children's Aid	New York City Council Member Ben Kallos
City Harvest	Red Hook Initiative
Cleaver Co.	RiseBoro Community Partnership
Community Food Advocates	Rockaway Youth Task Force
CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute	Teens for Food Justice
East New York Farms!/United Community Centers	United Way of New York City
Edible Schoolyard NYC	Universe City NYC
Equity Advocates	West Side Campaign Against Hunger
Food Bank for New York City	Wellness in the Schools
Food Issues Group	Women in Hospitality United

For more information please contact:

Gabrielle Blavatsky, Policy Director at Equity Advocates: gabrielle@nyequityadvocates.org

Dear Speaker Johnson,

I have recently heard that budget cuts include the elimination of the community composting subsidy. This funds the seven nonprofits that make up the NYC Compost Project in every borough, including the one that serves my neighborhood in the Bronx.

The NYC Compost Project provides essential services to me and other:

- community gardeners and urban farmers
- local and citywide greening and volunteer groups
- schools and youth organizations
- agency and institutional partners
- seniors and other residential groups

I have benefited from the Compost Project's helpline, hands-on assistance, resources, and educational efforts.

They have been crucial in helping me to use composting to reduce waste, grow food, connect to my community, and learn green job skills. Their work helps improve the health of our depleted soils and the environment at our homes and in our neighborhoods throughout NYC.

Now more than ever, we need the NYC Compost Project to continue to support our community as we work together to create a more healthy, equitable, and sustainable City.

We have already lost so much because of COVID-19. I hope I do not have to add such an important and beloved program to that list.

Sincerely,

Good afternoon, my name is Garth Swanson and I am a resident of Brooklyn. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Now, especially, we need to maintain and strengthen our commitment to sustainability.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

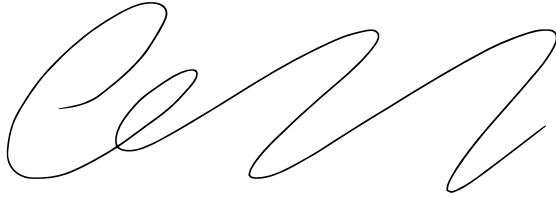
This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and

recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our neighborhood, and I hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'C' followed by a series of loops and a final upward stroke.

Good afternoon, my name is Gary Waskow and I am with It's Easy Being Green, an Upper West Side climate education and personal action group. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting, Composting has provided our community with an important way to combat the effects of climate change.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. It's Easy Being Green has been working hard to educate our neighbors about the importance of reducing methane emissions and the elimination of the composting program is devastating to our efforts.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our It's Easy Being Green community and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Gary Waskow

To: Honorable Margaret Chin
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov

Re: Community Composting

My name is Geoff and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs.

Over the last year, I have successfully converted to composting 100% of my food waste. I have found that this greatly reduces my own weekly trash output. EPA estimates that more food reaches landfills and incinerators than any other single material in our everyday trash, constituting 22 percent of municipal solid waste. I find this egregious, when such a small gesture as taking your waste to a community compost depository can make such a difference. My wellbeing is greatly improved by knowing that I can make this adjustment to my lifestyle and contribute to the overall sustainability of our ecosystem.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Geoff Han
Independent

300 Rector., #5L
New York, NY
10280

Good afternoon, name is Geoffrey Stoner and I live at 35 West 90th Street. We have a very active block association: The West 90th Street Block Association.

At 35 West 90th Street, we have been using the DSNY Food Scraps pickup for the past year and a half. We have engaged our block association in this effort which has been invaluable in expanding the reach of our efforts to get the program established in our neighborhood. Composting, as it turns out, has proven to be a widely embraced program not only for our building, but one enthusiastically received by the neighborhood in general. In addition, we have had a serious rat infestation problem on our block, we have seen the implementation of the food scraps program as an effective way of getting food scraps out of garbage bags and into rat-proof containers. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Since we have had tremendous support from our tenants for the Food Scraps program - we now realize it has been a terrific source of civic pride and a vital program to promote neighborhood camaraderie (we have a private and public housing mixed neighborhood, of which we are proud)! It was so successful in our own building, that we encouraged and worked with two Mitchell-Lama buildings on Columbus Avenue and 90th to implement the program, and spoke with people at the El Dorado apartment building on 90th and CPW on how they might transition to the program. In addition, we are in the process of encouraging many of the smaller housing units on our block to transition to food scraps pickup, and are looking to partner with the NYCHA houses on our block to demonstrate to them the benefits of the program. Importantly, this program is vital to help control rat and other vermin infestations in our neighborhood.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. GrowNYC has been a mainstay of the city for years, and to cut it would cut a vital service to the community.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our neighborhood, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you,

Geoffrey Stoner and People of West 90th Street Park Block Association.



RECLAIMING THE COMMONS CULTIVATING COMMUNITY SINCE 2011

New York City Council Committee on Finance
Hearing May 21, 2020

Regarding the Mayor's Executive Budget for FY 2021 and proposed cuts to community composting in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

May 21, 2020

Informed and responsible New Yorkers know that COMPOSTING IS ESSENTIAL. Smiling Hogshead Ranch has maintained a volunteer run community compost site in Queens since 2011. While we are one of the larger community garden composting sites, our compost infrastructure is quickly becoming overwhelmed since the City suspended the Brown Bin program and defunded the NYC Compost Project including local processing sites and Food Scrap Drop-off programs. Through those programs, the city has helped many households create the good habit of saving their food scraps to be composted. Now that municipal composting is defunded people in our neighborhood and beyond (we have people coming from Brooklyn, Manhattan and the Bronx to drop-off!) are desperate for a way to compost, and our garden can't safely keep up with the huge increase in demand¹. We need the City to step up and honor its commitments to Zero Waste by funding community composting and not leave this essential work to volunteers like us.

We implore the City to keep the larger compost processing sites open. The finished compost from sites like Big Reuse, Earth Matter and Added Value is used across the city in schools, parks, community gardens and street tree pits. The hard work and dedication of all those teachers, students, tree stewards, friends of parks and community gardeners deserves compost to help the urban ecology. The entire city benefits from this closed loop system. Please do not undo all the hard work grassroots organizations have put into building these compost sites.

We want to note that composting is the process of turning food scraps into rich organic fertilizer that feeds plants by creating a living soil food web of fungi, bacteria and invertebrates. This complex material is the foundation of life on earth. Science shows that applying compost to soil helps create a carbon sink, encouraging life to thrive, retaining more moisture and rainwater,

¹ Queensbridge Studios. (2020, May 9). *Earth Day 2020/Composting at Smiling Hogshead Ranch*. Youtube, <https://youtu.be/sH94NXhmdsk>.

25-30 SKILLMAN AVENUE • LONG ISLAND CITY, NY 11101
SMILINGHOGSHEADRANCH@GMAIL.COM • 347.509.4464
WWW.SMILINGHOGSHEADRANCH.ORG



RECLAIMING THE COMMONS CULTIVATING COMMUNITY SINCE 2011

reducing combined sewage overflow, increasing foliage cover, decreasing urban heat island effect and ambient temperatures².

Compost programs provide multiple solutions that stack efficiency and productivity. The City Council declared a climate emergency last year. Weeks later, austerity cuts were made to the NYC Compost Project's budget. Now we are letting Covid-19 completely eclipse the efforts we were making through our compost programs to ameliorate the longer-term problems of this climate emergency. We plea for you to begin thinking responsibly and holistically about the multiple problems we face. Stop compartmentalizing issues and understand that compost is a multi-faceted solution.

Finally, education around composting is important but it will not be as relevant if composting is not mandatory. Food scrap aggregation, compost processing and redistribution to the community has been achieved most cost effectively by the NYC Compost Project Hosted by Big Reuse. They have model food scrap drop-off sites that can serve as the model for safe aggregation moving forward. Ton per ton, this form of large scale processing is the most cost effective. We encourage you to expand this model throughout the city.

In your deliberation it may be offered that the City may be able to save money by incinerating the organic waste. Please know that viewing this organics issue from a single minded approach of cost will, in the end, create more problems in the form of externalized costs³. This is exactly the type of thinking that has led us to send our organics to the landfill to begin with. Please realize that compost can help solve other issues; reducing costs in other areas, increasing the quality of life for New Yorkers and contributing positively to reducing the effects of global climate change. Please support New Yorkers in responsibly dealing with our kitchen scraps.

Thank you for your consideration,

Smiling Hogshead Ranch

² Tautges, Nicole E., Chiartas, Jessica L., Gaudin, Amélie C. M., O'Geen, Anthony T., Herrera, Israel & Scow, Kate M. (2019, July 13). "Deep soil inventories reveal that impacts of cover crops and compost on soil carbon sequestration differ in surface and subsurface soils." *Global Change Biology*, DOI: [10.1111/gcb.14762](https://doi.org/10.1111/gcb.14762).

³ Brewer, Cale & Reynoso, Antonio. (2020, May 13). "New York City Must Keep and Expand Organics Collection, It's an Essential Service." *Gotham Gazette*, <https://www.gothamgazette.com/opinion/9390-new-york-city-must-keep-expand-organics-collection-essential-service-composting-garbage>.

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5/21/20

Good afternoon,

My name is Gina Stevensen. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to me and my family, and our NYC community at large, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Gina Stevensen

Good afternoon,

My name is Godfrey Diamond. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Organic composting has proven to be a successful initiative in under served communities like mine and the benefits are many when combined with education and jobs.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. As we go forward, it is critical to reinforce ALL energy and waste saving initiatives, especially in our youth who will be our next world leaders.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;

- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to me, I have 2 home compost bins and STILL take a considerable amount of organic waste to the GAP Greenmarket each week. I am eagerly awaiting brown bin recycling in my community and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Godfrey Diamond

Good afternoon, my name is Grace Orr. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting. As someone who came to NYC from the Pacific Northwest, I was thrilled when composting started happening here. I believe connecting to the earth even through composting, greatly adds to the quality of life. By learning to respect and help our planet we can create a world in which future generations can be proud of.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. It felt like a crippling loss when our building notified us that the compost would no longer be taken. Reinstating the program would bring hope during a time when we need it the most.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;

- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to us and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

-Grace Orr

Dear Council,

I am writing to beg you to not cut composting programs from our FY21 budget!

Both curbside collection and community composting via the NYC Compost Project are essential and visionary programs that allow New Yorkers to participate and have a role in landfill waste reduction and climate change mitigation. Furthermore, composting gives every New Yorker the opportunity to participate in the production of healthy soils – a really valuable resource for a livable future.

By cutting composting from the budget today you are taking a debt from earth, a debt from the future... and the future generations that will have no choice but to pay that debt in crisis management and more lives lost due to climate chaos.

New Yorkers care about compost!! The generation of young people cares about the future! One year may not sound like much to you, but you are taking away people's agency to participate in the solutions that we all desperately need to keep hope alive.

Where there is a will there is a way! Please choose for the future and for the people today!

Please don't cut composting from the FY21 budget!

Thank you,
Catherine Grau



**Green Map
System**

292 East Third St, #1A
New York, NY 10009 USA
Tel: +1 212 674 1631

Wendy E Brawer
Director
web@greenmap.org

GreenMap.org
Think Global, Map Local!

May 20, 2019

To members of NYC City Council

As a longtime sustainability professional, I have composted my food scraps since 1999, thanks to LES Ecology Center. We partnered on a Green Map of Composting in Manhattan which tripled the drop off rate at Union Sq and their other locations around 2008.

Since then, composting has become a true gateway to **sustainable, climate smart culture change** for tens of thousands of NYC families. NYC is on the frontline for climate change and composting is critically important behavior to reinforce! Supporting community composting organizations has a significant impact on NYC's 80x50 and other climate goals. If you care about climate change, public health and engagement, you will

Immediately restore funding to cost-effective community-based composting programs.

Pass the CORE Act and radically reduce waste and the cost to NYC of managing it.

Make composting mandatory across NYC, and allow it to be processed in NYC Parks and other locations.

SYEP matters too! Restore this budget too, please.

Find a cheaper flood protection alternative to the ESCR (such as adding a flood wall on the west side of FDR Drive) and use this money for building our youth's future as well as for composting.

Sincerely,

Wendy Brawer, Director, Green Map System

Hello, my name is Griffin Boyd – I am a community organizer helping to lead a local group of climate activists. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. A head of lettuce can take up to 25 years to decompose in a landfill. And, while decomposing in a landfill, 1 dry ton of food waste will produce around 65 kg of methane, which is between 28 - 86x more potent than carbon dioxide. Eliminating composting options for the city would be a devastating blow to the environment.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;

- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the importance of these resources to our community, and hope the Council ensures that they are not left behind in the budget process. This pandemic is a perfect example of why we need to listen to scientists and work on tackling problems before it's too late. Let's recognize the irony of expediting an existential threat while trying to avoid another.

Thank you.

To: Honorable Margarette Chin
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

I live on the Lower East Side and my name is Guido Hartray. Over the past years I and my neighbors have learned to separate our compostables as well as our recyclables. Initially taking them to a drop off site provided by the Lower East Side Ecology Center and eventually by DSNY's brown bins. It has been disheartening for compostable pick-up in brown bins to be interrupted- -IT MEANS WE NEED COMMUNITY COMPOSTING MORE THAN EVER.

Over the past years the city and a constellation of community groups have made an effort to educate us about handling waste responsibly- -teaching us to care about how much waste we create and where it goes.


We do not want a city where people stop caring.

Community Composting is an important effort with a real impact and a symbolic importance. Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,


Guido Hartray
385 Grand Street
NYC NY 10002

To My Hardworking Elected Officials,

I'm writing to urge you to continue to fund the nonprofits GrowNYC, the NYC Compost Project and support other compost programs around the city. With the environment in such a precarious state on the route to permanent, irreversible and devastating destruction we can't afford to regress by cutting the city's composting programs that attempt to mitigate these effects. Thank you for taking the time to read this, I hope you will do the right thing for the environment and New Yorkers.

Sincerely,
Hannah Antalek
hannahantalek@gmail.com
518-225-1292

We desperately need to maintain funding for community composting. In this time of crisis- jobs that are responsible, educational, and community driven are more important than ever. In my years of involvement with community composting I've met decent New Yorkers from every age, race, and creed. Their common quality is caring. Why would we take away something that brings people together? Why would we take away something that helps people care? Why would we take away something that makes New York City the vanguard of waste management? Please don't set back these advancements three decades.

Harrison Weiss

To: New York City Council Members
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

I am writing to ask that you please continue to fund NYC's community composting and zero waste outreach programs.

We can choose to come out of this pandemic stronger, and headed in the right direction for our residents, our economy and our earth. Maintaining composting programs in NYC takes in the right direction.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost.

We need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Heather Kolb
Hroitb@aol.com

Good afternoon, my name is Heather Norton. I live in Brooklyn and worked hard to convert my entire building to begin composting first at our Farmer's Market and then with the curbside pickup. I believe that city run curbside composting is absolutely essential to a sustainable future, especially in an urban environment, where we generate so much waste and do not have alternative ways to lower our carbon footprint individually. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;

- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to all of us who benefit from living in this incredible city and want to support sustainability in our lives here together, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process. I share the larger goals below and hope that you do as well:

- Short-term solution: immediately restore funding to community-based composting programs (which can be done with the Executive Budget)
- Medium-term solution: pass the CORE Act, which was introduced last week by Council Members Antonio Reynoso and Keith Powers
- Long-term solution: make composting mandatory across NYC, like recycling is. With more people participating, composting will actually become a source of income for the city, rather than an expense. If you are not familiar, the case for this is laid out very well in [this op-ed](#) from Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer and Council Member Antonio Reynoso.

Thank you.

Heather Norton

11 Schermerhorn St.

Brooklyn, NY 11201

Good afternoon, name is Heather Page. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

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- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and

- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our neighborhood and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Heather Page

Dear members of City Council,

Mayor DeBlasio's decision to stop curbside composting in New York City is advised and shortsighted. It would make much more sense to implement mandatory organics collection. Ultimately, this would save the city millions of dollars, and create a far more sustainable model that looks toward the future, rather triaging to balance our current budget. If we stop our composting initiative for 14 months, it will take five years for our citizens to get back into the habit. Anyone who has lived in the city since mayor Bloomberg's tenure is aware of this, because he stopped our recycling collection as part of a budget plan. We do not have five years! Do you really think the perils that await us because of our changing climate and unsustainable habits are going to sit back and wait? This is another instance of elected officials damning our children's future. Shame on you!

khiggins@townschool.org

My name is Hila, and I would like to respond to the news that the city is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. I grew up on Mercer St. in SoHo. mountains of trash bags on the side walk my whole life. Rats made my neighborhood famous before fashion did. The rats are still holding it down tho. I never grew up thinking about waste or where those bags go, honestly, I grew up completely used to and unfazed by city grime. No issue for me.

Only after graduating from NYU in 2014 did I learn that I could take my food scraps to the Union Square Grow NYC drop off site, I have since learned that these programs and many more have been a part of the city for decades and I just had no idea. Honestly I don't even remember what got me switched, It just seemed like a no brainer. "So you're telling me... all this wet, gonna get mouldy and smelly, organic waste, that I'm accumulating.... I can just freeze that shit... and give it to someone to turn into soil? Great. I'll do that. So in 2014, right after I graduated from NYU, I started biking frozen bags of scraps from Spring st to 17th street, and It felt great. Mainly because it made it so that 80% of my trash was recyclable, and the other 20% was dry plastic and styrofoam.

This simple act has made a tremendous amount of impact on my life. To the point where I learned how to make my own composting system and diverted over 1000lbs of organic waste from the landfill. This project is documented with The Strongest Foundation and with generous help and consultation from BKROT.

When you learn the science behind composting, it really seems like something every society should strive to do. It is also a great injustice to the black and brown communities who have waste facilities near where they live that pollute the air and cause all sorts of health issues, composting decreases air pollution at waste sites and is a building block towards a green economy and just society. The solution also provides a valuable resource (in the form of compost) for revitalizing soils and sequestering carbon.

When I moved to Bushwick in 2019, I wasn't sure how I was going to compost. To my extreme delight, there was a Grow NYC drop off site on Wyckoff and Troutman, a few blocks away.

Please bring back the compost program, expand it and make it available to every corner of the city. Show the United States where NYC stands with environmental action. Now more than ever it is important to take a stand.

I have been composting in NYC for the last 6 years. I used to bike freezer-stored food scraps from SoHo to the Union Square, but most recently I have been composting at the Grow NYC drop off site on Wyckoff and Troutman.

There are many many reasons to keep the compost program. But something I can give as a person who grew up in lower-manhattan, nothing would make me prouder than to see my city go green. Pausing the program is a big mistake. We need NY to be leading the green movement in the United States.

Ecological study teaches time and time again that biodiversity gives health to the ecosystem. And NYC is diverse. When NY does something, it shows the world it can be done. 8 million people composting, green roofs, a closed food system, what can we achieve if we set our minds to it?

Please bring back the compost program, expand it and make it available to every corner of the city. Send the message that NYC is working towards green resilience. Especially now when we get to restructure and rethink our ways. The NYC composting efforts made a huge difference, the people want change, we want clean air and clean water. Composting is a fundamental part of that vision.

This is my testimony.

Hila Perry
83 Mercer St.
NYC, 10012

To: Honorable Finance Committee Members
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

My name is Hope Ellis and I am truly disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. I have been taking my food scraps to the drop-off at 145th and Edgecombe Ave for the last two years. I live in a building that does not participate in the Curbside Composting program, though I have asked them to consider it. I was so happy to have another option for keeping my food waste out of landfills. In the months since the City has suspended food scrap collection at drop-off sites, I have struggled to contain my roommate's and my food scraps, storing them in the freezer while discussing options with neighbors on Nextdoor—could we use a neighbor's Curbside Composting bin meanwhile? Then we heard that the Curbside Composting program was also being suspended. Just before that program ended, a neighbor found a very temporary solution—the Whole Foods on 125th was still collecting food scraps, and confirmed that their brown bin was still being serviced by DSNY. Immediately after work, I packed up 5 bags of compost and walked, masked, from 147th to 125th to drop it off. (I wanted to leave the subways, buses, and Lyfts to essential workers.) Now my food scraps are once again piling up in my freezer—it is breaking my heart to throw my food scraps in the trash after years of diligently composting, and it is unacceptable for the City to leave us with no other options.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Hope Ellis

507 W. 147th St. #9,
New York, NY 10031

Concerning NYC Compost Project and partners, and GrowNYC

My name is Howard Polivy, and I am a member of the Board of Directors of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation, a NYS Public Authority, although I write in my individual capacity. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not ruin its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years. These continued efforts will, most importantly, maintain program visibility and build more general acceptance and compliance.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. I have witnessed the leveraged impacts of these programs in my local Roosevelt Island community. Since the programs' food scrap collection began, hundreds of Local residents diverted 133,000 lbs. of food scraps from landfill. Valuable compost was returned to neighborhood landscaping, school gardens and tree pits to amend the soil. These actions follow sustained efforts from all sectors of the community, especially families and youth.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to Roosevelt Island, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Howard Polivy
hpolivy@me.com
212-362-2389 cell

I am disturbed to learn that the Mayor's proposed budget includes eliminating opportunities for composting in the City because I believe such a move would be a short-sighted and retrograde step. New York City has made great progress over recent years in recycling food scraps and yard waste into locally-useable compost while at the same time keeping a significant portion of the City's waste out of landfills.

I understand that the Administration aims to save \$28 million by eliminating all funding for composting organic waste and for recycling education and outreach; within the total, the NYC Compost project and GrowNYC together cost about \$7 million. The amounts involved seem almost trivial in the context of the City's overall budget and such savings can surely be found elsewhere without such damaging effects. These proposed cuts would jeopardize the attainment of the City's indispensable Climate Justice and Zero Waste goals and, from a broader perspective, the savings may be more apparent than real. The City will instead have to transport this relatively heavy waste to increasingly scarce and distant landfills, increasing transportation costs and generating pollution and greenhouse gasses. Once dumped, the waste will produce methane, itself a particularly potent greenhouse gas. Such non-financial 'externalities' may be dismissed, but they will impact, however minimally, the well-being of a large number of citizens. Landfills are also a nimbyish way of addressing the City's waste problem. The City, and all its individual inhabitants, should become more, not less, socially responsible and deal with waste locally. In this case, in an era where distance seems likely to become a greater challenge, waste can be transformed into usable compost to grow food on urban farms and in community gardens, further reducing transportation costs and enhancing the City's food security.

The City has expended considerable resources over the years in building infrastructure, creating networks, training human resources and, above all, fostering community participation in the composting program. This momentum must not be lost. If the City is to strive for its Zero Waste goals, composting will have to be part of the solution so that, if scrapped now, the system will have to be not only re-built but expanded. This will cost both financial resources and also, importantly, time. Discontinuing the program at this juncture would therefore be a false economy - 'penny wise and pound foolish'.

In the City's short-term and long-term interests, I would therefore urge the City Council to restore the NYC Compost Project and GrowNYC, rather than abandoning the progress made over years. A comparatively small amount of funding would ensure the continuation of the existing 170 food-scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs, six community composting facilities and eight non-profit organizations that provide organics collection and processing services. To ensure that these activities yield the maximum benefit to future generations, the City should also continue community education and outreach to ensure that all New Yorkers, particularly school children, understand why and how to compost, as well as to recycle more generally.

Ian Kinniburgh

Good afternoon, name is Ian Patrick, a born-and-raised New Yorker. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. It is important that global leaders like New York City lead the way in helping conserve energy, reduce waste & lessen carbon emissions.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I am asking the City Council to ensure that the City at the very least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

While I would like to request that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts, I appreciate that the City now has significant unexpected expenses due to the COVID-19 pandemic. So, what I am asking is that the cuts proposed to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a very long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases. Again, it is pivotal that New York City is a global leader in addressing climate change.

In the grand scheme of the annual City budget, this is a relatively small amount of funding and it would go a very long way. Restoring this funding would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;

- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We have one Earth and we need to keep it healthy for as long as possible. Please consider restoring the funding for organics recycling and composting.

Thank you for your consideration, and for all that you do for the City of New York.

Sincerely,

Ian Patrick

Irina Arnaut
3515 80th Street
Jackson Heights, NY 11372
irina.arnaut@gmail.com

Thursday, May 21, 2020

Dear members of the Committee on Finance:

I urge you to please not cut funding for the compost program. It is essential, and possibly the easiest and most accessible way to make a huge positive impact on our environment.

I live in Jackson Heights, and before the lockdown, I would bring compost to our farmers market every week. I know that many of my neighbors did the same. The 6-12 bins of compost collected at the market testify to the program's immense popularity.

It's also been so valuable as a teaching tool for our 3 year old daughter - she gets to learn about the lifecycle of food, about organic and inorganic waste, and about the environment around her. Please please restore funding to the program, it's easy and it's so useful.

Sincerely,

Irina Arnaut

Hello,

My name is Isabella Reese and I have been a resident of NYC for one year. In that time, I was an employee for GrowNYC in their Greenmarket program and their Zero Waste department. I also hold a degree in Environmental Science from the University of Maryland in College Park. I will keep this short: composting is an essential service. My experience as an employee with GrowNYC showed me that NYC residents cannot put a price on this service. Compost not only would reduce the burden for DSNY employees who collect garbage already, but there are numerous studies that cite community and city-lead composting as a way to connect families, improves health of the neighborhood by reducing solid waste, and encourages residents of all ages to become environmental stewards for their neighborhoods. If composting were to be available again, it should begin with curbside collection, since this is a low-contact method of collecting scraps. Otherwise, there need to be better procedures for gardens and other public drop off facilities to collect food scraps from residents, because it IS possible for composting to continue in the city while respecting social distancing. Residents want compost, and they will do anything in order to make that so. I hope that this message reaches you well and that it encourages the rest of the Council to begin reinstating composting services as cases of COVID in the city go down.

Thank you, I trust that you will all make the best decision--
Isabella C Reese

Hello,

My name is Isabella Vitti and I live in Bed Stuy in Brooklyn. I am concerned about the suspension of the organics recycling program, both the drop-off sites, community composting, and the DSNY curbside program.

I drop off my compost at a GROWN NYC site at a farmers market about once a week. My household garbage is hugely reduced as a result. I've been doing this for a few years and it has become an essential part of living a less wasteful life. My neighborhood in Bed Stuy doesn't have brown bins, or I would enthusiastically use those! It also inspired me to start a compost system at my office where my coworkers and I saved our food scraps and a volunteer dropped it off at the farmers market. Eventually, my coworkers grew to appreciate composting so much that we convinced our office to sign up for a paid food scrap pick up service.

Composting is an investment in the future of our planet and our city. We should be expanding it, not ceasing to support it. I would appreciate it if you could champion organics collection, and thank you for your support thus far.

Best,

Isabella Vitti

Good afternoon, name is Ivana Nitzova. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. I am a civil engineer working on projects for city agencies that actively prioritize the 2050 sustainability goals laid out in the OneNYC plan, and slashing composting funding is in direct opposition to these goals. The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, I am asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. I am a member of a 615Green, a 12,000 square foot community garden in Park Slope that has composting set up already and could receive compost from the surrounding community -- they just need funding to be able to organize and implement the program. Community gardens like mine could fill the void until DSNY compost pickups begin again, and they receive their funding through GrowNYC. The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;

- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;

- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and

- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle -- such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this task and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Ivana Nitzova

Hello, my name is Ivy, and I'm 12 years old. Please take the time to consider my plea, as my generation will inherit this amazing city — all of its beauty, *and all* of its problems, as well as the planet. Therefore, NYC kids, (and kids everywhere) need your help right now in order to preserve and protect our future.

Problems are plentiful right now, but a big one is climate change. Even in a pandemic, we need to think beyond the next grocery shop or online meeting, to our planet's future. One of the most impactful actions an individual can take in the fight against climate change is to compost! This is why we need the NYC compost service. Most people think that when you put your food scraps in the trash can, they simply biodegrade in the landfill . . . BUT: that's very wrong, and a vital mistake.

To break down properly, organic waste needs air which creates *aerobic* digestion. When it gets compacted into a landfill, there isn't any oxygen which results in *anaerobic* digestion—and this is very bad news. Anaerobic digestion releases methane, a gas that is exponentially worse for the planet than carbon dioxide. Methane is 80 times more powerful and efficient contributing to climate change over 20 years than carbon dioxide. Besides the toxic gases it releases, organic waste pollutes groundwater, soil, (due to the harmful toxins created when mixed with trash), and eats up unnecessary space in landfills.

According to a New York Times article in 2017 on New York's organic waste:

- There are 14 million tons of general waste thrown out per year.
- Food waste is “ . . . the largest portion of the trash”.
- It costs the city \$400 million to ship to other landfills and incinerators.

Compost doesn't just prevent big problems, it gives big benefits as well! Often referred to by gardeners and farmers as black gold, it greatly enhances soil, creating healthier, happier, more nutritious plants without the need for chemical fertilizer. Chemical fertilizer costs money, washes off immediately, and runs into the water, soil, and groundwater, generally polluting the earth. Compost becomes a part of the soil, making it nutrient-rich, properly compacted, moisturized, and healthy all around.

Most people don't have the time, space, or resources in New York City to compost. Backyards are limited and most people don't have access to their own outdoor space. You can, of course, start a cardboard box compost in your home, but again, that takes up resources and isn't efficient in getting rid of large amounts of compost.

The conclusion is that we need NYC's compost service. It is as essential as transportation, food, or health during this time, essential as a bee is to the flower of New

York City: saving NYC's future, and the whole world's. This will make your city cleaner, more beautiful, prouder, and more aware: it is one of the largest individual impacts we can make in the fight for climate change during the pandemic, and in general. We need your compost vote.

Thank you for taking the time to care about the city's opinion as well as mine. I hope that together we can change our city for the better.

Good morning,

My name is Jacey. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Composting is important to me as an NYC citizen and an environmentalist.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our NYC community, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Jacey

To: Committee on Finance
Re: Community Composting

My name is Jackson Chabot and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. As a resident of Bedford Stuyvesant for the past three years, we have not had access to curbside pick up. However, in that time I have been a frequent user of the compost drop off service at Union Square, near my office, as well as at Grand Army Plaza on the weekends. Both of these locations have given me an option to keep my food waste out of landfills.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. While I recognize the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise. Our collective path forward, towards climate and environmental justice, must include city funded and supported composting. It is apparent now more than ever that our future depends on a green economy with meaningful green jobs.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Jackson Chabot
Treasurer, American Planning Association New York Metro Chapter
249 Vernon Avenue, Apt. 2L

My name is Jacob Shipley and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. Part of why I love living in NYC is the care for the environment and the understanding that Climate Change is a real and immediate threat to our lives.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Jacob Shipley

436 Fort Washington Ave. New York, NY 10033

SAVE COMMUNITY COMPOSTING in NYC

To: Honorable Ydanis Rodríguez
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

My name is Jacquie Martin and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. I have been taking my food scraps to the Dyckman Street Compost & Inwood Greenmarket for 2 years. I live in an apartment that didn't have access to the Curbside Composting program, and I was happy to have another option for keeping my food waste out of landfills. I am a member of the Ring Garden. We have a small composting initiative that's been overwhelmed since the City suspended the Curbside Composting and Food Scrap Drop-off programs. People in our neighborhood are desperate for a way to compost, and we can't safely keep up with that demand. We need the City to step up and honor its commitments to Zero Waste by funding community composting rather than leaving this essential work to volunteers like me.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Martin
Ring Garden Member
103 Thayer Street
New York, NY 10040

SAVE COMMUNITY COMPOSTING in NYC

May 20, 2020

To whom it may concern:

My name is Jaime Weisberg and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. Up until the pandemic, I would save all my compost scraps in my freezer and bring them to a community composting site, either near my work (an hour by train) at Bowling Green, or here in my neighborhood composting site at the Jackson Heights farmers market. It pains me to have to throw out my scraps right now.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Jaime Weisberg
33-24 93rd St. #1P, Jackson Heights

Additional Information about the Proposed Cuts

The Mayor's proposed FY21 budget eliminates all funding for Community Composting (\$3.5 million) and Zero Waste Outreach (\$2.9 million). These budget lines fund NYC Compost Project at Big Reuse, Brooklyn Botanic Garden, Earth Matter, Lower East Side Ecology Center, NY Botanical Garden, Queens Botanical Garden, and GrowNYC Zero Waste Programs.

Examples of Personal Stories

- My **[family/household]** has been participating in the Curbside Composting program for **[X]** years. Separating our food scraps and yard waste for composting has significantly cut down on the amount of trash we generate, made our home cleaner, and become a part of our daily lives.
- I have been taking my food scraps to the **[Your Food Scrap Drop-off Site Here]** for **[X]** years. I live in a **[high rise building / neighborhood]** that didn't have access to the Curbside Composting program, and I was happy to have another option for keeping my food waste out of landfills.
- In the months since the City has suspended Curbside Composting and Food Scrap Drop-off sites, I've had no options for composting my food waste. I have been storing it in my freezer in the hope that these programs will return, but I have long-since run out of space. It breaks my heart to throw my food scraps in the trash after years of diligently composting, and it is not acceptable for the City to continue these cuts for the next year or more.
- One of the things I love most about the City's composting programs is that I've been able to use the finished compost that I helped make. I received finished compost from **[Organization]** that I used to **[grow food/grow flowers/care for a street tree...]** in my **[apartment/terrace/backyard/community garden/neighborhood]**.
- I have volunteered with the NYC Compost Project Hosted by **[Organization]** and was encouraged to see all the job opportunities in the field of organics recycling and urban agriculture. My experience volunteering helped me secure a green job doing **[description of work]**.
- I am a Master Composter certified by NYC Compost Project Hosted by **[Organization]**, and have been volunteering at my community compost site **[name]** for **[X]** years. It has changed my life. Making compost got me involved in growing food for myself, which meant fewer trips to the grocery store and introduced me to other ways to reduce the waste in my life.
- I am a member of **[Community Garden]**. We have a small composting initiative that's been overwhelmed since the City suspended the Curbside Composting and Food Scrap Drop-off programs. People in our neighborhood are desperate for a way to compost, and we can't safely keep up with that demand. We need the City to step up and honor its commitments to Zero Waste by funding community composting rather than leaving this essential work to volunteers like me.

To: m35@council.nyc.gov

CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov

Re: Budget Cuts - Waverly Avenue City Owned Brownstones (x2) and Composting

My name is James Anstey, I live on Waverly Avenue in Brooklyn by the Navy Yard and Myrtle Avenue and I am shocked to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. My whole family and our Waverly Avenue Block Association are committed to composting, reducing waste and helping reduce our carbon footprint.

I understand the city has a budget short fall due to CV19. Please note that we have two (2) abandoned city owned brownstone houses on our block at 99 Waverly Avenue and 110 Waverly Avenue that have been empty for over a decade and are boarded up. They attract homeless people and drug addicts making it a dangerous block for families. Why not sell them for over \$2 million each (current market rates for houses in Clinton Hill) and use this money to help reduce your shortfall?

Now more than ever we need a **Green New Deal** that supports community composting programs in NYC to focus on the longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs. Sell the two vacant City owned brownstones at 99 and 110 Waverly Avenue.

Sincerely,

James Anstey
83 Waverly Avenue, Brooklyn, NY, 11205

Composting

May 21, 2020

I know that it is critical to discuss the points about composting today.

I have been composting for several years, dropping it off on the way to work with the LES ecology center, then when they closed, the City.

Composting is important to me to keep the rat population down as well as reducing my need to empty the garbage more often.

Regards,

James Knapp

Hello,

I am writing to ask you to preserve and expand New York City's compost program. This program is vital to the sustainability of our city. Although New York is facing a myriad of challenges right now, it's incredibly essential that we do not lose sight the city's long-term needs. The composting program is an essential step for providing education to residents about sustainability and reducing the city's overall waste production. It has become a vital part of our daily lives, and will become even more essential in the future. Thank you.

Jamison Heldrich

I demand to consider the consequences of your actions because composting is essential to our environment and community.

[With the new budget, Mayor Bill de Blasio is about to end all composting in NYC for at least the next fiscal year.](#)

There are short term and long term consequences to this.

Short term, for as long as composting is suspended, NYC will send more waste to landfills and incinerators.

Currently, NYC composts 308,600* pounds per day. With composting suspended, these 308,600 pounds will instead need to go to landfills and incinerators, where they will release greenhouse gases.

Long term, it likely will take years for our composting programs to recover. We have a precedent for this.

After 9/11, NYC temporarily stopped recycling glass and plastic to save money. It reintroduced plastic recycling in 2003 and glass in 2004, but it took years for the capture rates to rebound to pre-9/11 numbers.

Composting is essential to our environment and community. We cannot afford to regress.

If you care about composting in NYC, please let Mayor Bill de Blasio know.

*According to the [Department of Sanitation's latest annual report](#), DSNY collects 308,600 lb of organics (food scraps, yard waste, and other material) for recycling (composting or anaerobically digesting) every day.

Jana Littleton



TESTIMONY TO RESTORE FUNDING FOR NYC COMPOST PROJECT/GROW NYC AND
IN SUPPORT OF THE CORE ACT (INTRO. 1943, INTRO. 1944), May 21, 2020

My name is Jane Selden, and I'm here representing 350NYC, an environmental activist organization focusing on local NYC climate issues. We are a grassroots climate group that depends on volunteers to advocate for political and social solutions to drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

First, I would like to voice our opposition to the Mayor's plan to cut funding for the NYC Compost Project and Grow NYC. As curbside recycling was suspended on May 4th, these community-based organizations, which operate six compost-processing facilities as well as 170 food scrap drop-off sites throughout the five boroughs, have taken on an even more crucial role. The services they provide are now the only way NYC residents can continue to recycle organic waste. We can see from the huge public outcry when the organic waste recycling cuts were announced that New Yorkers recognize the vital importance of composting; they clearly view it as a priority and an essential service, and the City must as well.

We are highly aware of the daunting budget crisis the Mayor and the City Council are grappling with. However, we can't forget that we are also facing a looming climate crisis with only a short period of time to take action in order to mitigate its worst effects. Diverting waste from landfill is a key component in addressing the climate emergency. 1/3 of the city's waste stream is composed of organic material. If it is composted, it has the environmental benefit of sequestering carbon. But, with the elimination of city-funded organics recycling, all of this organic material will now enter landfills, where it produces methane, a greenhouse gas 30 times more potent than carbon dioxide.

We also need to recognize that most landfills and waste transfer stations are located in low-income communities, where this methane enters residents' lungs, causing serious and sometimes deadly respiratory problems. It is these same communities that have generally not had access to organic recycling programs. The curbside organics recycling program only reached about 30% of the City's neighborhoods, primarily serving the more affluent areas. Intro. 1943 of the CORE (Community Organics and Recycling Empowerment) Act, sponsored by Council Member Keith Powers, would address this inequity by mandating the establishment of at least three drop-off sites in every community district across the five boroughs by June of 2021. Intro. 1944 of the CORE Act, sponsored by Council Member Antonio Reynoso,

would ensure that all New Yorkers are able to continue to safely dispose of electronic and hazardous waste. It is, in fact, prohibited by state law for these materials to enter the general waste stream.

We fully support both continuing to fund GrowNYC and the NYC Compost Project and passage of the CORE Act as important measures that will keep organic and e-waste recycling going during the current budget crisis. However, ultimately, we need to restore curbside pick-up and make organics recycling mandatory, as has been done with great success in cities like Seattle and San Francisco.

Twenty years ago, after 9/11, plastics and glass recycling was suspended in the wake of another financial crisis, and the City's recycling rate has never fully recovered. Today we no longer have the luxury of time in ensuring a sustainable future. Let's not make the same mistake twice.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jane Selden
350NYC

Good afternoon, name is Jane Wolterding. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our communities, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Janee Graver
467 Central Park W
New York, NY 10025

I live on the top of Central Park, 107th and CPW and there are so many reasons i feel strongly about our representatives choosing to **continue** and not cut **the composting program in NYC**. I do not represent any organization or political position - I am a New Yorker who owns my apartment, and as a New Yorker I am proud of the program that the city has run. I am glad that my taxes are used for this program. Since COVID, I miss the composting program and especially now --- with people eating at home - I seriously want the program to be restored.

The NYC composting program already makes a small amount while doing a good thing. It has the capacity to raise millions for the city. ([See how composting can be a profitable endeavor, here](#)). It is a model for the world of what a city can do. The program gives jobs to many, and it also provides an outlet for many.

And, the rats are back because the program has been cut. When compostable material is put out with trash, the rats are happy to break in. Consider also please what it costs to eradicate the rats.

This is a pivotal moment, when you can make a difference in the health of New Yorkers and the health of the city itself. Please restore our composting program.

Thank you for doing the right thing!
janee

--

Janee Graver
ducks in a row, inc
732 241 4557
janeegraver@gmail.com

May 21st, 2020

Good afternoon,

My name is Janet Fish. I have been taking my food scraps to the New York City Compost at Bowling Green for the past year. Composting my food scraps has positively changed my life. By composting my food scraps, my garbage can no longer has decaying odors, it no longer attracts bugs and I need to empty my garbage can much much less often, saving on the use of the plastic bag that lines my garbage can. I have also used the electronic recycling for my old electronics, rather than adding these toxic items to the landfill. I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate financial support for composting and e-waste recycling programs. The composting program and the electronic recycling is a major boon for our ecology that is suffering on many fronts.

These cuts will directly affect the LES Ecology Center together with the NYC Compost Project partners and GrowNYC Zero Waste programs. The cuts represent approximately \$7 million, and if restored can continue to provide citywide access to these crucial Zero Waste programs. It's essential to retain these programs so as not to lose the existing recycling infrastructure, knowledge and habits that will be difficult to rebuild once eliminated.

Cutting these programs will reverse the progress that we have made by diverting food scraps and toxic electronic waste from landfills. When in a landfill, food waste is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions and electronics leach heavy metals and toxins into our soil and waterways. We can't let the current budget crisis allow us to lose sight of the looming climate crisis and we must continue to divert these materials from landfills to reach our sustainability goals. Cutting these programs affects those who are employed by the programs.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future to continue. **These programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference.** We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to community compost and e-waste collection programs. Protect our environment!

Sincerely,

Janet Fish

janetfish@earthlink.net

Composting is the future. We need to make bold moves towards being a sustainable city. San Francisco's city composting program turns a profit. We can do the same if we invest in it now. This is not the time to go backwards, we need to invest in what will make our city be able to survive.

If we need to generate money now from waste we should charge for collection that is going to landfills. That is the only policy that makes sense.

Janine Lariviere

It would be a very devastating blow for the Composting Program in the city to have it's funding cut, whether it be temporary or permanent.

I have taken great pride in the fact that NYC is one of the cities at the forefront of sustainability and composting within the United States. One of my biggest lamentations is that I have never been able to see the program expand to include all zip codes within the 5 boroughs.

Up until now I have been waiting for an expansion of the Composting Program into my zip code, which is 11237 in Brooklyn. However, I freely utilize the program whilst I spend time at my partner's home, which is in the 11385 zip code, in Queens.

As a vegetarian, whose diet mainly consists of plant based and compostable materials, it hurts my heart to have to dispose of my waste in a traditional receptacle, whose ultimate destination is a landfill. As a city of this incredible size, it is highly unsustainable to continue to put this compostable material into landfills, because as it decomposes it generates methane, which is a greenhouse gas and it is harmful to our planet and future generations. A composting program allows us to turn these wastes from natural and organic materials into a nutrient rich substance that aids and benefits the agricultural process. I also believe that it is helpful for everyday, average citizens to be aware of where their food goes, just as much as it is important for them to know where it comes from. A composting program allows everyday citizens the right and the opportunity to take part in their future and to help shape the world that they would like to see their children grow up in.

Please reconsider pulling funding, whether temporary or permanent, from the Composting Program in NYC.

Thank you.

I urge the City Council of New York to restore funding for GrowNYC's compost program, and the NYC Compost Project. The Council should also pass the CORE Act, and consider making composting mandatory, as recycling is now.

Thank You,

Jason Fitzsimmons
City Council District 34



Cornell University

Cornell Waste Management Institute

Dept. of Soils and Crop Sciences

817 Bradfield Hall

Ithaca, NY 14853

607-255-1187

cwmi@cornell.edu

<http://cwmi.css.cornell.edu>

The Hon. Corey Johnson, Speaker New York City Council

250 Broadway

New York, NY 10007

Dear Speaker Johnson:

Re: Composting in NYC: NYC Compost Project

Composting organic material including food waste in any city is a daunting challenge. NYC made the commitment to meet that challenge and said to the world; “Watch Us”, we can do this and set the standard. Building the infrastructure to make this happen was complex, bare bones and well throughout. DOS, DSNY, haulers, micro-haulers, large scale composters, community farms and gardens, gardeners, The vast NYC Botanical “educational” Gardens, community composters, master gardeners and composters, grassroots and nonprofit composters are part of the solution. However, the most important key to this programs’ success is communication and education, without these building blocks and strategies there is no conveyance of information, of compost bins, of community energy and no program.

Cutting any part of these programs will reverse the progress that we have made by diverting food scraps and about 60% of our organic waste stream from landfills. When in a landfill, food waste and other organic waste are a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. We can’t let the current budget crisis allow us to lose sight of the looming climate crisis and we must continue to divert these materials from landfills to reach our sustainability goals.

Cutting these programs will again turn the clocks backwards and the great progress that has been made will be expensive and almost impossible to restart. After more than 20 years of composting outreach and education, the NYC Compost Project is working to increase the number of composting opportunities available to New Yorkers and continues to shape the landscape of composting in New York City. From in home vermicomposting to Bokashi, (or Vokashi as we know it in NYC) to small and large bins or windrows to Freshkills’ facility; all are integral components of how NYC Composts! The attached posters feature many of the programs that we are addressing, where NYC is making and using compost while building community.

When COVID-19 hit and devastated NY and isolated us, all I could think of is we, need to plant seeds and grow food as so many people have become less food secure. NYC diverts organics to produce compost to grow healthy food and care for all! The Mayor's proposed budget would decimate these organizations, who we have watched as they built momentum in New York City for significant diversion of food scraps from landfills to soil enriching compost. New York is now seen as one of the cities' leading in composting and healthy soil development through these efforts. Healthy Soils = Healthy Communities!

Cornell Waste Management Institute (CWMI) at Cornell in Ithaca, NY supports the efforts of the NYC Compost Project which was founded in 1993 by the NYC Department of Sanitation's Bureau of Waste Prevention, Reuse, and Recycling (now the Bureau of Recycling and Sustainability) to provide compost outreach and education to NYC residents, institutions, and businesses. CWMI urges the New York City Council to retain programs that the NYC Compost Project and Grow NYC nurtured over the years and that funds for community education be re-instituted to keep composting active in the city until DSNY's program can be funded in 2021.

Respectfully Submitted,



Jean Bonhotal, Director & Organic Material Specialist

Hannah Schaler, Extension Associate, Healthy Soils, Healthy Communities

Mary Schwarz, Organic Material Specialist

Waylon Partridge, Program Assistant

Rachel Kelchlin, Program Assistant

of Cornell Waste Management Institute

Attachments:

[Compost Use for Improved Soil: Make it Use it Urban Applications \[PDF\] \(6.370Mb\)](#)

[Compost Use on Turf for Improved Soil \[PDF\] \(883.1Kb\)](#)



Compost Use for Improved Soil

Make it and Use it: Urban Environments

Earth Matter:
Make it Turned windrow
Use it Vegetable production



Fresh Kills:
Make it Turned windrow
Use it Top dressing for landscape beds at golf course (left)
 Amend on-site soils for turf establishment (below)
 Photos courtesy of WeCare Compost



Earth Matter: Make it
 2-yard bin; passively aerated

Use it Vegetable gardening



Red Hook Community Farm: Make it Compost windrows created and maintained entirely by solar, wind, and human power
Use it Community Farm



NYC Compost Project hosted by NY Botanical Garden:
Make it Compost curing area
Use it Street tree planting



LESEC: Make it In-vessel (hot-phase): alternating layers food waste and sawdust.



Turn out to windrows: red wiggler worms finish the job



Use it
 Street tree planting
 Photos courtesy of NYC Compost Project hosted by LESEC

St. John's University: Make it
 In vessel composting, compost tea brewer



Use it
 Apply tea to soils of tree roots and shrub planting beds in late April and September



Earth Matter: Make it
 3-bin system; passively aerated

Use it
 On-site beautification



Compost Use for Improved Soil

Compost Use on Turf

Top dressing improves seed establishment and turf quality

September 27, 2017: Due to shading and tree roots, the front lawn of this building on Cornell University's campus has trouble growing grass. Both pieces of lawn (sidewalk in between) were core aerated. The background lawn had ½" of compost spread and raked on it, while the foreground did not.

September 19, 2018: The plot where compost had been applied has less bare spots and is greener than the plot with none



Benefits of Using Compost on Turf

- **Visual Properties:** Turfgrass quality improves over time; increased grass (vs. weed) coverage and earlier spring green-up
- **Physical Properties:** The addition of compost improves the physical structure of soil (reduces bulk density increases aggregate stability and water infiltration), which in turn, promotes root development and heightens the turf's resistance to stress.
- **Chemical Properties:** increases organic matter, brings the pH of the soil closer to neutral allowing better availability of both manganese (suppression of leaf and root diseases) and iron (plays a role in spring green-up).

Find your compost here: <http://compost.css.cornell.edu/maps.html>

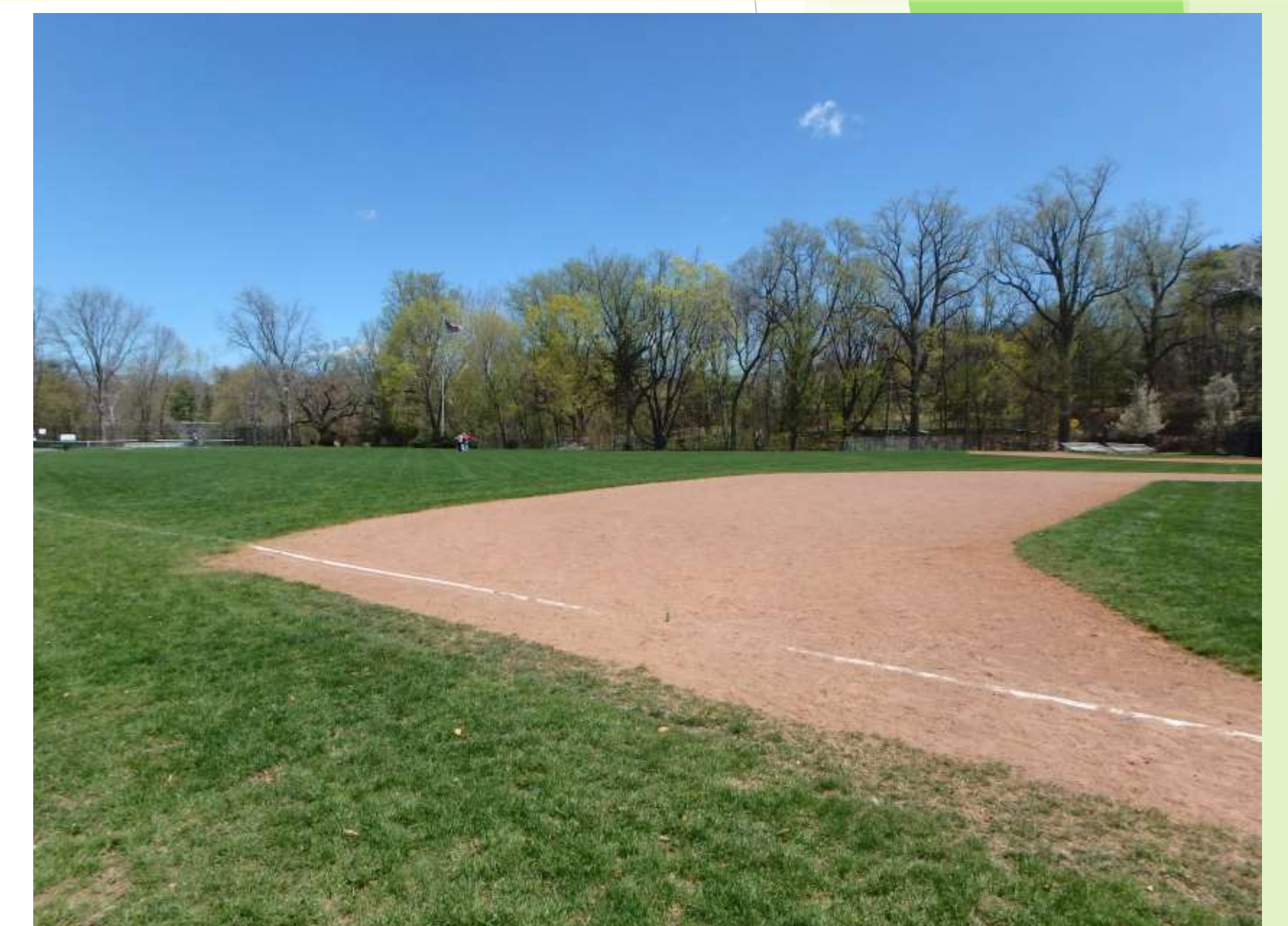
Top dressing improves playability on athletic fields



May 5, 2018: Core aeration of compost into field in front of building on Lehman College campus. Seeded on May 7



May 5, 2018: Application and core aeration of compost on bare, hard to seed spot at Lehman College. Seeded on May 7, 2018



Athletic fields are prone to compaction due to heavy traffic, use of fields when wet, and weight of vehicles on the fields. Wet and/or hard surfaces can cause injury to the turf and players.

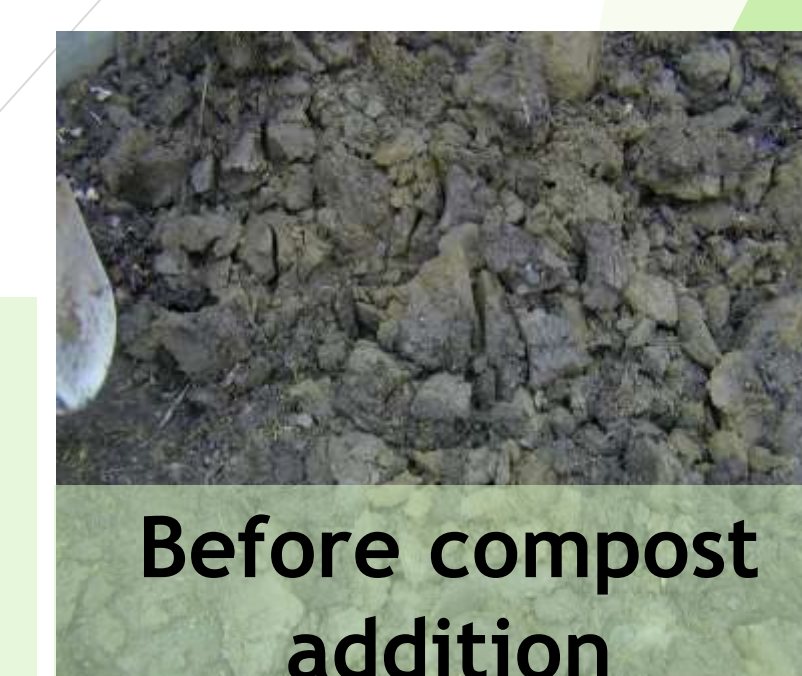
Compost Improves Highly Compacted Soils



Applied compost has settled in (this occurred starting < 1 week after application), grass seed applied within 3 days of compost application, bare patches beginning to fill in; several heavy rain events, but no pooling of rainwater.



May 24, 2018: Although birds may have consumed much of the seeds, the turf established. The site showed improved water retention and no pooling of water.



Before compost addition



After compost addition

Good afternoon,

My name is Jean-Dominique Bonnet and I am with Q Gardens in Brooklyn.

We are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored for continued community outreach and education. The cuts to both programs together represent approximately \$7 million and allows New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste, prevent this major waste stream (or potential soil amendment) from going to landfill, and waste valuable learning/training opportunities. This amount of funding enables:

- at least 8 non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, and continue employment of beneficial community work
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs to divert organics
- at least 6 community composting facilities to continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity
- the City's vital education and outreach needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

During fiscal years impacted by COVID-19, Climate Justice and Zero Waste goals are still as crucial as ever with the climate crisis advancing independent of our short-term economic circumstance. Climate issues overall began before and will continue to compound with crippling, irreversible long-term effects without action as soon as possible. Meanwhile, the multiple local benefits of the NYC Compost Project and GrowNYC have significant positive human impacts. We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our Brooklyn neighborhoods, and know the Council cannot ignore this important priority in the budget process. Thank you.

Jeanne Lurvey
340A 22nd Street
Brooklyn, NY 11215
917-309-5327
jlurvey@gmail.com

May 21, 2020

NYC Mayor's Office of Management and Budget
255 Greenwich St
New York, NY 10007

Good afternoon, my name is Jeanne Lurvey. I am an avid composter and volunteer with Earth Matters. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. According to NYC Food Policy, 34 percent of New York City's residential waste stream consists of organic waste - food scraps, food soiled paper, and yard waste. This percentage is growing consistently each year.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress the City has made in diverting food scraps, yard waste, and valuable recyclables from landfills. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach, and all composting services. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications and will be a massive setback of the City's sustainability goals.

Today, I urge the City Council to maintain residents' ability to continue recycling and composting, and not toss the significant progress we have made in diverting valuable materials from landfills and incinerators in the past few years.

I am asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with an additional expansion of funds for community outreach and education. Diverting food scraps from landfills is an achievable and net positive path to reaching not only the city's 2030 Zero Waste goals but necessary measures to mitigate climate change.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners, and to GrowNYC, together represent approximately \$7 million. Restoring this \$7M to the budget, plus some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to reduce their impact on the environment, reduce long term costs for the City, and live lives that are more environmentally responsible, without massive behavioral change (which we know can be challenging to instill!) With this funding, organic material that makes up at least 34% of the residential waste stream will be diverted from landfills. We should not waste the value of the nutrient resources in our food, and should not

waste money and resources shipping this heavy and wet material far from the City, instead of keeping it close by in composting facilities.

Restoring \$7M+ would ensure that:

- at least 8 non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as essential community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to serve their communities, allowing individuals to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least 6 community composting facilities can continue their work of processing organic waste, turning it into usable compost to amend soils and grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity;
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living; and
- individual New Yorkers who are already stressed by economic collapse and fear of infection during a global pandemic can continue to take a small daily action, making them feel connected to the world, and recognizing that small actions can make a difference.

This is an urgent request. I hope the Council ensures that this important priority is not left behind in the budget process.

Sincerely,

Jeanne M Lurvey

To: Honorable Justin Brannan (JBrannan@council.nyc.gov)

CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov

Re: Community Composting

My name is Jeanne Solomon and I would like to encourage NYC to reverse its plan to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. The City's composting program in zip code 11209 (Bay Ridge) changed my life almost 10 years ago, by allowing me to reduce my household's contributions to landfill and better adhere my daily living to my values. I had purchased a drum composter in 2009 and mostly stopped using it when the City provided composting bins and the ability to compost meat, pasta, bread, oils and other hearty food scraps beyond the produce scraps, eggshells, nut shells and coffee grounds that we were contributing to our composter. My garbage pail stopped being smelly and messy and I have been thrilled to be helping to reduce climate change from home. I had been looking forward to similar efforts citywide on the corporate side, so NYC could really make a difference. **This is NOT the place to cut corners in the midst of unprecedented climate change. It's a huge mistake and a terrible precedent for NYC, and this backsliding will make me question my commitment to NYC living, if NYC changes its commitment to fighting climate change.**

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs. **DO THE RIGHT THING.**

Sincerely,

Jeanne R. Solomon
442 77th Street #2
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11209

Save Our Compost Testimony

My name is Jeff Levy-Lyons and I live on the UWS of Manhattan. As an NYC resident and as a person of faith, I'm urging you to reinstate the community compost programs recently cut in the mayor's budget and soon thereafter, restore the curbside organics collection program.

While we are in the midst of a pandemic, with NYC being a global epicenter of the crisis, we are also in the midst of an ecological crisis which portends even greater health and economic pain and suffering. We cannot be so short-sighted that we institute regressive policies that work against the long-term health and safety of city residents.

The city's Zero Waste initiative is a noble effort that speaks volumes about the kind of city we strive to become. Cutting the composting programs that are a key part of Zero Waste is a clear violation of environmental justice principals. These programs educate future generations about sustainable living. They aid community gardens and urban farms that provide sustenance in a time of increased food insecurity. They mitigate the methane emissions into the atmosphere that make us all less safe.

This is also an issue my faith calls me to speak out on. My Jewish tradition teaches me to care for creation and to seek justice for the marginalized, the underserved, the most vulnerable. For the past 20 years, living first in Chicago and for the last 10 in NYC, my wife and I have always found some way to avoid our food scraps being diverted to landfills. This is one part of living lightly on the Earth and making it more livable for others. Being a participant and advocate for NYC's composting programs has deepened my appreciation for this amazing, progressive city. Through many city and state legislative campaigns, I've seen us move toward becoming a beacon, lighting the way for the country and the world to a more just, more sustainable future. Cutting these programs sends a horrible message to the world that these programs are luxuries that can easily be reversed, just as President Trump has shamefully modeled since taking office. They are not luxuries. They are essential examples of how to live in the world in a time of ecological crisis.

I am clear on the huge financial burden our budget seeks to address. There are so many in dire need right now and we must help them find a firm economic footing as we work to recover from the pandemic. At the same time, the choices we make in our recovery effort may be our last opportunity to blunt the worst impacts of a warming world and prepare New Yorkers for the resilience we'll need in a very short time. Funds will need to be found, hopefully through means that close the huge equity gap in our city. However, cutting sustainable living initiatives would see burgeoning community gardens wither, people in frontline communities suffer from even poorer air quality as more trucks using the waste transfer stations roll through their neighborhoods, and turn the clock back on our climate leadership, all impacts we cannot afford.

Restoring these programs in a year or two would almost certainly require many years for them to recover the momentum they currently have.

I ask you to go back to the budgeting drawing board, take cutting these programs off the table, and work towards a more forward-thinking and just recovery plan.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony.

Jeff Levy-Lyons

Good morning.

My name is Jelena Zurilo and I am with SaveOurCompost. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. It is extremely important for our planet and therefore all humans and animals to keep the natural cycle of composting which our government must support and implement as a obligatory rule.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. There are millions of people who support this program and composting means a lot to them, it's the lifestyle that you taking away from us, the lifestyle that actually makes the world better and healthier.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our community, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you,
Jelena Zurilo

To Mayor DeBlasio and the Members of the New York City Council,

I am writing today in regards to your decision to suspend or cancel the composting program to save money in the city budget.

Cutting composting to manage budget cuts as a result of CV19 is a major misstep. This is a critical issue that needs to be reconsidered. Here's why:

1. The city's own assessment indicated that composting saves money by reducing the large amounts spent to buy landfill space in other states. How will this actually save money and how much?
2. The return on composting is enormous: reducing our waste and footprint in the climate crisis, modeling a sustainable city and the possibilities for our future, supporting community gardens with rich compost and the development of public understanding and knowledge will make our city sustainable for the long haul
3. Composting was a major step taken to help the climate crisis and we do not have the time to move backward. In the wake of 9/11, recycling was stopped temporarily, also to save money. It took years for the city to return to pre 9/11 recycling levels. The same will happen here, but as the science tells us, we have no time to spare.
4. COVID19 and the Climate Crisis are related. We will be seeing more pandemics and more extreme weather if we don't address the climate crisis. Becoming a model sustainable city is in the best interest of all our citizens.
5. We realize there is an impending financial crisis due to COVID-19. Investing in sustainable jobs and a sustainable city are the only long-term viable methods to address the finances. Composting is an critical element of the solution.

Best regards,

Jen Neal
317 Greene Ave 1b
Brooklyn NY 11238

Hello, my name is Jenna Frasier and I am a resident of Astoria, Queens. I'm writing today to urge the City Council to ensure that we at least fund and maintain some food scrap recycling option for New Yorkers such as the successful community drop-off sites run by nonprofit organizations like Grow NYC, BigReuse, and the Lower East Side Ecology Center. These are essential services that divert thousands of pounds of food scraps from trash sites every week.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills - a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination funding for organic waste recycling. This is short-sighted and will set us back from achieving our sustainability goals. I understand that this is a difficult time for everyone and that the pandemic forces us to make difficult decisions. However, there is no price we can put on the damage we continue to do to our Earth. I want my children to be able to inherit a planet where they can live healthy and happy. That requires us to commit ourselves to green solutions like composting - not slashing them when things become too hard.

Our environment, our green jobs, and our shared future are too important to throw away. Please take action!

Jenna Frasier

Since hearing that the Mayor planned to cut the Compost Project in this year's budget I have been feeling a great deal of anger and sadness. I am a member of a large, well established community garden in Prospect Heights, Brooklyn and for eight long years acted as the compost coordinator for our large composting system. Through this I experience I grew to appreciate the amazing benefits that composting can bring to you individually and as part of a community. It not only brings together our hard working compost team together who does shifts every Sunday, flipping and turning the compost bins to create the "black gold" of finished compost that we then use on our garden beds. It also brings together our larger community who come into the garden to drop their organic scraps and thus experience the garden, as well as feeling like they are part of a larger effort. Just this year alone our compost system diverted over 15,000 pounds of organic material from going into the garbage. Our garden members and all of these community members still rely on our compost system. With the threat and then ending of compost collection I have heard from so many frantically trying to find another place to bring their organic scraps to keep them from being thrown away. It is also incredibly satisfying to see how much keeping organic materials out of your garbage it reduces the amount of garbage you create. Your garbage is also less smelly!

This are just some of the aspects and why we must keep compost collection going here in the City. Another is the major environmental benefits that composting organics brings. It is well known that when organic material is thrown into the garbage and goes to a dump that methane gas is created as it breaks down. Methane is of course what contributes to global warming and advances the effects of climate change. Considering the dire situation we are here in New York and around the world as we wade deeper into the disaster of climate change we must take any steps we can to reduce our impact.

Lastly, if the Mayor thinks the City is going to save money sending more of our trash to "the dump", which really means putting it on barges and sending it who knows where, then he's wrong. If the Mayor was forward thinking, like he likes to make himself appear to be, he would know that in fact ramping up rather than ending compost collection is the better fiscal decision. The City could stand to create revenue of over a million dollars if composting was made mandatory, like recycling. So I strongly encourage you as a Committee to refuse the Mayor's proposal to cut funding for the Compost Collection.

Jennie Spector

To: Honorable Stephen Levin
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

My name is Jennifer Brown and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. Since we began using the "brown bins" I have been astonished at how little garbage we actually generate. Vegetable peels, egg shells, coffee grounds, apple cores -- the daily detritus of a family of four disappear into the bin and then, later, will reappear to us as compost for us to use in our garden. What a gift to the city to cut the garbage at least in half and make rich soil available. When I travel or stay with friends elsewhere, the amount of garbage that I know can be composted is painfully obvious.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jennifer N Brown
90 Dean St, Brooklyn

SAVE COMMUNITY COMPOSTING in NYC

To: Stephen Levin

CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov

Re: Community Composting

My name is Jennifer Li and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. Composting is very important for our city. We were thrilled when the city began to offer the pick up and it reduced our non recyclable garbage to less than one bag per week. With our dense population, seeing what kind of difference it can make it's unimaginable this is being cut from the budget. Drop off compost is our only option now. Making cuts to environmental initiatives is simply not a step in a forward direction.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Li
26 Butler Street
Brooklyn, NY 11231

Hello, my name is Jennifer. I live in Astoria with my 2 sons. I've been an organics recycler for decades, both personally and professionally. My testimony is reinforcement of the message sent by many today that the City does not abandon its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals and lowering its leadership on the global effort to mitigate climate change.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years. All evidence from governments who have preceded the City in these efforts is that they take YEARS to mature. Abandonment when momentum is high (as demonstrated by the outpouring of support evidenced in testimony) is a mistake that will likely be looked back on with regret if allowed to pass.

I agree that the full budget is ripe for investigation and am not advocating the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, the cuts to the Community based programs such as the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, should be reversed, with expansion for community outreach and education. People who are motivated to source separate and participate must be supported. They are the grassroots leaders who will make the City's long term goals achievable.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases. These are also tons that will be removed from the curbside and hopefully lower the MSW tip fees the City pays to remove trash for disposal.

Please vote to continue to fund curbside residential pick up, the nonprofits like GrowNYC and the NYC Compost Project. We can't afford to regress.

As a founding member of the D3 Green Schools UWS compost pilot of 2012, the work to establish organics separation was arduous. It has taken root - in the 5-7 yrs we suspected it would take. To pull the plug now will be devastating to not only NYC residents who feel that they are making an environmental impact by source separating organics from the waste stream, but also to the environment itself!!

Organics can be a revenue source once systematically integrated to logical resources like local farms, and the bio-gas industry for use as fuel and natural fertilizer. NYC is poised to become a progressive, green city and example to the world.

Our lives actually depend on it.

Thank you,

Jennifer Prescott
41 W. 83 St. #4d
NYC 10024

Dear New York City Council,

I am writing to ask for funds to be restored for New York City's composting programs. The programs include the following:

- The Master Composter Certificate Courses
- Free support for volunteer-led community gardens and compost sites throughout Brooklyn
- The Red Hook Compost Site
- The NYC Compost Project sister programs based in botanical gardens and environmental non-profits throughout the Five Boroughs

I was a Compost Coordinator for Grow NYC for two years and I got my Master Composter certification at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. I loved my job as a compost coordinator. It felt great to advocate for the environment and meet the people who brought their food scraps to the green markets.

Please restore the funds for the program.

Thank you for your time.

Best Regards,

Jennifer Sairi Kanter

Thursday, May 21, 2020

Good evening,

My name is Jennifer Stephens and I live in the Lincoln Towers co-op community in New York City's Upper West Side. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Composting is such an important way for our community to give back to the environment and something we need to invest in now more than ever on behalf of the future health of our suffering home planet. My neighbors and I who live in Lincoln Towers deeply value the city's Organics recycling and composting curbside pick up services as well as the ability to drop off composting at the city's greenmarkets.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and

recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our neighborhood and the city as a whole, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Jennifer Stephens

Good afternoon,

My name is Jenny Fan. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our neighborhood and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Jenny Fan

Good afternoon, my name is Jenny Lin. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a

small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

May 22, 2020

Honorable City Council Members
The City Council Finance Committee
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Honorable City Council Members and the City Council Finance Committee:

I am writing to express my deep concern about the City's plan to cut organics collection and community compost program. I was shocked when I heard that DSNY intends to cut this important and vital program completely for over a year. While I understand the necessity for budget cuts in light of the current crisis, it is essential to maintain the composting program. It is short-sighted to eliminate the program, and here's why:

1. Composting is essential to keeping NYC on track to reduce its carbon emissions.

—If NYC is to be a leader in preventing climate change that will have destructive impacts on the City and the world, we have to remain committed to composting and other sustainability initiatives even in the face of challenges. Global warming doesn't take a break if we don't address it.

2. If the City claims it has to cut back on sustainability initiatives, then how could City government enforce legislation that demands real estate and industry to reduce their carbon emissions?

—Last year, the City Council wisely passed the Climate Mobilization Act, a series of forward-thinking bills that enforce stringent reductions in carbon emissions. This legislation is perhaps the most forward-thinking in the nation and in the world—it is an ambitious plan that we need to tackle climate change. The laws will require industry and real estate to make investments in infrastructure and buildings that will, in the long term, reduce fossil fuel use and carbon emissions significantly.

If we roll back the composting program, then industry and real estate will similarly ask for rollbacks on the Climate Mobilization Act as well as other climate laws and policies that are designed to reduce the City's—and the State's—greenhouse gas emissions. In the aftermath of the economic devastation caused by COVID-19, they will say, "The City cut its various sustainability initiatives, including its composting program, to cut costs. We must do the same, and imposing a requirement for these sustainability upgrades is not possible."

(Continued on next page)

3. If we eliminate the composting program, then we are greenlighting environmental and economic devastation that will damage NYC and the world in far more significant ways than COVID-19 will.

—All of these cumulative roll backs will lead to a situation where we will go above 1.5 degrees of warming—meaning there will be significant devastation not only in NYC but around the world.

In short, if the City eliminates composting initiatives, then it has no moral authority in telling industry to follow sustainability legislation that sets a standard for NYC and the world. The result will be environmental destruction instead of the pioneering sustainability leadership that only NYC can achieve.

4. We won't meet our longstanding and important goals to achieve Zero Waste by 2030.

—If we cut the composting program now until 2021—and what's to guarantee that it will come back then?—then how can we achieve the City's 0x30 goals to produce zero waste by 2030? An interruption in the composting program will lead to less engagement down the road. Critics of the program say that it already didn't have enough engagement—even though the program was diverting a significant amount of organics from landfill and thus reducing NYC's greenhouse gas emissions.

If we give up on composting and give up figuring out how to facilitate the behavior change necessary to increase adoption, then we certainly aren't going to increase adoption for all of the other new behaviors necessary to achieve zero waste reduction by 2030. Instead of ditching the compost program, we should use it as a platform to problem-solve how we can increase engagement for new routines necessary to fight climate change. The efforts to increase engagement will be a case study for how we'll need to increase waste reduction in other areas as we move forward to achieve our zero waste goal.

In conclusion: I'm asking the City Council and the Finance Committee to maintain our commitment to composting, sustainability, and sane policies to get us on track to our emissions reductions goals. I'm asking the Council to continue NYC's leadership on climate.

This is the only way to ensure the future of NYC—the future of those of us who live here now and those who will live here in the future. Please restore the organics collection program and ensure that we can continue our leadership in enacting policies that will literally save our planet.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Best,

Jeremy Lehrer
lehrermail@gmail.com
38 Sherman Street #3
Brooklyn, NY 11215

To whom it may concern:

My name is Jeremy Teperman and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. I am a native New Yorker and have been involved with composting in NYC since 2012 when I became a Master Composter, certified by the NYC Compost Project hosted by Queens Botanical Garden. I went on to serve as Project Coordinator of that program for three years, 2013-2016 and currently am Farm Manager at East New York Farms, where we operate a robust community composting program. Composting is an essential service in NYC, one that is only growing in popularity. When I was growing up here, composting was not a household concept; now it is, thanks in large part to pioneering programs that reach a full cross section of New Yorkers through education, outreach and providing easy ways for people to recycle their organic waste. This program has grown tremendously since I became involved in 2012, going from simply encouraging homeowners and garden groups to compost, to building a robust network of food-scrap drop off sites and nationally recognized, professional-level composting facilities in several boroughs.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Teperman
Youth Farm Manager, East New York Farms
6740 Booth Street #1F
Forest Hills, NY 11375

Good afternoon, my name is Jess Pinkham. I wrote this testimony to request that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Composting is an important and easy form of environmental activism, which is only getting increasingly crucial in light of the ever-exacerbating climate crisis. It is also a simple, reliable way to allow citizens to feel good, and gently involved in their community, which is particularly important now, as people felt fractured and helpless and alone.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is shortsighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

It is also important to note that the statement of "diverting resources" that's on all the fliers announcing the suspension of composting through June, 2021 fails to attempt to begin to explain what that means. And ignores the fact that human density, the cause of the virulent spread of the novel coronavirus, is very much an environmental issue, which will only be heightened by widening the imprint of landfills.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. This would be a magnanimous move – and an antidote to the actual necessity of the plastic bags proliferating at farmers' markets, where I do the bulk of my produce shopping.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to the green-minded citizens of the city, who are legion, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Dear New York City Council,

My name is Jesse Ash and I am born and raised New Yorker, currently living with my wife in Clinton Hill, Brooklyn. I am a member of the Park Slope Food Cooperative, one of the largest working member cooperatives in the world. I am also a board member of the Townsend Harris High School Association where Assemblywoman Nily Rozic also sits on the board with me.

In this testimony, we ask that the City does not eliminate opportunities for organics recycling and composting citywide. Despite the current pandemic, it is still very critical to maintain the City's Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This will certainly have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue an organics recycling and composting program, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. GrowNYC has been a vital resource to nourishing our city not only from its amazing Greenmarkets programs, but also in providing a recycling and composting resource for all New Yorkers.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;

- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;

- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and

- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to us, our neighborhood and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Jesse Ash

325 Clinton Ave.

Brooklyn, NY 11205

Board Member Townsend Harris Alumni Association

Member Park Slope Food Coop

Director, Greener Media

To: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov, speakerjohnson@council.nyc.gov,
areynoso@council.nyc.gov, acohen@council.nyc.gov, fcabrera@council.nyc.gov

Date: May 20, 2020

From: Jessica Haller, Bronx, NY 10471

Re: FY 21 Mayor's Executive Budget –Hearing 5/21

It's ironic that just in time for Earth Day, New York City announced that it was suspending the popular Organics recycling program for the FY21 Executive Budget. The three composting budget programs – all of which have no impact to DSNY head count – include curbside, community composting and all the community support of the citywide composting initiatives.

The benefits of separating organic waste, such as food scraps, yard trimmings, and solid paper, from the trash are manifold: fewer rats, less air pollution, less soil contamination, healthier lives, and cleaner waterways. Organics collection isn't just about composting; **it is about public-health**. And we need to keep focus on long term public health even as we address the current public health emergency.

In the same announcement, the City also stopping e-waste collection and discontinuing SAFE Disposal events, which safely remove toxic materials such as Solvents, Automotive, Flammables, and Electronics - anything that says "Danger" or "Poison" - from the waste stream, air and water.

Have the following budget implications been considered?

1. Increase of approximately 2600 tons of additional waste that will enter the solid waste stream (2068 tons of organics was dropped at community drop sites, plus 468 in curbside from 2018 numbers).
2. Shut down and start up costs of stopping and then starting these programs again in 2021
3. Financial impact on the seven NYC not-for-profit institutions who provide community composting support
4. Long term costs of handling toxic in the waste stream

I implore the committee to consider at least reinstating the \$3.5M budget line for Community composting support and at most – all the related budget line items.

To: Honorable Ydanis Rodriguez
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

My name is Jessica Thompson and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. Since curbside organics pickup was instituted, the amount of trash my family and I throw away has decreased by nearly 75%. Not only does this make a huge difference in terms of keeping food out of landfills, where it releases methane as it decomposes, but it gives me an opportunity to teach my children that being a good steward of our planet is something that can be a small part of everyday life. In addition, earlier this year, my synagogue, the Fort Tryon Jewish Center (along with Hebrew Tabernacle, from whom we rent space), began participating in organics pickup as well. This was an effort that was embraced enthusiastically by our members.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Jessica Thompson
360 Cabrini Blvd #60
New York, NY 10040

Good afternoon, name is Jessie Euell Bonet. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and

- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to family, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Food Scrap Collection Program

I know these are unprecedented times. I know we have a relatively limited amount of money to spend and so many pressing needs.

That being said, we are an international city that has taken a very long and slow learning curve to achieve a modicum of environmental awareness. In 2005, I returned to my home city of New York after living in California for a decade and was struck by how far behind we were environmentally speaking. I had trouble imagining how New Yorkers would bridge the hypothetical leap of saving something of which they had very little awareness and to which they had nearly no connection. We have come a long way but are not nearly there.

It is a crime to curb that momentum. It will cost much more to haul away all of those wet and heavy food scraps than it would to compost them. How is no one calculating the additional costs to the city--environmentally and fiscally--by stopping this food scrap collection program?

I have always found a way—for the past 25 years, to compost my food scraps and I have not stopped now. In these lean times, I have found the one option in the boro of Manhattan: a bin next to the Friends of Battery Park City headquarters.

Please reconsider. Please think of the value of keeping as much as we can out of our landfills. As a native New Yorker, I can also ask you to please think larger than the typical New York-centric New Yorker. The world is bigger than our city. It is our responsibility to participate in preserving the natural environment to the extent we are able. Please make the right choice.

To: Honorable Helen Rosenthal
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

My name is Jo Burnside and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. I have been utilizing various drop off collection sites, particularly Union Square Greenmarket for my organic waste for several years. Since moving recently, I have been working with my new building's board to participate in the brown bin pick up service. I have been hoping that use of this service would finally be made mandatory so the program can truly flourish and become financially self-sustainable in addition to being environmentally sustainable.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis. As we move forward please let us truly "Reimagine" New York and take action to improve the city and our impact.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Jo Burnside
60 Riverside Boulevard
Apt 2011
New York NY 10069

Additional Information about the Proposed Cuts

The Mayor's proposed FY21 budget eliminates all funding for Community Composting (\$3.5 million) and Zero Waste Outreach (\$2.9 million). These budget lines fund NYC Compost Project at Big Reuse, Brooklyn Botanic Garden, Earth Matter, Lower East Side Ecology Center, NY Botanical Garden, Queens Botanical Garden, and GrowNYC Zero Waste Programs.

Examples of Personal Stories

- My **[family/household]** has been participating in the Curbside Composting program for **[X]** years. Separating our food scraps and yard waste for composting has significantly cut down on the amount of trash we generate, made our home cleaner, and become a part of our daily lives.
- I have been taking my food scraps to the **[Your Food Scrap Drop-off Site Here]** for **[X]** years. I live in a **[high rise building / neighborhood]** that didn't have access to the Curbside Composting program, and I was happy to have another option for keeping my food waste out of landfills.
- In the months since the City has suspended Curbside Composting and Food Scrap Drop-off sites, I've had no options for composting my food waste. I have been storing it in my freezer in the hope that these programs will return, but I have long-since run out of space. It breaks my heart to throw my food scraps in the trash after years of diligently composting, and it is not acceptable for the City to continue these cuts for the next year or more.
- One of the things I love most about the City's composting programs is that I've been able to use the finished compost that I helped make. I received finished compost from **[Organization]** that I used to **[grow food/grow flowers/care for a street tree...]** in my **[apartment/terrace/backyard/community garden/neighborhood]**.
- I have volunteered with the NYC Compost Project Hosted by **[Organization]** and was encouraged to see all the job opportunities in the field of organics recycling and urban agriculture. My experience volunteering helped me secure a green job doing **[description of work]**.
- I am a Master Composter certified by NYC Compost Project Hosted by **[Organization]**, and have been volunteering at my community compost site **[name]** for **[X]** years. It has changed my life. Making compost got me involved in growing food for myself, which meant fewer trips to the grocery store and introduced me to other ways to reduce the waste in my life.
- I am a member of **[Community Garden]**. We have a small composting initiative that's been overwhelmed since the City suspended the Curbside Composting and Food Scrap Drop-off programs. People in our neighborhood are desperate for a way to compost, and we can't safely keep up with that demand. We need the City to step up and honor its commitments to Zero Waste by funding community composting rather than leaving this essential work to volunteers like me.

Good afternoon, my name is Jo Mispel and I am a member of the GreenThumb Garden, Mobilization for Change, in Manhattan.

In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. This is especially pertinent when New Yorkers were adapting so quickly and conscientiously to composting as a win, win easy environmental solution - converting organic waste into carbon sequestering soils.

We had been hosting a 24 hour compost drop off site for over a year at our garden and it's popularity and usage was consistently increasing. We were at the point where 3 medium bins and one large bin would be full to overflowing every two days. Our city populace is so obviously eager to participate in transitioning our great city to one that will be resilient in the face of inevitable climate change. And composting is a massive piece of that puzzle. Not only does cutting the budget mean losing that momentum, and change in habits, it also means risking all the knowledge, expertise and infrastructure so carefully built upon in NYC.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress the City has made in diverting food scraps, yard waste, and valuable recyclables from landfills. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications and will be a massive setback of the City's sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to maintain residents' ability to continue recycling and composting, and not toss the significant progress we have made in diverting valuable materials from landfills and incinerators in the past few years.

I am asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with an additional expansion of funds for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners, and to GrowNYC, together represent approximately \$7 million. Restoring this \$7M to the budget, plus some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to reduce their impact on the environment, reduce long term costs for the City, and live lives that are more environmentally responsible, without massive behavioral change (which we know can be challenging to instill!). With this funding, organic material that makes up at least 34% of the residential waste stream will be diverted from landfills. We should not waste the value of the nutrient resources in our food, and

should not waste money and resources shipping this heavy and wet material far from the City, instead of keeping it close by in composting facilities.

Restoring \$7M+ would ensure that:

- at least 8 non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as essential community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to serve their communities, allowing individuals to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least 6 community composting facilities can continue their work of processing organic waste, turning it into usable compost to amend soils and grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity;
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living; and
- Individual New Yorkers who are already stressed by economic collapse and fear of infection during a global pandemic can continue to take a small daily action, making them feel connected to the world, and recognizing that small actions can make a difference.

I cannot understate the urgency of this request, not just for our local community but for our beloved city and indeed the entire planet. I hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you

Jo Mispel

To: New York City Council Members
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

I am writing to urge New York City to continue funding its community composting and zero waste outreach programs.

As evidenced by the events of the past few months, our Earth is fragile. We must advance our efforts to help our planet be healthy and curb global warming. We cannot afford to reverse progress, progress which is exemplified by the community composting programs. Due to COVID-19, I understand that the City must seek budget cuts; however, eliminating such a program would undermine the health of our citizens.

Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost.

We need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis and beyond.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Joan Weissman ws1930@aol.com

Good afternoon,

My name is Joann and I am a lifelong resident of East Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Growing up blocks away from a Superfund site and down the street from a major truck corridor, I had first-hand experience with local environmental pollution and its effect on the health of our communities. My experiences inspired me to pursue a career in urban environmental sustainability, and educating my community on initiatives like citywide compost collection opened my eyes to the importance of unity in fighting climate change. We've seen a lot of progress in this area in recent years and in this testimony, **I ask that the City does not reverse this progress by eliminating funding for community-based composting initiatives.**

The elimination of curbside composting collection and community-based composting initiatives would force New Yorkers to send their food waste to landfill, which in addition to costing the City money to do so, will also drastically increase the production of methane: one of the greenhouse gases that contributes to climate change.

In my experiences with streetside tabling and door-to-door canvassing, I met people who have been freezing their food scraps and dropping it off at their local greenmarket weekly for decades, and people who couldn't speak English and were learning about composting for the first time when I rang their doorbell. All in all, I learned that New Yorkers want to do the right thing. Choosing how we want to dispose of our waste should not be a privilege and instead, should be a right for all New Yorkers. It is troubling that the City wants to revoke this and instead, leave residents without a choice to live more sustainably.

Budget cuts to this program would not only be detrimental to the health of the city, but also to the livelihoods of those who have dedicated their lives towards helping New Yorkers compost their food waste. Community activists who were taught to follow their dreams to better their city lost their work overnight.

I urge you to reconsider these budget cuts to GrowNYC, NYC Compost Project, and their partners, and to restore a service that is so critical to our city. If there's one thing I learned from the tragedy of COVID-19, it is that New York's strength and resiliency are built out of the compassion of its citizens. By providing citizens with the opportunity to compost, you will be restoring some of the unity, normalcy, and collective action that we all need to help New York heal.

Thank you,
Joann

My name is Joanna Garcia and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for our community composting and zero waste outreach programs. One of the programs I use the most and boast about to fellow Brooklynites.

Composting and low/zero waste lifestyle has been something very important to me over the past few years. I've used these outreach programs to learn more and pass any information along to others. Composting has always seemed like the most daunting task to me for the lack of ease, the smell, lack of composting options in my neighborhood etc. I finally overcame this hurdle this year and have started composting as much as humanely possible.

Composting is so important for our environment for many reasons - these scraps waste space in the landfills and release toxic fumes, food attracts vermin and can cause respiratory problems and these problems disproportionately affect our neighborhood with people of color. Instead, please allow our community to continue to be productive and use our food scraps to create rich soil that in turn enriches and flourishes our parks and gardens. And allow us to empower ourselves with the zero waste programs and information that's at our disposal. Overall, I see more and more people composting and trying to take better care of our Earth, **our one and only Earth**. But this could change if we eliminate funding for composting and outreach programs. This could ultimately discourage the small strides in improvement we've been making and obstruct people from learning more and trying to do more for not only our community, but our Earth.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I beg that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Joanna Garcia

Concerned Bushwick Resident

Good afternoon, In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting. Composting is and should continue to be a regular way of life that the city should support.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years. I ask that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Good afternoon,

My name is Jocelyn Scanlon. I am a Brooklyn resident and a member of multiple environment-focused organizations in the city.

I am reaching out today to testify, asking that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. It's essential that New York City - the best city in the world - is leading the way in forward thinking green practices. Creating and maintaining an effective organics/composting program for such a populous city will significantly help decrease the amount of methane being released into the atmosphere due to waste being dumped at landfills, and set our future generations up for success developing life-long habits for a sustainable lifestyle.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back much further from its sustainability goals. We know the future will need comprehensive organics collections and it needs to be done now to help our planet and save money for future generations so they are not stuck with the burden.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City maintains the ability to continue organics recycling and composting, as well as expand opportunity for education and outreach so the public can properly participate. Please do not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners is a comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture and would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to myself and my community, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you very much,
Jocelyn Scanlon

jocelyn.scanlon@gmail.com
(757)-617-8638

Good Afternoon,

My name is Jodie Quaglia and I live in the Bronx. I am a mother, teacher, and proud citizen of my Bronx community. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. I just recently learned about composting, through a fellow community member. I took pride in saving my food scraps and helping my local environment. Every weekend I would either visit a local food scrap drop-off site in the Bronx, or I would take the train to Union Square in Manhattan and drop off my food scraps and then shop at the Green Market. It became part of my routine. Just as I learned the importance of composting, I wanted to spread the word to others in my community whom might not know. I saw a real opportunity to make our environment a cleaner one, for us and for our children. For this reason, I applied to become a community board member for my local CB district.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, I am asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. My Bronx community (including my neighbors and students and families) should have the opportunity to learn about and practice composting in order to make our communities healthier places. We already suffer from environmental factors like pollution – as evidenced in our high asthma rates in the Bronx – why add the methane gases produced by food waste to our communities?!

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you,

Jodie Quaglia

Good afternoon, my name is Johanna Gerlach. I'm a Greenpoint, Brooklyn resident who believes in the importance of the City's Compost project. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. In this tenuous time we are living in, it has become especially clear how interwoven our lives and lifestyles are with the greater world and how our actions affect our environment for better or worse. We need ways to relieve the heavy burden we put on our landfills. Organics recycling and composting is an effective and sustainable way to ease our carbon footprint.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills—a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, I am asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;

- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to Greenpoint and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Janice

Dear Members of the Committee on Finance,

First, thank you for your service and for the time spent in making difficult decisions on behalf of our City during this difficult time.

I would like to testify in support of re-instating composting collection.

Ending composting in NYC for the next fiscal year will send more waste to landfills which will ultimately lead to more greenhouse gas emissions. Longer-term, it will take years to re-instate and recover –operationally, financially, and socially. After over a decade of public investment in composting, the proposed cuts would be a devastating setback to the OneNYC 2050 Zero Waste to Landfill goal and Green New Deal policies.

In cutting this program, you are also sending a message that the environment and climate change are less emergent than the COVID crisis. In reality, our New York neighbors at greatest risk to climate hazards and COVID exposure and death are greatly intersectional. This is not the time to ignore these relationships or regress. It is also not a time to enforce short-term decision-making, the same short-sighted patterns that landed us all in both the COVID and Climate crises.

Finally, New Yorkers like me who compost take great pride in the effort to separate our waste and play our part in supporting the natural systems upon which ALL of us rely. Now is the time for innovation and remaining true to values, and for creating opportunity for civic engagement in ways that are safe when New Yorkers are desperate to help their city and earth. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

By maintaining this program, you are sending a message that we are collectively responsible for our environment and therefore each other's interconnected wellbeing. At a time when COVID has exposed a reality of how poorly we have embodied this truth, nothing could be needed more than that during this difficult time.

Thank you,

Johanna Lovecchio
Council District 5

May 21, 2020

My name is Jolie and I am a long-time resident of the Lower East Side with many years as an urban farmer in this city focused on permaculture, regenerative farming, and city sustainability.

In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. This will severely slow down any good intentions and progress we have made and seems utterly devastating to be a “progressive” city without this service.

The Mayor’s proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New

Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to us, our neighborhoods, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Jolie Warbet

Good afternoon,

My name is Jonathan Jin. I live in Williamsburg in Brooklyn. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Municipal composting is a crucial pillar in the fight for environmentalism and against climate change and I strongly oppose its elimination.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to myself, my neighborhood, and my community in Williamsburg and Greenpoint, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Jonathan Jin

Good afternoon,

My name is Jordan Kraemer, and I am a resident of Prospect Heights, Brooklyn. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Composting is an effective way for New York City to lead on reducing greenhouse gases such as methane, while reducing pressure on landfills.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, I am asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. The city should be expanding access to composting and organics collection, given the broader climate crisis which is still pressing, despite the pandemic.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to me and my family, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Jordan Kraemer

May 21, 2020

Good afternoon, my name is Joseph Polizzi and I am a resident of Greenpoint.

In this testimony, I am joining with fellow New Yorkers to ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. I urge the City to take a long view of organics recycling and not to reintroduce millions of pounds of waste to our landfills. Compost recycling is one of the easiest tasks that residents can take to have a large impact on the environment and climate change.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council not to abandon organics collections during this crisis but to recommit to organics diversion programs that have made significant impacts in our communities. Please do not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

History shows us that temporary suspensions do not have temporary effects. In the wake of the 9/11 attacks, the City suspended plastic and glass recycling in July 2002 to close a budget gap. Plastic recycling was suspended for 12 months and glass for 21 months. Once recycling resumed, rates plummeted and they have still not fully recovered, even now in 2020. Recycling compliance works best when practice and behavior are consistent.

I am asking that the Council restore organics program cuts including curbside collection. Though the brown bin program has yet to reach all of New York City, suspending the program will likely have grave consequences over time.

In the interest of access and equity, I am specifically asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. These programs ensure that all New Yorkers can participate in organics collection and help to raise awareness about the importance impacts of diversion and waste reduction.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to my family, neighborhood, community, City, country and the World, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Joseph Polizzi

Good afternoon,

My name is Josh Kleinmuntz, and I'm a pediatric social worker at Elmhurst Hospital and a member of the Queens Climate Project, a non-profit group devoted to local clean energy solutions.

I was disturbed to learn that the city plans to slash the budget for organics recycling and composting. We need to protect our Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and composting programs are a crucial part of this transition to cleaner energy.

I understand that the city needs to make budget cuts, but it also needs to make swift, bold changes to reduce its carbon emissions. The city has made major progress in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills, and the Mayor's proposed budget would undercut all of this. Eliminating composting programs is profoundly short-sighted.

I realize it is not possible for the Council to restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts, but I am asking that the city restore the cuts to the NYC Compost Project/partners and to GrowNYC, with a corresponding expansion of community outreach and education. My particular community - Jackson Heights - is full of eager composters, and we need education to help people build private bins and weekly drop-offs for those without garden access.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;

- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you!

Josh Kleinmuntz

Good afternoon, name is Joshua Paul Gale and I am a resident of Greenwich Village. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. I have been composting for 5 years, and it has increased my mindfulness in consumption and helped connect me with my neighbors over the serious responsibility we have to our city and planet.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. This restoration would serve as a lifeline to the work we have all been putting in to increase composting in the city.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;

at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;

at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and

the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask, along with the dividends it will pay in increasing ecological engagement in this city, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you

Good morning. I am Joy Gramolini, president of 790 Riverside Drive Owners Inc., a 200 unit co-op in Washington Heights that joined the Organics program earlier this year. On behalf of our residents—which include a mix of working families and older adults—I ask that the City reconsider plans that would eliminate all funding for recycling/composting organic waste. Our residents care deeply about sustainability, and the simple act of separating food waste from other items that we discard as trash helps us become more intentional consumers, a critical life skill we pass along to our children.

The Mayor's proposed budget could end this by sending food scraps and yard waste back to landfills, a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. Transporting reusable waste to landfills costs money, and disproportionately affects poor neighborhoods where NYC transfer stations and upstate/out-of-state landfills are located. This is short-sighted and will make it very hard for the City to reach the Mayor's Zero Waste initiative goal of reducing landfill use by 90% by 2030.

I realize the impact that COVID-19 has had on the City's finances, and am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts to the fiscal 2021 budget. Rather, ***I ask that the Council restore \$7 million in cuts to GrowNYC and the NYC Compost Project, along with some additional funds for community outreach and education.*** This \$7,000,000 investment would allow New Yorkers to continue to recycle organics, and would go a long way towards ensuring that the habit of recycling food waste is not lost. It would allow:

- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs to continue diverting this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least 6 community composting facilities to continue making compost for community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity;
- at least 8 non-profits to continue their good work of providing organics collection, processing services and community education and;
- City education and outreach programs to continue so that all New Yorkers—including our school children—understand why and how to compost and recycle. This small investment in our schools will pay off for decades by helping children develop life-long habits of sustainable living.

As it considers the City's immediate needs, we ask that the Council invest in its future by restoring \$7 million for GrowNYC and the NYC Compost Project.

Sincerely,

Joy Gramolini

President

790 Riverside Drive Owners, Inc.

May 21st, 2020

To Honorable Laurie Cumbo and New York City Representatives,

My name is Joy Rifkin and I am a resident of Crown Heights, Brooklyn. I am devastated to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs.

Community composting at the NYC Green Markets is the only way I am able to compost my food scraps in the city. Every week I lug my peels, pits, and dried flowers up to the Grand Army Plaza. Without composting, I personally will be landfilling 20 pounds more every week.

NYC is at the forefront of sustainability and environmental action against climate change. If we lose our community composting we lose progress. We take five steps backwards. The habits and mindsets of New Yorkers are changing. Do we really want to lose this shift in behavior and go back to the 1990s, when only recycling was publically funded in NYC?

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Joy Rifkin
1328 Union Street
Brooklyn, NY 11213

Good Afternoon. My name is Joyce Bialik. I reside in Community District 7 and I am a member of the Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board (MSWAB). In this testimony I am not representing MSWAB. I am writing to advocate for continuing composting sites in each community district as put forth by the City Council's Sanitation Committee. This would be a temporary measure until the City makes collection of food scraps a mandatory practice for all City residents. If we weigh the benefits of food scrap collection against the costs of leaving food scraps within general waste collection, the benefits far outweigh the costs.

We have an estimated cost of millions of dollars for shipping food scraps to landfills. We have the methane released when food becomes part of the general waste cycle, which is a major contributor to our climate crisis.

When we divert our food wastes for compost we have in the compost a valuable source of nourishment for the City's parks and gardens. We also have the potential for processing renewable biogas. We also help to reduce and eliminate the onslaught of vermin that occurs when food scraps are contained within the general waste pile. Moreover, we are likely to enable the maintenance of behavior for putting aside one's food waste, developed over the last few years of the voluntary DSNY brown bin food scrap program. From the City's past experience of temporarily ceasing the recycling program, we know how difficult it is to restart recycling behavior after an interruption.

For these reasons I request that community composting sites be restored given its importance and the fact that it accounts for a mere 0.2% of the City's overall budget.

COMPOST TESTIMONY

Dear Council Members:

I am a community rabbi, Judith Edelstein, representing my group, Jewish Climate Action Network, JCAN. We are a non-denominational group of Jewish New Yorkers, who reside throughout the boroughs and Long Island. We came together several years ago out of our deep concern for the environment to support non-sectarian Climate Action organizations, both in the city and nationally, on policies that we believe are important to retaining a healthy planet that include human justice and economic equality components.

Conscious of the current crisis in our beloved New York due to the pandemic, we must confront this trauma to problems in the climate. While recognizing the strains on the budget, we urge the City not to disregard its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by curtailing organics recycling and composting options.

The composting/organic effort in NYC is relatively recent, with curbside pick up available only in targeted neighborhoods. Yet, it is among the simplest and most convenient ways to minimize land fill and green house emissions. As Jews we believe that it is our moral responsibility to maximize opportunities to continue these practices now and in the future - we are commanded and committed to care for the earth and humanity. Organic waste and composting are tools that enable us to take small steps towards fulfilling our larger sustainability and moral goals.

We urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

Understanding current budget issues, we ask that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners and to GrowNYC, totaling \$7 million, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. This restoration will enable all NYC citizens to do our share to create a safe environment for current and future generations through separating food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to JCAN and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Blessings for the work you do on our behalf.

Rabbi Judith Edelstein, Doctor of Ministry, BBC



Good morning,

My name is Julia Ferguson and I serve with the Roosevelt Island Garden Club as chair of Outreach. We are a 40-year-old volunteer run community of gardeners on Roosevelt Island who have actively supported, benefitted from, and worked alongside NYC Compost (for education, advice, food scrap drop off programs, and compost give backs) through both Big Reuse and Grow to Learn. Our gardens and our broader community have been revitalized through this work. We have learned so much in our community and connected with so many outside our gardening group as a result of these programs.

In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Composting has brought all ages of our gardening group and also broader community or 15,000 people on Roosevelt Island together. Because of NYC Compost programs our community has diverted over 100,000 pounds of food scraps from landfills.

Composting also helps our gardens with significant community connections and education outreach and it is essentially a free and wise use of our natural resources. In addition, the ripple effects for our environmental health and our children's futures are priceless.

Please be clear in a 2020 vision for NYC and our planet. This vision should be one with healthy people, healthy air, healthy soil and filled with **climate justice solutions that will save money long term and save lives**. Please listen carefully to @SaveOurCompost goals and plans.

Below are only a few examples of how important this work is to our Roosevelt Island community and to NYC:

Partnerships and More Partnerships through Composting

<http://www.rigarden.org/ri-garden-blog/ri-day-partnerships-for-compost-and-planting>

<http://www.rigarden.org/ri-garden-blog/full-circle-from-food-scraps-to-school-garden>

<http://www.rigarden.org/ri-garden-blog/nyc-compost-project-and-big-reuse-on-roosevelt-island>

Outreach/Service Events for all Ages: Cornell Tech to P.S. 217

<http://www.rigarden.org/ri-garden-blog/nyc-compost-official-pumpkin-smash-on-roosevelt-island-2019-third-annual-event>

<http://www.rigarden.org/ri-garden-blog/cornell-tech-volunteers-with-roosevelt-island-garden-club>

<http://www.rigarden.org/ri-garden-blog/compost-connection-worms>

Sincerely,

Julia Ferguson

Roosevelt Island Garden Club (Outreach and Publicity) rigardencluboutreach@gmail.com

www.rigarden.org "RIGC - In Earth We Trust"

rigardenclub@gmail.com RIGC Board

Good afternoon, my name is Julia Schulhof.

In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. As is all too evident during this terrible pandemic, many of those in our city who are especially vulnerable are also those most impacted by the City's management of waste and the ensuing effects on the environment. The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Hello,

In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is incredibly short-sighted and has long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I stand with 100s of New Yorkers - we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

Understanding the extreme situation the City is in now, if the Council cannot restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts, I hope that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Julia Tejeda

My name is Julia Valencikova and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. Thousands of New Yorkers have been fighting for decades to prioritize sustainability and zero waste goals. As climate change becomes more and more apparent as a threat we can't reverse the hard work and achievements made thus far. I understand it is in response to COVID-19 and that it must have been a hard decision to make but this budget decision is a short term resolution that will cost us a significant amount more in the near future. Lives, buildings and funds will be taken from NY as climate change progresses.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Julia Valencikova
esa New York

8005 3rd Avenue 2F
Brooklyn NY 11209

Composting testimony

May 21, 2020

I know this a critical day for budget talks and I'm pleading with the city council to restore sufficient funding for NYC composting to operate. My husband and I are passionate about composting, knowing our food scraps are going to feed the earth and not add to the landfill and greenhouse gases. We valued being able to drop it off at city-funded sites every few days and hardly had any garbage. Now our freezer is filling up with food scraps, awaiting your decision. Despite the global pandemic, we can't lose sight of climate change. That will cost us far more in the long run.

Thank you for fighting for us!

Julie Besonen

My name is Justin Bisceglia and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs.

I have been taking my food scraps to the 82nd St. Farmers' Market on Saturday for the past four years. In the Upper East Side, we don't have access to the Curbside Composting program, and I was happy to have another option for keeping my food waste out of landfills. Through a combination of composting organics and recycling paper, metal, and plastic, I've been able almost entirely eliminate any regular waste. I was great to be able to get most of my groceries from the farmers' market while at the same time returning my organic scraps.

In recent weeks, I've noticed a sharp increase in the numbers of people at the farmers' market, and it is truly a shame how many more people could have been introduced to composting on a regular basis.

A quote from a recent article in "The Economist" is applicable here: "Following the pandemic is like watching the climate crisis with your finger on the fast-forward button."

The Mayor has said there is only room in the budget for essential services. Well, garbage removal is an essential service, and composting is the most cost effective way to do it because it costs more to haul organics away with regular garbage than it does to compost, not to mention it is an environmentally sustainable practice. Thus, we should be expanding our composting program rather than cutting it.

Elected officials should realize that a thoughtless slash and burn approach to addressing budget deficits is something that robots can do. Ingenuity does not require rocket science, especially when you are broke.

Justin Bisceglia
350 E 77 St., 6H
New York, NY 10075

To: Honorable Jimmy G. Van Bramer
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

My name is **Justin Hoch** and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. I have been a committed composter for over 13 years here in Astoria and it's one of my favorite and most-used services provided by the city. It's one of the things I am most proud of about New York City.

Community composting programs are essential. We cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting is cost-effective and critical.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Justin Hoch
34-47 29th St
Astoria, NY 11106

May 21, 2020

Good afternoon, my name is Kaitlyn Brown and I am a resident of Williamsburg/Greenpoint

In this testimony, I am joining with fellow New Yorkers to ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. I urge the City to take a long view of organics recycling and not to reintroduce millions of pounds of waste to our landfills. At this time of unprecedented global panic, environmental justice provides NYers like myself with the ability to continue to do my part to protect our home from the safety of my apartment.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council not to abandon organics collections during this crisis but to recommit to organics diversion programs that have made significant impacts in our communities. Please do not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

History shows us that temporary suspensions do not have temporary effects. In the wake of the 9/11 attacks, the City suspended plastic and glass recycling in July 2002 to close a budget gap. Plastic recycling was suspended for 12 months and glass for 21 months. Once recycling resumed, rates plummeted and they have still not fully recovered, even now in 2020. Recycling compliance works best when practice and behavior are consistent.

I am asking that the Council restore organics program cuts including curbside collection. Though the brown bin program has yet to reach all of New York City, suspending the program will likely have grave consequences over time.

In the interest of access and equity, I am specifically asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. These programs ensure that all New Yorkers can participate in organics collection and help to raise awareness about the importance impacts of diversion and waste reduction.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing

New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our community and our species on earth and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Kaitlyn Brown, MS, CGC

102 Bedford Ave

To Whom It May Concern,

I am emailing you to help save composting in NYC! It is a crucial part of fighting climate change and should be an essential service to everyone in New York City just like trash and recycling.

I'm asking you to support composting by saving funding for the community composting subsidy and Food Scrap Drop Offs, as well as maintain funding for curbside composting pickup that reaches 470,000 buildings and single-family homes each year in NYC.

Landfilling organic material generates climate-changing methane and food waste is the primary contributor to GHG emissions in landfills. Composting diverts 157 tons of organic material every day from these landfills and creates rich, nutrient-dense soil that helps our planet.

COVID-19 has been devastating to our country and to our city, but disasters like these will only increase if we do not do something NOW to fight climate change and its impacts on our planet.

Thank you,
Kara Weinstein

May 24, 2020

To: Honorable New York City Council Members
cc: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

Dear Honorable New York City Council Members,

As volunteers of the Town of Mamaroneck Sustainability Collaborative, we strongly encourage New York City to maintain funding for community composting. We, in the Town of Mamaroneck, have worked very hard to build a successful, voluntary drop-off food waste recycling program since September 2017 with enthusiastic resident support, and are hoping to move toward a curbside pick-up program. We look to New York City for inspiration and leadership. The Town of Mamaroneck residents have been collecting food scraps and yard waste for years for composting. The Mamaroneck Union Free School District has also joined the efforts in food waste recycling, so our students are developing important daily habits to take care of our environment. All realize that composting significantly reduces the amount of trash generated by residents and students.

In short, food waste recycling is being enthusiastically embraced by residents and institutions in our municipalities in Westchester county. The growth in participation in this program continues not only in the number of residents involved, but also with the participation of schools, houses of worship, and other community groups. As of April 2020, over twenty Westchester municipalities have started food waste recycling programs. We are proud to point out that the growth of the food waste recycling program is a result of the partnerships we have forged among municipal officials, sanitation staff, and resident volunteers in our communities.

While all municipalities are under burdens caused by COVID-19, now is not the time to reverse our progress on reducing the longer-term climate change impacts. Everyone, regardless of location, can compost to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need to look to New York City to set the positive example and be ahead of the curve. We fear that cutting the funding leaves a huge vacuum and will set a negative precedent to roll back all our hard work and efforts in building a food waste recycling culture across the state. We need instead to take this opportunity to double down and improve on practices to mitigate climate change as this pandemic is simply a foretaste of what could be a worse crisis if we are short-sighted and simply react by returning to old ways. We respectfully urge the City to restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Best regards,

Karen Khor
Arlene Novich
Lisa Pascetta
George Roniger
Wendy Gittings

My name is Karen Shatzkin. I am the President of West 99th Street Apartment Corporation, a five-unit residential cooperative located at 258 West 99th Street, in Manhattan ("258"), and I am submitting this statement on behalf of 258's tenant shareholders.

We ask the City Council to immediately restore funding for the composting program, the loss of which puts at risk the serious progress the City must make toward achieving zero waste, which is imperative for public health and the survival of our planet. At a minimum, we ask that cuts to the NYC Compost Project and GrowNYC be restored and that they receive additional funding to broaden community outreach and education to increase composting participation City-wide.

There are numerous immediate and long-term benefits to reinstating the compost initiative: not just reducing greenhouse gases, but actively removing carbon from the atmosphere; serving as a toxic-free means of reducing the presence of disease-carrying rats; eliminating noxious smells from garbage awaiting pick-up (sometimes our side streets smell like sewers from the piled-up black bags); and reducing the cost and pollution involved in trucking these tons of refuse to landfills, as well as the mass of organic landfill content that attracts rodents and insects.

In addition, if we can increase composting, we can save the City money — so worrying about the short-term expense is denying us the ability to obtain a larger savings in the not-distant future and the hope of avoiding the looming, truly catastrophic cost of ocean warming and other climate threats.

For all these reasons, the slashing of the budget for composting and other recycling initiatives is short-sighted and reckless. We need to sustain what we have and actively seek to expand our environmental sustainability efforts, not abandon them. Importantly, we should be broadening composting and other recycling in poorer sections of our City that do not get the same level of services (and siting of greenmarkets) that we enjoy on the Upper West Side.

I would like to briefly share the powerful, positive rippling effect of composting that we have witnessed in our own small building's experience. For some years, 258's shareholders had individually taken the initiative to deposit compost at local greenmarkets. After making inquiries when we saw some brown composting bins in our neighborhood, we were approved for curbside pick-ups in December 2018, and have been impressed with the terrific support we have gotten from Sanitation at every step.

Curbside recycling upped our composting compliance, and our regular garbage was dramatically reduced as a result. Keeping food scraps out of the black garbage bags has meant that they are no longer prone to marauding rats and unruly dogs when we put them out for Sanitation pick-up. We have used the compost end product when it was made

available at the local greenmarkets to nourish a tenant's back garden, as well as the trees on our block.

The public school attended by one of our shareholder's 6-year-old granddaughter Dorothy had curbside compost pick-up every week, and the children were invited to bring compost from home. Dorothy took immense pride in doing this, and turned her parents into regular composters (having previously not composted at all). Our shareholder taught Dorothy, her cousins and another tenant's young children about the process of composting and the reasons for it.

We found that we were all individually encouraged friends and acquaintances in our neighborhood to take compost to the greenmarkets (and now, to get curbside collection). More recently, we discussed taking the initiative to speak with the other buildings on our block to encourage them to enroll, when we learned of Mayor di Blasio's shutdown of the program. It is a double blow to learn that we cannot even go back to our earlier practice of carrying the waste to greenmarkets.

We implore the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintains the present level of composting, rather than throw overboard the progress we have made in the past few years.

Restoring budget cuts to the NYC Compost Project and GrowNYC is necessary not only for the composting they enable, but preserves a fount of knowledge and on-the-ground experience that are vital for our future progress against the climate threat.

We also urge that Sanitation be instructed to explore how it might be able to continue curbside recycling, such as, for example, recouping some of the cost by offering some of the compost for sale to City residents at local greenmarkets, plant stores and florists.

Thank you.

We are Roosevelt Island citizens who are concerned about the health of our environment, both now and for future generations. We have been very enthusiastic supporters of GrowNYC and the NYC Compost Project since its inception on the Island. Every Saturday, we have taken 2 or 3 2.4 gallon containers of organic food scraps to our collectors.

For one thing, we know that this composting greatly reduces landfill waste. We have noticed how much less garbage we dispose since we started participating in this program. Secondly, it creates lovely, rich soil for gardens and plants which can nourish us or add oxygen to our environment.

For these reasons, we ask that you continue to fund GrowNYC and the NYC Compost Project.

Sincerely,
Kris and Karen Johnson
531 Main St., #1201
New York, NY 10044

21 May 2020

Good afternoon,

My name is Kate Nesin, a resident of Brooklyn. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. I have been composting with my family at home for 18 months, ever since my younger son was born. I consider it a key way to teach both myself and my children about how to care for our community, our City, and our hurting planet—the one they will have to grow old in.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills—a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding for composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to my family, our neighborhood, our City, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you for your time and efforts,
Kate Nesin

Good afternoon,

My name is Kathryn Carnazza. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Composting is a meaningful and accessible way for me and other individuals to combat climate change.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. If these projects disappear we have no way to compost given our microapartment and budget, and the same must be true for many New Yorkers. And the bill will come due, as climate change continues to impact us all.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our family and neighborhood, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you,

Kathryn Carnazza

My name is Kathryn Natale, and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. I work at the Queens Botanical Garden, and although I cannot speak on behalf of the garden, I can tell you personally that we depend on the Compost Project hosted at our site to responsibly reuse our weeds and food waste. This, in turn, becomes rich compost that we then use to keep our garden beautiful. In losing the Compost Project and its dedicated employees, we are losing a cornerstone of our garden, and our community will lose out in the end as well.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,
Kathryn Natale
Assistant Gardener | Queens Botanical Garden
43-50 Main Street, Flushing, NY 11355
Email: knatale@queensbotanical.org
Phone: 718-886-3800, ext. 252

Good afternoon, name is Kathryn Bryant, and I am a New Yorker who is concerned about climate justice and longterm sustainability. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. As someone who wants to raise a family in the city, I believe these programs are important investments for the future.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;

- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot overstate the urgency of this ask to my neighborhood and family, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Dear NYC City Council Members,

I am disheartened to learn that community composting and curbside organics are being cut from the FY 2021 budget, leaving the City's 8+ million residents with no free, accessible option for organic waste diversion. This short-sighted decision will affect residents for decades to come and will dramatically impact the City's ambitious Zero Waste sustainability goals.

In the words of Jane Goodall, "What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make." **Your action on this issue is critical.**

I am calling on you to restore funding for NYC Compost Project, GrowNYC, and their partners. The funding for these organizations -- approximately \$7 million -- is a fraction of the \$28 million in organics funding being cut from the DSNY budget, but their capacity and citywide impact are substantial. With funding, these organizations can divert millions of pounds of organic waste from landfills each year, process large quantities of scraps, and distribute finished compost to community gardens, urban farms, and food access programs.

New York City has always been an exemplar during times of crisis. This moment is no different. Please restore funding for these essential organizations. We need them now more than ever.

Many thanks,
Katie Zwick
Brooklyn, NY

Good afternoon, name is Katy Burgio. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and

- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to the city, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Hello,

My name is Katy Einerson and I am a member of 61 Franklin Street Community Garden in Greenpoint, where I co-lead our compost committee. The committee maintains a 3-bin compost system that diverts food waste from landfills and enriches our neighborhood by adding compost to nutrient-deprived tree beds.

In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. I am a graduate of the the NYC Compost Project's Master Composter Certificate Course, which taught me all I know about composting, and has provided invaluable support to me and my community garden in our efforts. Without funding for initiatives like these, invaluable opportunities for citizens to learn, apply their knowledge for their community's benefit, all while working towards a sustainable future, will be lost.

.The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;

- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to me, my neighborhood, and my community garden, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Best,

Katy Einerson

--

740-456-7242

katy.einerson@gmail.com

272 Leonard Street Apt 1

Brooklyn, NY 11211

SAVE COMMUNITY COMPOSTING in NYC

To: Honorable Justin Brannan

CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov

Re: Community Composting

Composting returns what came from the land, back to the land, instead of to a landfill.

I have been composting, and teaching about composting, since I became a Brooklyn resident nine years ago. As an employee at the renowned Brooklyn Botanic Garden during my first years here, seeing composting happen at such a large scale drove me to believe in the power of teaching the public about community-based sustainability. It made me proud to be a Brooklyn resident, and I began a ritual of biking my frozen compost to the NYC Greenmarkets every single Saturday.

I have been a DOE teacher for five years now, and I have been privileged to work alongside coworkers who believe in engaging students in community improvement. At Sunset Park High School, students sorted their cafeteria waste properly into trash, recycling, and composting bins. Teachers at Sunset Park High School integrated local sustainability into the curriculum, and this motivated students to become involved.

My current middle school has been a proud participant in the DOE Office of Sustainability's Zero Waste program. This has been a true exercise in community-based sustainability. We have built relationships with school custodial staff, cafeteria staff, and members of the high school with whom we share the campus. Our school's ultimate goal has been to compost, and we have been waiting to be added to the truck's route. This seemed like a realistic goal, since the school is located in Boerum Hill, where residents and nearby schools utilize the composting infrastructure.

Composting not only reduces the waste in energy spent shipping our organics to far-away places, but it fills a need people have to feel involved in community improvement efforts. Citizens--and young people, especially!--are fed up with the blatant mistreatment of our resources and environment, our home. At this time where we feel most disconnected from each other and our physical interaction with our city, we need to be able to feel connected through community composting, and to look forward to a healthier city.

Thank you for supporting Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Kayla Hussey

Teacher, New York City Department of Education

130 72nd Street

Brooklyn, NY 11209

To our Council Members,

Good afternoon, my name is Kaytie Eaton and I live in Winsdor Terrace, though I am a former resident of Sunset Park, and have lived in Brooklyn for over 20 years. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. This is one small way we can take care of our city, reduce waste and pollutants as well as teach our children, more specifically, MY children, about what it means to care for our city and our world. We have to be able to give back in the same way we take from our earth.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;

- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our family, our neighborhood and our city, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Kaytie Eaton

Good Evening,

My name is Kelly Doyle. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organic recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut a lot of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills — a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling, education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential for long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress made in the past few years.

I am not asking that the Council to restore all \$28 million of organic program cuts. Rather, I am asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and its partners, and to GrowNYC be restored with expansion for community outreach and education.

I work for an environmental non-profit in the City and received a Masters of Science from the City College of New York. In my work and studies I have seen and researched the positive impacts organic recycling and composting has on all five boroughs and the communities within them. I also worked as a Compost Coordinator with GrowNYC where I helped educate people about composting at a Greenmarket. It was an amazing opportunity to meet directly with community members to discuss the positive impacts of composting. People were so happy to contribute to this effort in a very direct way.

The cuts to the NYC Compost Project, its partners and GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and prevent this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

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- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across the all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;

- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity;
- and the City could continue vital education and outreach needed to ensure all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle — such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you,
Kelly Doyle

Good afternoon,

My name is Kellyann Hee and I am a concerned activist and resident of NYC. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. This is important for not just me, but for all New Yorkers. We set an example for this country, and the world, and we need to set the right example during this urgent climate crisis.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. This would be huge for my community during this time of difficulty, isolation, and general anxiety about the state of the earth within all this.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work; at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills; at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle -- such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to myself, my family, and my community, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Kellyann Hee
82 Downing Street, #4D
Brooklyn, NY 11238

Good morning,

My name is Kelsey Swift and I am a resident of Crown Heights, Brooklyn. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our community, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Kelsey Swift

Dear members of City Council,

Mayor DeBlasio's decision to stop curbside composting in New York City is advised and shortsighted. It would make much more sense to implement mandatory organics collection. Ultimately, this would save the city millions of dollars, and create a far more sustainable model that looks toward the future, rather triaging to balance our current budget. If we stop our composting initiative for 14 months, it will take five years for our citizens to get back into the habit. Anyone who has lived in the city since mayor Bloomberg's tenure is aware of this, because he stopped our recycling collection as part of a budget plan. We do not have five years! Do you really think the perils that await us because of our changing climate and unsustainable habits are going to sit back and wait? This is another instance of elected officials damning our children's future. Shame on you!

To NYC City Council,

I'm dismayed to learn that the City is planning to cut the community composting and recycling outreach programs of the NYC Compost Project and GrowNYC.

As a longtime Crown Heights resident, myself and my neighbors have benefitted enormously from the NYC Compost Project classes and community gardening outreach at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. I was fortunate to participate in one of their community street tree care events a couple years ago and it was empowering to learn how easy and fun it was to make my community a brighter and more welcoming place. Given the health and economic crisis affecting our city, it will be extremely important that citizens feel motivated to continue this work as storefronts become vacant and construction projects idle.

I've also been able to participate with hundreds of my neighbors in the community composting drop-off program on Eastern Parkway. Each week it's incredible to see the spirit of so many people going out of their way to recycle their food scraps. It's the friendly and knowledgeable staff at these sites that are key to this participation. These sites also play a necessary role in public health. My neighborhood has a terrible rodent problem and this is only likely to grow with the aforementioned vacating of buildings and the increased amount of residential food waste placed unsecured at the curb.

I implore you to please reverse these cuts and ensure that worthwhile community programs will survive our current crisis.

Thank you,
Keshia Coe

Composting is something that my wife and I have loved to do over the past few years. Every time we dropped our food scraps off, there was a sense of pride of doing something good, both for the community and the environment. As time went on we started helping neighbors get on board with it, showing them the benefits of not having your garbage fill up with smelly food waste constantly.

When we heard that composting was being suspended for the foreseeable future, we were so disheartened. Living in New York is supposed to mean that we're in a city that is at the forefront of progressive movements. With composting just beginning to really gain ground, ending it now will send us back to a point that we cannot afford at this moment. If our great city can't figure out a way to make it happen, why would other cities and communities bother? We must continue to lead and be an inspiration, while also proving that we care about the future of both our city, and the planet.

With this in mind, please reconsider funding our composting programs, as we all stand to benefit from it in the long term.

Thank You,

Kevin Sternschein

Amanda Grant

Kim Tateo

16 Hutton Street, Apt 2, Troy, NY 12180 (previously resided at 921 Metropolitan Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11211)
646.673.3473 | kkullmer@gmail.com | www.lookalittlecloser.com

May 21, 2020

Hello,

My name is Kim Tateo and I'm with Earth Matter, NY an important and essential composting organization on Governors Island. I currently serve on the Board of Directors of the organization.

In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

For two years I was the Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator for the NYC Compost Project hosted by Earth Matter NY. During those two years, I saw the composting movement bloom and flourish and now community composting is needed more than ever.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The NYCCP hosted by Earth Matter, NY on Governors Island, provides an educational opportunity for New Yorkers to witness a closed-loop food cycle and see how their food scraps are turned back into compost. Trees can be planted and food can be grown to help those that are facing food insecurity.

Kim Tateo

16 Hutton Street, Apt 2, Troy, NY 12180 (previously resided at 921 Metropolitan Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11211)
646.673.3473 | kkullmer@gmail.com | www.lookalittlecloser.com

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Kim Tateo

Save our Compost

Please continue to support and save the Compost program and help fund a Compost machine on Roosevelt Island. Our compost program is vital for reaching the goal of Zero Waste. We do not want to go backwards. Let us do all we can to save the environment by reducing greenhouse gases and reducing waste to landfills. We must invest in our future generations.

Thanks,

Kimberly Ellis-Rogers

Roosevelt Island resident

To: Honorable Mr. Lander
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

My name is Kimberly Reinhardt and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs.

When my mother suddenly passed away in 2015, I was in a lot of sadness and grief. It was during this time that I enrolled in the six month composting apprenticeship at Earth Matter on Governor's Island. More so than many other activities I had going on, this simple act of diverting organics from the waste stream and turning it into vibrant living soil gave me hope for the present and future and eased my sadness and pain. In our present time of collective grief due to the pandemic, I believe that the humble yet powerful act of composting offers the same type comfort and hope for the future. It breaks my heart that during such a difficult and vulnerable time for the city both curbside collection and community drop off sites have been closed leaving me with no other option but to put the organics in the garbage. This material is not garbage. It is a valuable resource. We are nothing without soil. I believe that closing these sites and cutting funding after we have all worked so hard to establish the programs and infrastructure is the exact opposite direction that we need to be going in for ourselves and for future generations of New Yorkers.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis. Please, we need these programs for our physical, spiritual and mental well being.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,
Kimberly Reinhardt
661 Baltic Street #2
Brooklyn, NY 11217

The Wright Family
86 Green Street
Brooklyn, NY 11222

May 20, 2020

Honorable Council Levin and
410 Atlantic Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11217

Honorable Speaker Corey Johnson
224 West 30th St, STE 1206
New York, NY 10007

Re: Community Composting and Mandatory Organics Collection Bill

Dear Sirs:

My name is Kimberly Wright. I have been an active member of the Greenpoint Brooklyn Community since moving to this neighborhood in 1998. Further, I am a native New Yorker who grew up in Manhattan in the 1970s and 1980s before heading off to explore this country and others and then returning to this great city to raise my own family.

As a native New Yorker, I am not only disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs, I am sorely disappointed. As a child, growing up in Manhattan, I lived through the rodent infested garbage strikes, the black out and the near bankruptcy of this city. Back then, everyone understood the import of hard times and not receiving federal aid (the paper headlines ran something like "Ford tells City Drop Dead"). As a child, my neighbor told me "don't worry, New Yorkers can handle anything." I remembered those words 9/11/01, a week before my wedding day, when people fled the city, canceled their plans to come to our wedding and close friends and family had to go through Canada to make it. We all knew why we stayed. We know why we continue to stay despite Covid19.

I moved to Brooklyn in 1998 to start a new life with my own family. I participated in the meetings of the North Brooklyn Parks Alliance and the Open Space Alliance to ensure that our neighborhood became safe and desirable for our children to grow up away from the toxic chemicals and garbage dumps for which this area was infamous. In 2004, we purchased property, further committing to the neighborhood's development. This community has worked hard for a greener Greenpoint. McCarren Park and McGolrick Park now have Farmer's Markets that offer community composting, Newtown Creek is finally cleaning up, we have open spaces along the waterfront and people all participate in the brown bin organic waste program. The brown bin program has become so ingrained that neighbors are currently storing frozen composting bags filled with organic waste, waiting for places to open up to take it. We purchased our own compost bin only to find it is not enough. We were thrilled to recently learn that Smiling Hogshead Ranch in LIC is taking compost! There must of necessity be a citywide effort to ensure that we do not move back in the direction of landfills! One cannot and should not needlessly destroy such positive community norms.

I know that you, Stephen, have been part of this development. I remember the days when development meetings would happen one day and you would be singing in Teddy's the next night. You know what it is to live in support of your convictions. You now live in Greenpoint too. I can say the same for Antonio Reynoso of Williamsburg and hope that his bill to preserve the \$3.5 million that funds compost outreach and community programs gets passed. Improving the environment to make the world a better place for our communities and our children is not just a political position, it is a critical mission given the realities of global warming and the depletion of neighborhoods and communities.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change and urban blight. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis. Otherwise, middle class people will continue to leave (look at the stats).

I ask not only that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs but that you do better. I presume you are all New Yorkers, native or converted. Is it really necessary to spend as much on organics? Does the DOS need to pick up organics as often? Could you not work better with local community composting programs to make this a city-wide effort that doesn't just depend on the DOS and institutional waste? I beseech you all to think outside of the box the way so many New Yorkers have to do on a daily basis to survive now, during Covid19, or as we did back in 2008 or back in the 1970s. With appropriate laws, educational outreach and community, anything is possible. Please, act more like New Yorkers and less like politicians. Find a solution and convince Mayor DeBlasio and Governor Cuomo to consider it. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Wright
86 Green Street,
Brooklyn, NY 11222

Good morning,

My name is Kinga Novak, and I am a New Yorker who has been composting for over a decade now. I started by dropping off food scraps at the Greenmarket, and was very happy when the city began collecting compostable organics in my neighborhood in Brooklyn. In this testimony, I ask that the City not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. This would allow people to drop off compostable waste and not contribute to more landfill waste.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this to our local community and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you,

KINGA NOVAK

Good evening,

My name is Kjerstin Pugh and I am a resident of Hamilton Heights. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Composting has become an important practice in my life and the lives of my neighbors as we try to combat global warming and waste on a daily basis in our homes.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

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- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to my community and myself and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Best,
Kjerstin Pugh

Dear Speaker Johnson,

I have recently heard that budget cuts include the elimination of the community composting subsidy. This funds the seven nonprofits that make up the NYC Compost Project in every borough, including the one that serves my neighborhood in the Bronx.

The NYC Compost Project provides essential services to me and other:

%2◆%2 community gardeners and urban farmers

%2◆%2 local and citywide greening and volunteer groups

%2◆%2 schools and youth organizations

%2◆%2 agency and institutional partners

%2◆%2 seniors and other residential groups

I have benefited from the Compost Project%2◆◆s helpline, hands-on assistance, resources, and educational efforts.

They have been crucial in helping me to use composting to reduce waste, grow food, connect to my community, and learn green job skills. Their work helps improve the health of our depleted soils and the environment at our homes and in our neighborhoods throughout NYC.

Now more than ever, we need the NYC Compost Project to continue to support our community as we work together to create a more healthy, equitable, and sustainable City.

We have already lost so much because of COVID-19. I hope I do not have to add such an important and beloved program to that list.

Sincerely,

Kokou Tengue

tenguekokou@yahoo.fr

My name is Kristen - I co-run the group Clean Bushwick Initiative. We are an environmental group working on resolving the rampant litter issues in Bushwick / surrounding neighborhoods. As one might be aware, the neighborhood has a big rat infestation resulting from the litter, which in turn leads to high rates of asthma. What's more, it's no mere coincidence that the air quality here is what exacerbated the COVID crisis. The challenges are all linked. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of the city wide compost program and what an enormous environmental setback it will be if it's cancelled.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. Having GrowNYC Drop off locations in Bushwick allowed us to create awareness and great momentum in the fight against climate change .

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity;
- and the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to Bushwick and the rest of this City and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you,
Kristen Tadrous

Good afternoon,

My name is Larissa Ananko and I have been a resident in NYC for 10 years. I moved to the city when I was eighteen, and now consider myself a 'real New Yorker', something that I have immense pride in! In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years. I personally, only began composting in the past six months and cannot accurately illustrate in words how much NYCGrow has helped my household divert trash from landfills to purposeful composting.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

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- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our neighborhood and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you,

Larissa Ananko

Good afternoon, name is Laurel Chausse. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting. Composting is an easily adaptable process with proper education and one of the easiest ways for us to make a big impact on climate justice and keeping our city clean.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

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community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity;
and

- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our neighborhood and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Laurel Chausse

#SaveOurCompost. Continue to fund the nonprofits GrowNYC and the NYC Compost Project. We can't afford to regress. Composting will save our earth. People will do it if they have composting resources near to them which has a price tag.

.

lauren blankstein

Good afternoon,

My name is Lauren Giambalvo, and I am a resident of Far Rockaway, Queens.

In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. I feel that it is imperative that our community have access to organics collection.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. This outreach would be extremely beneficial to our community here in Rockaway. People are interested in climate change, and how to become more eco-friendly and responsible, but many do not know where to start, further education, especially in NYC public schools can help families understand the importance of composting and recycling to our climate.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;

- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to myself and my neighbors, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best,

Lauren Giambalvo

SAVE COMMUNITY COMPOSTING in NYC

To: Honorable Justin Brannan
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

My name is Lauren Hayman and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. For the past 3 years we have been freezing our nightly compost then disposing it in our brown bin. Before these cuts we were teaching our 2 year old the importance of why composting helps the environment. To now show her we are throwing all of our waste in the trash is a horrible example to set for her and hurting Mother Earth. People are home now more than ever and creating more food scraps than ever before, this could be the absolute WORST time to cut this program. If the city does not want to purely fund the program, you should be able to pay a small special tax to opt in to have it picked up each week.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Lauren Hayman
424 74th Street
Brooklyn, New York, 11209

To: Honorable Stephen T. Levin
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

My name is Lauren Kesner O'Brien and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. AS a parent of small children, I am concerned for the climate and want my kids to know they there are concrete actions we can take to preserve a livable planet. Compost is something that gives us hope.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Lauren Kesner O'Brien
350Brooklyn Families
188 Bergen Street, Brooklyn NY 11217

Good afternoon,

My name is Lauren Schlesinger. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this to us and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you. Lauren Schlesinger

My name is Lauren Singer, I am a New York City native, NYU graduate, a proud New York City resident, and owner of the NYC based business, Package Free, where we're on a mission to make the world less trashy through selling products that help you reduce waste daily.

Through my team's endeavors, we've helped divert hundreds of millions of units of trash from landfill, and have engaged millions of people around the world in living low waste. My mission in life is to create large scale positive environmental impact, and I have committed my personal and professional energy to accomplishing that goal.

I fundamentally believe that if there's anything that has an amazing positive impact on the planet, it's composting. Most people think that if they throw food into a landfill it's OK because it will "biodegrade." That's actually not the case. Food breaks down using aerobic digestion, or digestion with oxygen. However, in landfills, there is a lack of oxygen which results in anaerobic digestion. Anaerobic digestion releases methane, which is exponentially more effective as a greenhouse warming gas than carbon dioxide. Organics suitable for composting including food scraps, food soiled paper, and yard waste makeup 34% of NYC's total waste stream.

This 34% means that New Yorkers are directly responsible for catalyzing climate change through daily choices that can easily be changed with compost collection infrastructure.

Composting allows us to divert organic matter and food waste from landfill and reduce the amount of methane that's released into the atmosphere. It creates nutrient rich soil and introduces valuable microorganisms such as bacteria, fungi, and protozoa, to our underground ecosystems. It's also fairly accessible (you can worm compost in even the most lifeless spaces) and before COVID-19, New Yorkers could keep their compost in their freezers, and drop them at local farmers markets or in brown bins. These past few years, the movement towards composting was picking up momentum. Thanks to committed individuals, as well as organizations such as GrowNYC and the NYC Compost Project, which includes Earth Matter, LES Ecology Center, Big Reuse and the New York Botanical Gardens, over 308,600 pounds of organic matter was being composted per day.

The recent budget cuts and subsequent suspension of composting will result in these 308,600 pounds per day or 112,639,000 pounds per year to be sent to landfills or incinerators where they will release greenhouse gasses and have both short term and long term impacts on planetary health. They also threaten the infrastructure of the nonprofits as well as the livelihoods of the teams who have been working to make composting accessible to us all.

Nonetheless, I understand that given the current state of the world, budget cuts must be made to support our city and New Yorkers in need. I am personally an advocate for sustainability and

composting and I believe that protecting the environment now will work to prevent human and planetary health crises in the future. But still, I know that my environmental values may not be a priority to the many New Yorkers who are focused on meeting basic needs for themselves and their families day to day. As much as I truly believe in sustainability and Zero Waste, I have even pivoted many of my own priorities and practices to put the health of my community and those around me first.

I also recognize that even if environmental values are important to those feeling the weight of COVID-19, the ability to live sustainably is not currently available to everyone. I am on a mission personally and through my company to change that, and to make healthy and sustainable living accessible and affordable. Until that happens, and in the face of the current compost ban, I have a few questions.

Is composting really the most sensible sacrifice or are there other budget cuts that could have been made? If the reduction of greenhouse gasses is not a priority, how is the city taking long term action to protect and preserve our environmental health?

Can we fund composting in NYC another way? Can it become privatized?

Composting in NYC was piloted by nonprofits and passionate individuals, and once proven as an effective means to divert food waste from landfills, was adopted by larger municipal programs. This demonstrates that composting is a practice that people not only want, but will also go out of their way to seek. While I don't currently have all of the answers about how we can continue to support composting and compost collection amidst budgeting for immediate community concerns, I do know that a path forward is both inevitable and vital.

As members of the City Council, I urge you to not only reconsider budget cuts as they apply to composting, but also to work to provide solutions for those who seek to continue composting organic waste amidst this new normal. Proposed solutions include: maintaining citywide access to composting for NYC residents through a network of food scrap drop-off sites, processing residential food scraps at existing community composting facilities, and providing education, outreach, technical assistance, overflow processing capacity, and free finished compost to residents and groups.

As a born NYC native and business owner, I represent a rapidly growing demographic of individuals and business owners living in New York City who pledge to support, and work in parallel with, New York City in all endeavors that contribute to the continuation of our composting infrastructure to maintain an economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable city.

Is there a future where the health of all communities doesn't have to work in opposition with the health of the environment? I think yes, and if there is any city in the world that can accomplish it, it's New York.

Good afternoon, name is Lauryn Tacoronte. I live in the East Williamsburg community and rely on local community composting. I am also a former volunteer with Earth Matter, a non-profit composting group in New York City. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. I'm a long time composter (more than 10 years!) and rely on this program to reduce my waste footprint to reduce my carbon impact on this city and this Earth!

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;

- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to me and my community, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Thursday, May 21st, 2020

Good afternoon,

My name is Leah Kirts and I am a resident of Sunnyside, Queens.

In this testimony, I am joining with fellow New Yorkers to ask that the city does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. I urge the city to take a long view of organics recycling and not to reintroduce millions of pounds of waste to our landfills.

In my neighborhood, there is only one community volunteer-run composting site that is now overwhelmed with food scraps because so many people like me want to reroute our food waste to create beautiful, rich compost for gardening and to improve toxic NYC soil. We shouldn't have to go out of our way to do a simple good thing like compost. We also shouldn't risk smothering the one community spot that is willing to take our food scraps because the city doesn't think that this is a priority as important as recycling and garbage pick-up. Trust, it is!

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this city has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills, which are a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the city back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council not to abandon organics collections during this crisis but to recommit to organics diversion programs that have made significant impacts in our communities. Please do not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

History shows us that temporary suspensions do not have temporary effects. In the wake of the 9/11 attacks, the city suspended plastic and glass recycling in July 2002 to close a budget gap. Plastic recycling was suspended for 12 months and glass for 21 months. Once recycling resumed, rates plummeted and they have still not fully recovered, even now in 2020. Recycling compliance works best when practice and behavior are consistent.

I am asking that the Council restore organics program cuts including curbside collection. Though the brown bin program has yet to reach all of New York City, suspending the program will likely have grave consequences over time. In the interest of access and equity, I am specifically asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. These programs ensure that all New Yorkers can participate in organics collection and help to raise awareness about the importance impacts of diversion and waste reduction.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue

to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that: at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work; at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills; at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our city and the people in each neighborhood of all New York City boroughs, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority is not left behind in the budget process.

Thank you,
Leah Kirts

Dear City Council Members,

I am extremely disappointed to learn that the city is planning to cut community composting and residential organics recycling from the FY 2021 budget. Composting in NYC is as much about building healthy communities as it is building healthy soils, and the work of the NYC Compost Project and GrowNYC is essential to the community health of the city.

I cannot stress enough the urgency of reinstating the NYC Compost Project budget, and enabling them to continue their vital work of diverting food scraps from landfills, and making the city healthier, safer, and more resilient. If these programs are removed from the budget, the city's Zero Waste goals are imperiled and the infrastructure of at least 8 non-profits is endangered. Cutting this budget sets the city back over 100 years, when Sanitation Commissioner George Waring first instated food waste sorting in the 1890s. We cannot allow this colossal environmental set back on our watch.

At a time when public health requires a sustainable city, New Yorkers deserve better.

Please reverse these cuts to recycling outreach and community composting programs, so that our city will survive the current crisis, and emerge stronger and more sustainable.

Thank you,
Lena Frey
Brooklyn, NY

Dear New York City Representatives,

2020 must not be remembered as the year our city stopped taking the climate crisis seriously. A New York which can sufficiently thrive in the days of climate change is one which begins to change its ways now. A stable New York of the 2020s and 2030s can only exist if we are looking at a city which recycles its organic waste. It is clear to me that to lose a year of New York's compost dropoff program is to lose the entire program all together. What will be done with the well sealed brown containers that so many New Yorkers have just learned to use? What will be done with the orange peels and banana peels that so many now save in their kitchen? It seems to me that these scraps will now head to a landfill, where they will be covered with loads of waste and begin to emit toxic methane into the air - contributing to climate change. In order to be truly resilient during times of climate change, NYC's structure and culture must rapidly adapt to fit the rapid and difficult changes it will face in the coming years. The compost program begins truly spinning the wheel of action that will be required, and to see the wheel come to a screeching halt when time is already running out is extremely demoralizing. Please save our compost program. I hope, now that push is truly coming to shove, that I can be proud of my city government and not disappointed. Please make the right decision for our future.

Sincerely,

Leo Frampton. 315 Avenue C Apt 5B. 10009.

(25 years old. Environmental Studies degree at SUNY Purchase. Lifelong New York City resident.)

Leonard Librizzi
72 Clinton Avenue
Staten Island, NY 10301
May 21, 2020

To New York City Council,

I would like to add my voice to the discussion about how essential composting is to our city and environment. It is important that the City Council restore the funding to composting programs that have been cut in the Mayor's Executive Budget. The City Council must fund the nonprofits GrowNYC, Earth Matter, LES Ecology Center, Big Reuse, and the NYC Compost Projects at Brooklyn Botanic Garden, Queens Botanical Garden, Staten Island Botanical Garden and the New York Botanical Garden.

Composting is an activity where all citizens of New York City can participate by using Sanitation's curbside pickup, dropping food scraps at drop off sites in all 5 boroughs, creating businesses to assist others in composting or composting on their own. In all instances, the above mentioned non-profits are critical to teaching and informing residents about these programs. Over the years, these non-profits have built up expertise, resources and knowledge that would be lost if their budgets are taken away.

Citizens lose faith in government and government services when first they are told that they must compost to help improve the city's environment and then told to just toss their food scraps and yard waste in the trash that is sent to landfills in other states.

Please restore this funding as an important part of the effort to improve the City's environment, provide meaningful jobs and give New Yorkers hope for the future. Thank you.

Lenny Librizzi

My name is **Leslie McCall** and, though I understand budgetary pressures right now, I cannot believe that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. I have been participating in the Curbside Composting program for 2 years. Separating our food scraps and other organic waste for composting has **MASSIVELY** cut down on the amount of trash I generate.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: **climate change**. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. **Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.**

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more **sustainable future**. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Leslie McCall
450 Clinton St., Apt. 3E
Brooklyn NY 11231



May 21, 2020

El Puente's Testimony Regarding NYC Budget

Good afternoon, my name is Leslie Velasquez and I work for El Puente. We are a community based organization, founded in 1982, and serve the low income communities of color of Williamsburg's Southside and Bushwick with holistic programming focused on the arts, education, and social and environmental justice. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. We also urge the NYC Council to prioritize the implementation of Local Law 97, continue solar installations, and to push for infrastructure projects from the NYC Climate and Community Stimulus Platform.

City Composting Programs

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills, incinerators, and waste transfer stations in environmental justice communities. The Administration plans to slash the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This short-sighted action has the potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

While this program must be expanded to include a mandatory organics program inclusive of environmental justice communities and NYCHA residences, **today we are urging the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.**

Today, we ask that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education, and that there be equitable distribution of organics and e-waste drop-off sites throughout the City. We represent environmental justice communities, that is, low income communities of color that are disproportionately burdened with pollution and will be hit first and worst by climate change. Methane from food waste is 84 times more powerful than carbon dioxide. By not capturing these emissions and diverting them from our landfills, we will significantly contribute to the acceleration of climate change, and put vulnerable communities like ours at even greater risk. Continuing organics collection removes those toxins, reduces trash by roughly 30% or more, and can generate income for the city when transformed into power and create jobs.



In the near term, we will request to see the growth of the City's organics collection to a mandatory residential organics program for everyone.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners, and to GrowNYC, together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way toward allowing

New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfills and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that: at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work; at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills; at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living. We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our community and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Green Stimulus Fund for Climate, Jobs & Renewable Energy

The impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on jobs and health has necessitated that the City invest in green infrastructure projects to put our communities back to work in good jobs that move us towards our climate goals.

The City must fully fund the implementation of Local Law 97 to tackle the biggest source of carbon emissions in the most polluting buildings, and create 40,000 good jobs in the process. The City must also press on with its solar goals and prioritize environmental justice communities for solar jobs. In the very near future, a citywide composting program is an essential service that would also provide good jobs for impacted communities while reducing our waste burden.

The City should tap into available resources, including those authorized via the federal CARES Act, existing FEMA funds, municipal liquidity grants, as well as state and federal workforce development grants.

Thank you for considering these urgent budget items - we *really* do not have any more time to waste in meeting our climate goals.

Good morning,

My name is Linda Pugliese and I am a Brooklyn resident and small business owner. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. My building alone was producing more than 60 gallons of compost per week!

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years. We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

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- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you,

Linda Pugliese

My name is Lindsey Higgins, and I live in City Council District 3. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. I have been dropping off my food scraps at the Union Square Greenmarket for the past several months, which has enabled my family to significantly reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. Ever since we started composting, we have gone from taking out our trash several times a week to only once a month. We live in a small one-bedroom apartment with no patio or outdoor space, so it is very difficult to compost on our own without resources provided by the city. The total elimination of city composting programs will result in huge amounts of organic waste going to landfills, which will in turn will significantly increase our city's greenhouse gas emissions. Due to the lack of oxygen in landfills, organic waste releases methane into the atmosphere as it decomposes in landfills -- and methane has been shown to be over 80 times more potent than carbon dioxide.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress our City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today, I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not undo the progress we have made in the past few years. I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts, though I would certainly appreciate that. Rather, I am asking that at a minimum, the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners and to GrowNYC be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent ~\$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity;
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to my family, my neighborhood, and our city, and I hope that the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you,
Lindsey Higgins

Good afternoon,

My name is Lindsey Lange-Abramowitz and I am a resident of Jackson Heights. I am writing to ask that the City does not cut funding from the organics recycling and composting programs. Food scraps and yard waste represent a significant amount of greenhouse emissions. By cutting funding to these programs, the city will be turning back the progress we've made in fighting climate change, and this will have serious consequences for all of our well-being.

Please know that New Yorkers who vote are paying attention, and many of us care deeply about the environment and the programs in place to protect it.

Thank you for your consideration,
Lindsey Lange-Abramowitz

CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov

Re: Community Composting

My name is Lisa Bell- Lemm and I was very disappointed to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. This critical to the well being of the city. Without compost my family is disposing double the amount of garbage.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Lisa Bell- Lemm

378 7th street, apt 1L
Brooklyn, NY 11215

Lisa Kaplan
160 West 97 St
New York, NY 10025

May 21, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

Climate change is the most important issue of our generation. Our leaders need to be taking serious action now. Yes, we are currently in a pandemic, yet this is only a small taste of what our future has in store with climate change continuing to get worse.

I understand the need for budget cuts now, but compost initiatives are not what should be cut.

There are short term and long term consequences to this.

Short term, for as long as composting is suspended, NYC will send more waste to landfills and incinerators.

Currently, NYC composts 308,600 pounds per day. With composting suspended, these 308,600 pounds will instead need to go to landfills and incinerators, where they will release greenhouse gases.

Long term, it likely will take years for our composting programs to recover. We have a precedent for this.

After 9/11, NYC temporarily stopped recycling glass and plastic to save money. It reintroduced plastic recycling in 2003 and glass in 2004, but it took years for the capture rates to rebound to pre-9/11 numbers.

Composting is essential to our environment and community. We cannot afford to regress.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Lisa Kaplan

My name is Lisette Estrada and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs.

In the months since the City has suspended the composting program, I've had no options for composting my food waste. I have been storing it in my freezer in the hope that these programs will return. It breaks my heart to throw my food scraps in the trash after years of diligently composting, and it is not acceptable for the City to continue these cuts for the next year or more. Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting services for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Lisette Estrada

48-28 59th place

Woodside NY 11377

I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. I have been taking my food scraps to the greenmarket at Grand Army Plaza since I moved to the area last year. I live in a high rise building that didn't have access to the Curbside Composting program, and I was happy to have another option for keeping my food waste out of landfills.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Livia Foldes

575 3rd St. Brooklyn

To whom it may concern:

Community Composting is critical in NYC to reduce our waste, promote good recycling habits and keep our sidewalks clean. While I understand the expense associated with curbside pickup, I would suggest keeping farmers' markets open as drop-off sites. I look forward to my walk to the Union Square farmer's market each Saturday to drop off my organic waste. I cook 4 nights a week, make coffee at home daily, and all compostable scraps go into a bag to be dropped off. I even got my husband interested in composting and have influenced friends as well. So much of our waste does not need to go into the stream of garbage that will ultimately end up in landfills. It has been painful to throw out organic waste during the pandemic. We know that composting will have benefits for our city in the future and if anything should be expanded during these tumultuous times to show that NYC is a city of the future and committed to protecting the earth for generations to come.

Thank you for your time & consideration.
Liz Csordas, Greenwich Village

May 21 2020

To Government Officials,

Please **DO NOT** cut NYC organic Food Scrap Collection from the City's 2021 budget.

Organics collection in NYC is essential to public and environmental health -- throughout the COVID-19 emergency, and beyond.

Thursday, 5/21, the City Council will meet to weigh-in on De Blasio's 2021 budget, which eliminates all funding for organics collection through June, 2021 (at minimum). With these proposed cuts, New Yorkers will be left with no public options to keep their food scraps out of landfills for at least one year.

Our family, 5th generation Upper WestSiders, have been collecting and separating organic food scraps for years. By disposing of them separately, we are saving valuable landfill space and cutting down on waste and pollution, creating new rich organic soil for future use, and teaching our impressionable children that NYCers can be active environmentalists, even if we live in a major urban City.

Our family's wise forbearers were leaders in NYC; we're asking you to be the wise leaders we need today. We urge you to continue food scrap collection and pick-ups throughout NYC, and to promote 'green' strategies throughout NYC.

Thank you,

Lori Malloy

270 West End Ave

NY NY 10023

malloystuff@yahoo.com

My name is Lori Vroegindewey and I'm writing on behalf of 61 Franklin Street Community Garden in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. 61 Franklin Street Community Garden is a member-run communal garden and open space with the mission to provide a vibrant green space and the opportunity for environmental education to the residents of Greenpoint, Brooklyn. Started in 2013 our membership has grown to over 100 people as of this year.

Our garden community is dismayed at the city's decision to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. We understand firsthand the demand in our neighborhood for composting options.

Our garden has been overwhelmed with requests from people to compost with us since the City suspended the Curbside Composting and Food Scrap Drop-off programs. People in our neighborhood are desperate for a way to compost, and we can't safely keep up with that demand. We need the City to step up and honor its commitments to Zero Waste by funding community composting rather than leaving this essential work to volunteers like our membership.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future and that combat climate change. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Lori Vroegindewey on behalf of
61 Franklin St. Community Garden
61 Franklin St. Brooklyn, NY 11222

Hello,

I wanted to send a quick note in favor of saving the community organics programs and ultimately passing the CORE Act. I've lived in many different places in the city and had to find a multitude of ways to compost my food scraps: from farmers' market drop-offs, to community garden drop-offs, to ultimately getting a brown bin and enjoying the luxury of being able to "drop off" my organics right at my building's doorstep. I've always been impressed and relieved that these programs exist.

I am extremely disappointed to hear that funding for these programs would be cut off for this year.

I believe that we need to maintain the momentum begun by NYC Sanitation and the community composting projects to continue to instill this important habit of composting into the current and future generations of New Yorkers. There is no time to waste.

Sincerely,

Louisa Denison

Williamsburg, Brooklyn

To: Honorable Eric Ulrich
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

My name is Louisa Solomon and I am incredibly upset to learn of the City's plan to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. As a parent of two small children, I know how essential it is for NYC to lead the country - and the world - in progressive environmental policy, so our children can grow up in a livable world, in a livable New York. Our family has been thrilled to take advantage of curbside compost pick-up since we moved to Queens, and it has reduced our garbage output by over 50%, remarkably. We had been waiting with enthusiasm for the City to expand this program. It is devastating to think that you'll do the opposite.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Louisa Solomon
8616 98th Street
Queens, NY 11421

Good afternoon, name is Lucie Dupas and I am with GreenHomeNYC, a grassroots sustainability organization, as well as EnterSolar, the leading commercial solar installer in NYC. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress the City has made in diverting food scraps, yard waste, and valuable recyclables from landfills. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach, and all composting services. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications and will be a massive setback of the City's sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to maintain residents' ability to continue recycling and composting, and not toss the significant progress we have made in diverting valuable materials from landfills and incinerators in the past few years.

I am asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with an additional expansion of funds for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners, and to GrowNYC, together represent approximately \$7 million. Restoring this \$7M to the budget, plus some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to reduce their impact on the environment, reduce long term costs for the City, and live lives that are more environmentally responsible, without massive behavioral change (which we know can be challenging to instill!) With this funding, organic material that makes up at least 34% of the residential waste stream will be diverted from landfills. We should not waste the value of the nutrient resources in our food, and should not waste money and resources shipping this heavy and wet material far from the City, instead of keeping it close by in composting facilities.

Restoring \$7M+ would ensure that:

at least 8 non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as essential community education, could continue their good work;

at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to serve their communities, allowing individuals to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;

at least 6 community composting facilities can continue their work of processing organic waste, turning it into usable compost to amend soils and grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity;

the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living; and individual New Yorkers who are already stressed by economic collapse and fear of infection during a global pandemic can continue to take a small daily action, making them feel connected to the world, and recognizing that small actions can make a difference.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to my neighborhood, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you

Lucie Dupas

May 21, 2020

Lucy Koteen, 138 Lafayette Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11238

Good afternoon, my name is Lucy Koteen, an active member of the Sierra Club. I ask that New York City not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating the organics recycling and composting program. Organic waste composes about one third of the waste thrown out. Now all that waste will go into the landfills. The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. The cutting of the composting program is very short sighted and in opposition to the City's goal to work towards lowering greenhouse gas emissions that increase global warming. It is going backwards in our efforts to reduce global warming that leads to climate change endangering the lives of our children.

The City spent a great deal of money and effort to roll out the organics pick up program but did not follow up with promoting the program which accounts for the low participation in the program. To reduce the waste produced in this large City, there needs to be mandatory composting just as there has been for recycling.

For those of us who are accustomed to composting it is painful to combine organic waste from our kitchens, our gardens, and our fall leaf clean up with other household garbage. This organic waste will no longer be turned into valuable soil to return to the earth. This creates future costs in disposing waste and in lives.

The City must continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

It is urgent that the City Council restore the organics pick up program throughout the city.

Do it for the children and future generations.

Thank you.

Good morning,

My name is Lucy Roberts. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. We don't have enough time to go backwards on our sustainability goals. Not only will this create more methane than we can budget, it also sends the message that we're not in a climate emergency. We are absolutely in a climate emergency.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today, I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, I'm asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to me and my family, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Lucy Roberts

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Luke Bolton and I am a Harlem resident and member of our local community garden. I am writing to ask that the City continues its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by not eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. As someone deeply concerned with climate change, I know that composting organics instead of throwing them out to decay and produce greenhouse gases is an important part of fighting this pressing challenge.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. As a teacher I have seen the beneficial work that GrowNYC does in my public school and it would be a shame for that work not to continue.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work; at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our city, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Luke Bolton

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing to ask that the City restore city-wide organics pick up immediately, and indeed increase the budget to expand this service to include additional pick up days in more neighborhoods, and improved processing of organic waste.

I am a life-long New Yorker, born and raised in Manhattan, but I never composted until early last year after I moved from an apartment in Brooklyn to a house in the Bronx in an area with organics pick up. Immediately my husband (another native New Yorker, hailing from Brooklyn and Staten Island) and I saw how much of our household waste could be diverted from landfills on a weekly basis. Between recycling and organics, we were only putting out trash for pick up one-time per week although pick up in our neighborhood is three times per week. It is really rare to see that degree of impact on our environment at the individual level. We were immediately converts and dutifully followed the rules for organics pick up. A few months ago, a GrowNYC representative knocked on our door to ask what we thought about the program. Our feedback was actually that recycling and organics pick up should be increased to two times per week instead of one.

Since organics pick up was recently suspended supposedly until June 2021 (and if you believe that...), it has really been devastating to us to throw away all the food and yard waste we were previously composting. After a weekend of yardwork even in our small NYC yard, we produced 5 of those large brown yard waste bags of tree and grass trimmings and weeds from our flower beds. All of that is such good, rich plant matter that can be reused in our gardens and parks. Yet it was picked up and sent straight to the landfill because of the City's decision to suspend organics pick up.

I understand we are in a time of budget crisis. But it should not be that times like these require cutting programs with broad community support and that so tangibly and measurably improve the lives of the people of our city. Surely there are programs with less support that could be cut instead. Or even better - what of reviewing our many options for increasing revenue in our City? How many millionaires and billionaires live here? How many tax subsidies do real estate developers and large business interests get?

Please make the right choice, the green choice, the choice that represents the will of our people, and restore composting and organics pick up in New York City.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Lydia Devine
Bronx, NY
lydia.devine@gmail.com
917-952-9048

Good evening,

My name is Madison Mintz. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, I am asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases. This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask for the well-being of New Yorkers, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Madison Mintz

Good afternoon,

My name is Maeve Sullivan and I am a resident of Brooklyn 11215. In this testimony, I am asking that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Especially during a time like this when so much more waste is being created.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our city, its workers and the planet. I hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Maeve Sullivan

FY21 Executive Budget cuts to Community Composting and the NYC Compost Project

Dear Speaker Johnson,

I have recently heard that budget cuts include the elimination of the community composting subsidy. This funds the seven nonprofits that make up the NYC Compost Project in every borough, including the one that serves my neighborhood in the Bronx.

The NYC Compost Project provides essential services to me and other:

- community gardeners and urban farmers
- local and citywide greening and volunteer groups
- schools and youth organizations
- agency and institutional partners
- seniors and other residential groups

I have benefited from the Compost Project's helpline, hands-on assistance, resources, and educational efforts.

They have been crucial in helping me to use composting to reduce waste, grow food, connect to my community, and learn green job skills. Their work helps improve the health of our depleted soils and the environment at our homes and in our neighborhoods throughout NYC.

Now more than ever, we need the NYC Compost Project to continue to support our community as we work together to create a more healthy, equitable, and sustainable City.

We have already lost so much because of COVID-19. I hope I do not have to add such an important and beloved program to that list.

Sincerely,
Maggie Johanet
maggiejohanet@icloud.com

Good morning, name is Maranda L. Miller and I'm a Bronx resident that is very involved in protecting Mother Earth. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. One of the actions I perform is saving my food scraps since they are one source of negative gas emissions.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and

- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask for me, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Marcanda L. Miller

Good afternoon, My name is Marc Rolla and I am a teacher at PS 90. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting. Composting is now a vital part of NYC sustainability efforts. Cutting such programs will be a step in the wrong direction. Have we learned anything from our experiences with Covid- 19? Our health and the health of the environment needs to always be our number 1 priority. How do I explain this to my daughter and my students? That when we face hard economic times, programs that make our world better are cut. Covid- 19 is an opportunity to spotlight programs like our Compost Projects across the city. We should be focused on expanding operations not cutting back. We need to be looking forward not going backwards. Composting is a major part of the cities goals for Zero Waste by 2030. Let's keeping moving forward to expand not end these essential effort in combating Climate Change here in NYC.

Thank you for your time.

To: City Council Committee on Budget

Re: Community Composting

My name is Margaret Clixby, I live in and work in the five boroughs. The City's plan to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste programming is disappointing and a bad choice.

Community composting programs are essential in NYC. The urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19 can be done elsewhere. Here's an idea: cut NYPD's budget, we don't need more cops, we need to take direct and incisive action on climate change. That's a public safety issue. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

NYC needs programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this now, we need this for our future.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Margaret Clixby

60-34 70th Ave

Ridegwood, NY 11385

8115 35th Avenue Apt 4B
Jackson Heights, NY 11372

21 May 2020

Dear Members of the Finance Committee:

Please restore funding for composting and recycling in the city budget.

Amid the current health crisis, some people are saying that composting and recycling are luxuries that need to be cut as part of an austerity plan for the city. I hope you agree that this notion is short sighted.

Community compost collection prevents tons of food and yard waste from being trucked to waste processing facilities. Those facilities are located in some of the poorest sections of NYC, where people already suffer from respiratory conditions due to pollution. The result of these health vulnerabilities has become glaringly clear during the current Covid-19 pandemic, as people with respiratory problems have far higher mortality rates than others. More community-based composting means fewer trucks and less pollution for those neighborhoods. The long-term public health benefits for under-served communities and communities of color are clear.

Please join in support of the two City Council bills 1) to establish community organics and electronics recycling sites in every neighborhood; 2) to expand the organics recycling so it is mandatory for all New Yorkers.

Thank you very much for all you do to serve our city, especially during this incredibly difficult time.

Sincerely,
Margaret Samu

In the 1970's, a recycling program for glass, metal and paper was begun in Clinton Hill. FOR 20 YEARS it was operated by community VOLUNTEERS before NYC woke up to its benefits.

Collecting COMPOST BEGAN HERE at the Ft. Greene Farmers Market!

A local visionary approached neighboring businesses to store trash cans during the week. On market-day, they were carried across DeKalb Avenue and set up to collect coffee grounds, potato peelings, etc.

It did not take the city 20 years to recognize another good idea: soon every Farmers Market, citywide, was collecting compost.

The 7 Compost Projects enrich Community Gardens, advance scientific learning in our schools and advocate for composting in all 5 boroughs.

Neighborhoods have enthusiastically embraced the idea and composting has become a HABIT.

Once 'scrapped' (no pun intended) it would be hard to rev up the momentum again.

BE PROUD OF YOUR CONSTITUENTS FORWARD-THINKING! ADD STRENGTH
TO THE MOVEMENT! RESTORE THE BUDGET FOR COMPOSTING IN
2021!

To Whom It May Concern,

Compost is not only an important method of reducing waste, lessening greenhouse gas emissions, and minimizing landfills, it is also an important educational tool. As a science teacher in New York City, I see the huge value in teaching compost as an entry point to vital climate actions we can all take. Taking the initial step to learn about recycling and compost, and the huge impact these actions can have on our environmental impact, is a stepping stone into learning about how small actions by many people make a difference. As a child, there are few things in your control that you can do to alter your environmental impact. So many decisions are made for you, such as where you live or how you get around. Even the amount of waste a child makes may not be up to them. But what we do with that waste is a place we can all come together.

In these difficult times, let's choose to fund programs that will only make our city better. Let's choose to address current and future crises. Let's choose to keep fighting climate change.

Thank you,

Mariah Doll
NYC Science Teacher

Good afternoon, my name is Mare Berger and I am a gardener in Brooklyn. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Composting is a key factor in fighting climate change and if all that food goes to landfills it will produce so much more methane which will speed up global warming.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to my neighborhood, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Mare Berger

To: Honorable Stephen T. Levin
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

My name is Martha Rowen and I live in Brooklyn Heights. I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. I had been composting through the program at my farmers market, but was so glad when the City finally made composting available for my building. I was even more happy when I saw how quickly and enthusiastically the building residents took part. For me, the knowledge that I and my neighbors were able to do something positive for the environment was extremely important. In addition, it made my waste disposal much less messy. I had a compost bin that I took down to the bins a few times a week. No need to mix food waste with other trash that could start to smell and was unpleasant to take the compactor chute.

I feel angry and betrayed at Mayor de Blasio for using this pandemic as an excuse to cut an important service we need as citizens of New York and as inhabitants of the earth. Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. We cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise. We need this even more during the current crisis.

The City must restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Martha Rowen

101 Clark St, Apt 27C

Brooklyn, NY 11201

21 May 2020

To the City Council of New York City,

My name is Mary Jo Burke and I am a resident of the Lower East Side in Manhattan. I have been a devoted composter since 1998, when I discovered the Lower East Side Ecology Center's (LESEC) compost drop-off program in the NYC Greenmarket in Union Square. I have also availed myself of the DSNY Brown Bin program through my neighboring coop in the past year or more to compost organic material not accepted by the LESEC. My board will not approve the program in our coop, even though we share management and maintenance personnel with the neighboring coop. Because of the LESEC's compost program, I have had very little organic waste since 1998. With the addition of the DSNY program in the past few years, I have had no organic waste.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted the world's cities. It is not just a global health crisis, but a social and economic crisis, the effects of which will be felt for years to come."

C40 Cities, Global Mayors COVID-19 Recovery Task Force
(<https://www.c40.org/other/covid-task-force>)

Mayor de Blasio formally endorsed the Statement of Principles of the C40 Cities Global Mayors COVID-19 Recovery Task Force earlier this month. I hope that he and the City Council chart a path forward that uses these principles to "build a better, more sustainable, more resilient and fairer society out of the recovery from the COVID-19 crisis." One of the principles states, "Excellent public services, public investment and increased community resilience will form the most effective basis for the recovery;". (<https://www.c40.org/other/covid-task-force>)

I am providing testimony today to ask the City to continue to provide excellent public services and public investment by not suspending all funding for organics collection, processing, education and outreach. Much progress has been made by the City in the past few years in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills, which has furthered the City's progress in meeting its OneNYC 2050 Zero Waste to Landfill goals. After steady growth in collection rates, there was a sharp increase in organics collection numbers from 2017 to 2018. (<https://www.grownyc.org/compost>) A setback now could handicap the program, for years to come, when it is reinstated in July 2021. Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer and City Council Member Antonio Reynoso highlighted this in their opinion piece in the Gotham Gazette on May 13, 2020. (<https://www.gothamgazette.com/opinion/9390-new-york-city-must-keep-expand-organics-collection-essential-service-composting-garbage?fbclid=IwAR15M6viTDBXqkxr-oc28-vl3iksquZSRRLSmUjX-DgrSVfVlk4jW7R5reE>)

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program funding. I am asking that the funding of the NYC Compost Project, its partners, and GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The funding of the NYC Compost project, its partners and GrowNYC represent approximately \$7 million. With some additional funding, this reduced, but continued, programing would support New Yorkers as we continue to source separate food waste. It will also prevent this major waste stream, approximately 21% of all NYC's waste, (<https://www.grownyc.org/compost>) from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases. Methane, produced by organic material in landfills, is a short-lived climate pollutant and is approximately 86 times more potent than carbon dioxide at trapping heat in the atmosphere.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills; at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn it into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

Thank you for taking the time to read and consider my testimony.

Sincerely,

Mary Jo Burke

186 Pinehurst Avenue (5E)
New York, New York 10033

May 20, 2020

To: Honorable Ydanis Rodriguez
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

My name is Mary Mooney, and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs.

It is possible to maintain composting in the home, even in New York City apartments; I have done this for years, and it is amazing to me how much it reduces the amount of food scraps that I throw in the garbage.

At the same time, I realize that composting and other zero waste activities take time and commitment---and are an extra chore for New Yorkers already burdened with the demands of jobs, families, and other responsibilities. We all need the reassurance and encouragement of public programs that help us make good choices.

Experts tell us that a large percentage of our food supply is simply thrown away, a phenomenon that makes no sense, economically, ethically, and environmentally. Community composting is a reminder to avoid and offset this waste.

Consequently, now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs. In the long run, the failure to restore these funds will prove to be pennywise and pound foolish, by contributing to the next, looming catastrophe---the effects of climate change---that faces our city.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.

Very truly yours,

Mary Frances Mooney

Good afternoon, name is Mary Ng and I am a volunteer with Earth Matter. Earth Matter is a compost learning center and urban garden center that improves the experience on Governor's Island. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Composting reduces the emissions and pollution of our communities and redirects it to become a valuable asset rather than trash.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. Restoration means an impactful community for environmental education and inspiration for protection.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;

- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our organization, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.



My name is Mary Parisen-Lavelle and I am Chair of Civics United for Railroad Environmental Solutions. CURES is a coalition of civic associations that formed in November 2009 to advocate for the use of modern freight rail technology East of Hudson – including rail cars, containers, and locomotives used to export waste-by-rail from NYC and Long Island. Our goals are to eliminate needless air and water pollution and GHG, and enhance public and environmental health and quality of life in neighborhoods of in NYC and greater Long Island through the use of this modern freight rail technology.

In this testimony, we respectfully ask that the city restore cuts to our community-based composting programs. Waste export in NYC is expensive. Composting putrescible waste instead of exporting it reduces burdens. Every pound of solid waste exported by rail through Fresh Pond Yard in Queens is stored, classified, and hauled through the communities we work with. Communities have been burdened by odors, vermin, pollution from waste blowoff and leachate, excessive noise, and diesel exhaust from ancient locomotives during the export of putrescible waste-by-rail, and congestion and pollution from trucks used to haul solid waste-for-export to transfer and transload facilities, including from NYC out to Suffolk County.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills – a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases. Organics collection reduces waste, vermin, and odors and enhances public health and quality of life in every community in NYC, Long Island, and across Upstate New York that is touched now by waste export – as MSW is collected, processed, and exported, taken from homes and streets to transfer stations, transload facilities, and landfills, by truck and train through communities.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- o At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- o At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- o At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- o The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.



Mary Parisen-Lavelle, Chair CURES – 718-772-6563



410 East 6th Street
New York, NY 10009

Good afternoon, my name is Matt Malina and I am the founder and director of NYC H2O. NYC H2O's mission is to inspire and educate New Yorkers of all ages to learn about, enjoy, and protect their city's local water ecology. Our activities promote science-based knowledge of New York's local ecosystems and of what is needed for urban water resilience in a time of escalating climate change impacts. In this testimony, **we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting.**

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. Our members care deeply about composting and are devastated that they are left with no options. We know that they will make the effort to compost if options are made available.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our organization, our members, and the schools we work with, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matt Malina". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Good afternoon,

My name is Matt Lisiecki and I live in Kensington, Brooklyn. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills--a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

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- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our neighborhood and city, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.
Matt Lisiecki

To: Honorable Mathieu Eugene
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

My name is Meg Tyner and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. We have started to compost and have become very passionate about the program as we try to instill positive environmental values to our young daughter. Our efforts now to reduce waste will affect the future generations.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.
Sincerely,

Meg Tyner
10 Slocum Pl
Brooklyn, NY 11218

Good afternoon,

My name is Megan Lang. I live in Washington Heights in a building that was until last week part of the city's composting program. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting. Our planet's health is important to me, and I value all opportunities to be environmentally conscious.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

May 21, 2020

RE: NYC Composting & Recycling Programs

To the New York City Council Committee on Finance:

My name is Meghan Dunne. I have been a resident of New York City for 18 years. With this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. We owe it to the future of our families, our community and our planet to retain this crucial service.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years. We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;

- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

My family and I have been composting at farmers markets and through the city's curbside service for more than five years. We cannot understate the urgency of this request and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Meghan Dunne".

Meghan Dunne
7007 Colonial Road
Brooklyn NY 11209

Good afternoon, name is Meghan Lee and I am a resident of Fort Greene, Brooklyn. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting. Composting is an incredible way for me to be a more responsible, sustainable citizen of NYC, keeping tons of food waste out of our landfills. I've composted my whole life – in my backyard growing up, in Chicago, in San Francisco, and now in NY – because it's important and easy. We can do better than throwing food in the trash and we already have the infrastructure in place – now is not the time to backtrack on green initiatives!

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. My community deserves this option. Everyone wants to do their part. We just need a strong partnership with the city.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to

source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to for ourselves and for our neighbors in Brooklyn and Manhattan, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Good afternoon, my name is Mei Wang, and I'm a resident of Brooklyn.

In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Reducing the amount of waste that goes to landfills or pollutes our oceans is vital for the longevity of the planet and has become an important part of our Park Slope community and our household.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our city, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.



**Testimony of NYLPI at
New York City Council Executive Budget Hearing
Dated May 21, 2020**

Good afternoon, my name is Melissa Iachan and I am a Senior Staff Attorney in the Environmental Justice Program at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest. I have worked in waste policy and regulation for more than six years, and NYLPI has long advocated for waste equity in and around New York City. As our City continues to reel in the wake of the COVID crisis, we cannot allow ourselves to stop combatting the other crises we face, those of climate change and inequality.

It is critical that we adequately fund programs to ensure that our City diverts waste from landfills, furthering the central goal of the City's Solid Waste Management Plan to move waste processing away from the truck-intensive private transfer stations clustered in low-income communities and communities of color. Trucks traveling to and from transfer stations contribute to the particulate matter pollution in those areas, which in turn has made residents fall victim to COVID-19 at much higher rates. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting, and instead think innovatively about how to reduce our city's carbon footprint and improve air quality in our environmental justice communities.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills, leading to an increase in greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with

some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill where it emits significant levels of greenhouse gases as it decomposes.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

Importantly, maintaining this funding would also ensure that almost 100 jobs that employ people otherwise out of work continue to exist, and that these individuals do not become additional numbers in our City's ballooning unemployment figures.

We also propose that while restoring and expanding funding to the NYC Compost Project, GrowNYC, and partners, the Council consider utilizing the budget process to accomplish the goals recently set forth in the CORE Act (Intros. 1492 and 1493). This legislation aims to restore and expand organics and other recycling programs the Mayor intends to eliminate with his executive budget. Importantly, this legislation seeks to ensure that recycling sites for organic waste and other recyclables not collected curbside by DSNY this fiscal year are located in every community district across the city, and sited equitably and in a manner accessible to all. If the Council and administration are able to accomplish these goals via the budget process, even better! We can restore and create jobs, reduce our carbon footprint, and continue the path to zero waste.

While reducing greenhouse gas emissions is a priority of the City as a whole, reducing landfill-bound waste will be even more beneficial in communities where truck-intensive waste transfer stations are clustered and where COVID-19's impacts have been especially tragic. Importantly, the City's 2005 Solid Waste Management Plan called for DSNY to begin utilizing Marine Transfer Stations for commercial waste by 2010 to further reduce the amount of waste and trucks going to these private transfer stations. It is now a decade later and we still haven't

begun to use the four state-of-the-art City-owned facilities to help make the commercial waste system more efficient and reduce pollution.

As you know, the commercial waste zone system being implemented this year will greatly reduce the number of miles traveled by commercial waste trucks on their collection routes, as haulers will be awarded specific zones rather than traversing the city to find customers. Giving these haulers access to publicly owned marine transfer stations will allow them to operate even more efficiently and would reduce the number of diesel collection trucks and long-haul export trucks operating in environmental justice communities.

Having access to efficiently located marine and rail-based facilities is also advantageous for local private haulers bidding on waste zones – including smaller companies that do not own their own transfer stations. Any private hauler collecting commercial waste in midtown Manhattan, for example, would benefit by being able to tip waste at the East 91st Street MTS – eliminating several miles of driving and the bridge crossings currently required to get to private transfer stations in the outer boroughs. In order to implement this common-sense solution and fully utilize these public facilities the Council must allocate funding for them to run longer hours, and in particular those hours during which commercial haulers tend to dump the waste they collect—overnight. By adding a third overnight shift to currently under-utilized marine transfer stations, DSNY would also be creating additional high-quality, green jobs in safe facilities.

We therefore urge the Mayor's office and City Council to ensure that there is enough funding in this year's budget to begin operating the marine transfer stations at full capacity and begin accepting commercial waste during an overnight shift, which will also be a green jobs generator at a time that the City is desperately seeking economic stimulus.

Thank you.

I am a resident of Kensington, Brooklyn. For years I have been separating my food scraps from other refuse, storing them in my freezer, and bringing them to collection sites during neighborhood greenmarkets once every week or two. Like many New Yorkers, I have a solid habit down that has resulted in my contributing far less waste to landfills. Unfortunately, the mayor's proposed budget would cut the Department of Sanitation's budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste.

The current crisis of the pandemic is occurring alongside a previously existing, slower moving, and also deadly serious ecological crisis. A sustainable approach to the city budget would at the very least retain residents' existing practices and keep this organics waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

I am asking for the city to restore \$7 million to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC. This restored funding would mean:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle.

I also urge the NYC council to prioritize the implementation of Local Law 97, continue solar installations, and to push for infrastructure projects from the NYC Climate and Community Stimulus Platform.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Melissa Morrone
Brooklyn, NY

Executive Budget Hearing Testimony

May 21, 2020

Preserve and Expand Funding for Local Organics Collection and Processing

Good afternoon, my name is Meredith Danberg-Ficarelli and I am the Director of Common Ground Compost LLC. We are a zero waste services company, helping businesses and residents divert food scraps and recyclables from landfills. We run Reclaimed Organics, a bicycle-powered micro hauling operation that services businesses and residents in Manhattan, and we fought hard alongside other organizations to get micro hauling included in the Commercial Waste Zoning bill last fall. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

In fact, we strongly urge the City to use this economic shutdown as an opportunity to transition to the just, equitable, and environmentally responsible waste system that environmental and racial justice advocates have been fighting so hard for. We look forward to presenting our concrete and tangible solutions for community-scale waste diversion programs that will empower local communities, reduce transport costs for the City, educate residents, and allow New York to truly move the needle towards the essential Zero Waste by 2030 goal that the Mayor seems to have continuously shrunk back from since taking office. Climate change is real.

We want to build (and are already working to build!) a future New York where communities are empowered to divert their own material from landfills, by growing entrepreneurial ventures that recover value from waste instead of discarding it. Specifically, we urge the Council to continue to forge ahead on the path that was started with the inclusion of micro haulers in the Commercial Waste Zoning bill. While it was absolutely essential to build exemptions into the CWZ bill for micro collection organics, the bill fell short of also expanding opportunities for the siting and operation of community-scale organics processing sites.

The NYC Compost Project's processing sites, and GrowNYC's drop offs, are an essential piece of a burgeoning network of organics diversion programs. These operations must be preserved, and funding for them must not be cut from the budget. We will continue to fight for an expansion of available space for organics

processing in communities, outside of the Compost Project's scope, and we ask that the City allow more flexibility both in budget and in land allocation, for community-scale projects like ours.

The Mayor's proposed budget is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications and will be a massive setback of the City's sustainability goals. We urge the City Council to maintain residents' ability to continue recycling and composting, and not toss the significant progress we have made in diverting valuable materials from landfills and incinerators in the past few years.

We are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with an additional expansion of funds for community outreach and education, and we urge the City to meet with NYC's active organics micro haulers (a group that has tripled in size since the pandemic shutdown) to build on the dense fabric of hyper local organics processing that already exists in our communities.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners, and to GrowNYC, together represent approximately \$7 million. Restoring this \$7M to the budget, plus additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to reduce their impact on the environment, reduce long term costs for the City, and live lives that are more environmentally responsible, without massive behavioral change (which we know can be challenging to instill!)

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority is not left behind in the budget process.

Thank you

Meredith Danberg-Ficarelli

Director

Common Ground Compost LLC

Good afternoon, my name is Meredith Faltin and I am with the Queens Climate Project. We are a local environmental group based in Jackson Heights and dedicated to making climate action happen in our city as quickly as possible. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. As one of the many ways to fight the effects of the climate emergency, the Queens Climate Project has sought to expand composting in our neighborhood and beyond.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. This is not the time to be cutting programs that will help New York City reach its Climate Justice and Zero Waste goals.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;

- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our organization and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

To: Honorable Costa Constantinides
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

I have been taking my food scraps to the Astoria branch of the Queens Public Library for over 3 years, since Astoria doesn't provide access to the Curbside Composting program. This was crucial for me to keep my food waste out of landfills. I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs.

Recently, I've had no options for composting my food waste. I have been storing it in my freezer in the hope that these programs will return, but I have already had to throw out several batches. It breaks my heart to throw my food scraps in the trash.

Mr. Constantindes, you've campaigned on a platform of progress against climate change, and COVID-19 is no reason to give up the environmental fight. Climate change is not on PAUSE.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, cutting community composting is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Lesley Merz

Michael Banta
680 W 204th St
New York NY 10034

Dear Members of the New York City Council,

I am writing to ask that you restore the proposed budget cuts to the NYC Compost Project and GrowNYC. Organics collection and recycling are a key part of NYC's Zero Waste initiative, and short-sighted cuts now will set back years of progress and will disproportionately impact lower-income communities, who will have to deal with the health consequences of greater amounts of conventional trash passing through their neighborhoods. In fact, as Keith Powers, Antonio Reynoso and Gale Brewer have all pointed out, the organics program could be revenue-neutral or even a source of income for the city if organics collection were to be made mandatory and universal. But for now, preserving the kernel of the composting project would at least maintain the gains we have made, and will help divert a major contributor to the city's carbon footprint.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Banta', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael Banta

I am saddened to learn that New York City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. I have been using the city's dropoff sites since moving here last year; it is by far the most accessible way to compost in my neighborhood, Washington Heights. Composting has been important to me for many years as a way to promote sustainability and be more aware of my own habits around waste, and I have deeply appreciated being in a city where those values have been supported by city programs.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise. It would be a shame to cut a program that has so much long-term importance for short-term financial gain, much in the same way that it has proven to be a shame to cut CDC funding and our national pandemic response team on the gamble that budget cuts would be preferable to preparedness.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Michael Fraade
Washington Heights, NYC



34A St. Marks Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11217

info@habitatmap.org
347.410.9499

habitatmap.org

HabitatMap Testimony Regarding NYC Budget May 21, 2020

My name is Michael Heimbinder. I serve as Executive Director of HabitatMap. HabitatMap is a Brooklyn-based environmental technology non-profit building open-source, free, and low-cost environmental monitoring and data visualization solutions. Our tools empower organizations and citizen scientists to measure pollution and advocate for equitable solutions to environmental health issues. We focus on low-income communities and communities of color living with disproportionate environmental burdens.

In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. We also urge the NYC council to prioritize the implementation of Local Law 97, continue solar installations, and to push for infrastructure projects from the NYC Climate and Community Stimulus Platform.

City Composting Programs

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills. The Administration plans to slash the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This shortsighted action has the potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

While this program must be expanded to include a mandatory organics program inclusive of environmental justice communities and NYCHA residences, today we are urging the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

Today, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education, and that there be equitable distribution of organics and e-waste drop-off sites throughout the City. And in the near term, we also request to see the growth of the City's organics collection to a mandatory residential organics program for everyone.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way toward

allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that: at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work; at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills; at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living. We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our organization and the communities we support and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Climate Works for All

The COVID-19 crisis has impacted our climate and jobs at the same time, necessitating that we invest in green infrastructure projects to put our communities back to work in good union jobs that move us towards our climate goals.

First, the City must fully fund the implementation of Local Law 97 in order to tackle the biggest source of carbon emissions in the most polluting buildings, and create 40,000 good jobs in the process. The City must also press on with its solar goals and prioritize environmental justice communities for solar jobs. In the very near future, a citywide composting program is an essential service that would also provide good jobs for impacted communities while reducing our waste burden.

The City should tap into available resources, including those authorized via the federal CARES Act, existing FEMA funds, municipal liquidity grants, as well as state and federal workforce development grants.

Thank you for considering these urgent budget items - we *really* do not have any more time to waste in meeting our climate goals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Heimbinder', with a stylized, cursive script.

Michael Heimbinder
Executive Director, HabitatMap

2020 NYC Council Budget Hearing

5/23/20

Good afternoon, my name is Mike Mullaley and I am a volunteer with the Sierra Club in New York City. In this written testimony, I ask that the City prioritize the implementation of Local Law 97, continue solar installations across the City, and continue the composting program in this year's budget. By doing this, the City is making a strong commitment to combating climate change while investing in good jobs that put our communities back to work, at a time that has seen everyone impacted by the pandemic and the loss of innumerable jobs.

The coronavirus pandemic has taught us that our government is grossly unprepared to protect our most vulnerable communities. But we can learn from this crisis and take aggressive, bold action to address the economic recession and the climate crisis at the same time. Climate solutions will create direct opportunities for coming out of an economic collapse, but only if there is large-scale, coordinated citywide action rooted in equity. If we get this right today, we can create a forward-looking plan that addresses how our communities, especially frontline communities, can recover from an unprecedented economic crisis and thrive in a post-COVID city by building a resilient New York. In a time of great uncertainty, this much is clear: we need good jobs. We need to move on a plan to create good jobs as soon as the economy can reopen safely, and that proactive plan can be adopted now. Austerity does not bring prosperity or justice or solutions to climate change.

We can achieve this through several immediate ways. We should implement Local Law 97, which will reduce carbon emissions in buildings, as it would create 40,000 jobs by funding oversight positions in the Department of Buildings. Another opportunity is by ramping up the City's solar installation. It has committed to 100 megawatts (MW) by 2025, but only has completed 15 MW so far. Finally, the City needs to continue its composting program - both by mandating curbside organics citywide, while also continuing to invest in the NYC Compost Project, GrowNYC and other partners who are providing crucial training, education, and outreach that is building a robust network of community composters. With the Summer Youth Employment Program being cancelled, there are significantly fewer opportunities for youth to have meaningful jobs, and some of these provide great opportunities to incorporate youth.

We cannot return to a normal economy until we put people back to work. There are even additional funding sources available now that can help contribute. The City still has FEMA funding from Sandy that has not been spent, in addition to the current FEMA funding available. While some of this might be restrictive, it can be used for preparedness. There are also municipal liquidity grants, as well as State and federal workforce development grants. We also hope to see funding coming down for local infrastructure projects in the next iteration of CARES.

New York City can take bold action immediately that puts people back to work and addresses important climate issues, while rebuilding communities devastated by the pandemic. I cannot understate the urgency of this ask and hope the Council ensures that these priorities are not left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Michael Mullaley
Kensington, Brooklyn



Testimony of Michael Padwee
New York City Council
Committee on Finance Executive Budget Hearing
May 21, 2020

My name is Michael Padwee, and I am a member of Families for Safe Streets. Next week I will mark a date no parent should ever have to commemorate. It will be two years since my only child, Aaron, was killed in a traffic crash on May 29, 2018.

His death was an unacceptable failure on so many levels. He was doored on an unsafe street without bike lanes, and then run over by an unlicensed box truck driver. He sustained unimaginable trauma to his head and body and died shortly after the crash.

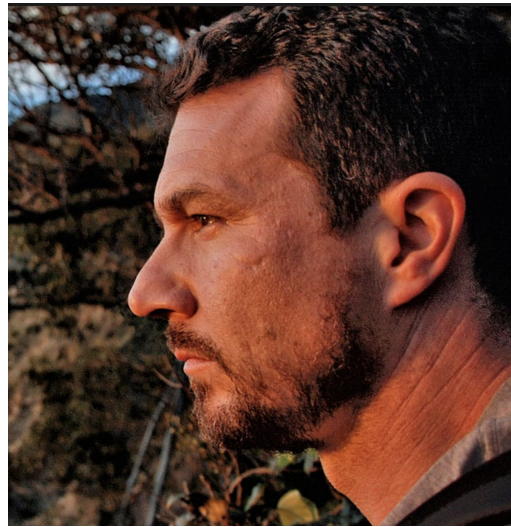
Aaron was 45 when he was killed. But he was more than just the tenth cyclist killed in 2018. He loved the outdoors, hiking and taking photos -- mainly during his trips to Europe, the Middle East and South America. Aaron loved animals, and brought us dogs and cats that he found on the streets and in Italy and Israel. He worked as a union carpenter, making sets for movies and TV and had recently been promoted. He had so much to live for.

But his death tore a hole in our lives. We would never hear his voice again, never see him, never be able to tell him how much we loved him. Ten months after his death, my wife, Susan, gave up her fight to live with COPD and died of a broken heart.

New York City took some big life-saving steps forward in recent years with passage of the Master Plan, Green Wave, Dangerous Vehicle Abatement Act and other Vision Zero initiatives. We had yet to see the impact these changes

would make when COVID hit. And now NYC is poised to gut these life-saving programs and relegate other families to the pain that I feel every day.

For Aaron and the others who have been killed and maimed, keep your commitments to the critical Vision Zero initiatives. We demand that the City Council embody the “vision” in Vision Zero and not just preserve the status quo. Help New York City become a leader in re-imagining a post-COVID future with thriving, safe open streets that protect all New Yorkers.



Good afternoon, my name is *Michael Rieser*. I am formerly a *Recycling Outreach Coordinator* and am presently the *New York City chapter chair of the New York State Association for Reduction, Reuse, and Recycling (NYSAR3)*, although this testimony today is my own.

In this testimony, I ask that the City not undo the Climate Justice and Zero Waste accomplishments that it has achieved over the past five years.

By suspending the curbside organics collection program, the proposed budget will reverse the progress the City has made in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It will make more food available to rats. It will encourage building residents to dispose of food scraps in their trash chutes, increasing the cockroach population. And it will make the jobs of building staff more difficult by combining the heavy, wet food scraps with light dry trash increasing the liquid content, smell, and weight of the black trash bags.

28 million of the 106 million dollars that was cut from the budget is coming from the elimination of funding for recycling outreach and education, and the largest municipal compost program in the United States.

Breaking the social contract with the thousands of New Yorkers from all walks of life who contributed their good will by organizing the residents of their buildings to separate their food scraps and to make New York City's Curbside Organics Collection Program a growing success is short-sighted and will set the City further back from achieving its sustainability goals.

Despite the loss of tax revenue, and the cost of responding to the coronavirus, it is more important than ever to maintain programs that inspire a sense of civic pride and encourage citizens to care for their neighbors, our city, and the environment we all share. Therefore, while the city has found it necessary to sacrifice the curbside organics collection program until July 2021, I urge the City Council to maintain funding for composting on a smaller scale to preserve the progress that residents have worked for over the past five years.

Please follow the recommendation of the Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens Solid Waste Advisory boards and restore the funds that were cut from the NYC Compost Project, Lower East Side Ecology Center, Big Reuse, Red Hook Farm, Earth Matters, and GrowNYC. This would go a long way toward keeping New Yorkers engaged in composting and recycling. These engaged partners will prove vital when curbside organics collections are reinstated.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, can continue their good work;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn it into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and

- The City can continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle. This education is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our young citizens develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you,

Michael Rieser

To: New York City Council Members
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

I am writing to urge New York City to continue funding its community composting and zero waste outreach programs.

I am a New York City resident and take advantage of the composting drop off sites. It is a program I fully support and it helps me be a little more eco-conscious in my daily life.

Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost.

We need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis and beyond.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Michael Weissman mjweissman@gmail.com

Good Morning,

My name is Michele Fox and I'm with the NYC Chapter of the Sustainable Event Alliance. The NYC Chapter of the SEA is a collection of event industry professionals who are passionate about implementing sustainable event practices. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. When events come back, we need them to be more sustainable, and not having an option to compost food waste will result in more climate change and global warming.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to the New York City Chapter of The Sustainable Event Alliance, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority is not left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Michele Fox

To: Laurie A. Cumbo, m35@council.nyc.gov
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

I am very disappointed to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting. I have been both participating in the Curbside Composting program and using Drop-Off Sites for 3 years. Separating our food scraps for composting has significantly cut down on the amount of trash we generate and become a part of our daily lives.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting Programs.

Sincerely,

Michele Krech

231 Clermont Ave, Unit 2F
Brooklyn, NY 11205

Good afternoon, name is Michele Zackheim and I am a member of the coop at 790 Riverside Drive . In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, I am asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Informed and responsible New Yorkers know that COMPOSTING IS ESSENTIAL. I am a member of Smiling Hogshead Ranch. We have been a community compost site in Queens since 2011. While we are one of the larger community garden composting sites, our compost infrastructure is quickly becoming overwhelmed since the City suspended the Curbside Composting and Food Scrap Drop-off programs. Through those programs, the city has helped so many households create the good habit of saving their food scraps to be composted. Now that municipal composting is defunded, people in our neighborhood and beyond (we have people coming from Brooklyn, Manhattan and the Bronx to drop-off!) are desperate for a way to compost, and my garden can't safely keep up with that huge demand. We need the City to step up and honor its commitments to Zero Waste by funding community composting rather than leaving this essential work to volunteers like me.

Furthermore, I implore the City to keep the larger compost processing sites open. The finished compost from sites like Big Reuse, Earth Matter and Added Value is used across the city in schools, parks, community gardens and street tree pits. The hard work and dedication of all those teachers, students, tree stewards, friends of parks and community gardeners deserves at least a little compost to help the urban ecology. The entire city benefits from this closed loop system. Please do not undo all the hard work grassroots organizations have put into building these compost sites.

Michelle Arvin

To Honorable Rory Lancman,

My name is Michelle Lin and I am writing in regards to the City's funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. For the past year, I have been working as an Outreach Associate on the campaign **Make Compost Not Trash** in Queen Community Boards 2, 5, and 8 while my coworkers worked in Bronx Community Board 8 and Brooklyn Community Boards 2, 6 and 7. Having spoken to thousands of community residents at our campaign events and door-to-door, I understood that the outreach work I was doing was making a difference in educating residents on the importance of community composting and the invaluable service the city was offering to them in order to mitigate the effects of climate change.

In light of the recent budget cuts of COVID-19, I understand that New York City needs to save money. However, we cannot take this huge step backwards in environmental reform because the impacts of climate change are threatening and inevitable. These effects will become more devastating especially when leaders repeal important environmental programs. NYC **was** leading the country with the largest residential organics collection program in the country and putting that on pause will cause a loss of momentum on this critical fight with climate change, which we cannot afford.

It was a difficult task for my outreach team to convince individuals who did not believe that recycling food and yard waste was valuable or worth their time. But it is a big deal. **If foods waste were a country, it would be the third largest emitter of greenhouse gases.** Recycling food scraps, yard waste and food soiled paper allows us to use that energy and turn it into a valuable resource (such as compost and renewable energy). In the long term, organic recycling will prove to be an **economic asset** as the city can spend less on shipping waste into landfills and instead recycle its waste locally. By pausing the program, the city is sending the message to its residents that organic recycling is dispensable and undoing the work of all the outreach team. But the truth is that the City's Community Composting programs give individuals optimism and actionable steps to contribute to a more sustainable future.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,
Michelle Lin

To: New York City Council Members
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

I am writing to ask that you please continue to fund NYC's community composting and zero waste outreach programs.

We can choose to come out of this pandemic stronger, and headed in the right direction for our residents, our economy and our earth. Maintaining composting programs in NYC takes in the right direction.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost.

We need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Michelle Sterling
Michellesterling1@gmail.com

To Whom It May Concern:

I would like to express my support for continuing the composting program funded by the city. I use it all the time. We need to make our environment a priority. We need to reduce waste.

Thanks,

Milda Vera
Ridgewood, NY 11385

Good afternoon,

My name is Mildred Martinez. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Composting is essential in order for our communities, our city as a whole to move towards Zero Waste goals and reduce the amount of methane gases released into our atmosphere that would contribute to global warming. Our city plays a crucial part and needs to push forward and onward in composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. Restoring this would mean I can continue to do my part along with thousands of other New Yorkers to The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to my family, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Mildred Martinez

To: Honorable Margaret Chin
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov

Re: Community Composting

My name is Ming and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs.

My family has throughout my life and even more so in recent years made devoted use of these programs. As a child, I grew and harvested my first vegetables, learning the value of land use and environmental health at The Brooklyn Botanical Gardens. My father, a resident of the neighborhood for nearly 50 years, at the age of 65 discovered the joys of composting. Since then, twice-weekly trips to the compost bins at Washington Market and Union Square have become both a source of satisfaction and exercise. For many years we have both deposited and collected resources at the Lower East Side Ecology Center. My whole family feels grateful to be in some small way part of a larger movement to reduce waste and contribute to the wellbeing of our city.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Ming Lin
Independent

Ming Lin
50 Walker Street., #5B
New York, NY
10013

Hello,

My name is Nabjot Kaur. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Composting is one way we can reduce our greenhouse gas emissions such as methane which is 20-30 times more potent than carbon dioxide. Composting reduces the amount of trash and odor.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. It will reduce my and the City's greenhouse gas emissions, reduce pests, and help our environment.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to myself and my neighborhood, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Nabjot Kaur

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Nadine Kruczowy and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. As a native New Yorker, I always took pride in my city for paving the way in environmental initiatives. If New York can do it, so can anywhere else, is a motto you hear often. I now feel a sense of shame and embarrassment for how the city is handling the budget cuts due to COVID-19. I am a Master Composter from Queens Botanical Garden, and I was the former Project Coordinator for the Curbside Composting Program hosted by Big Reuse. Composting is so important to me I have decided my livelihood. These cuts may be short term now, but will have great long term consequences. I can tell you first hand it was a challenge to get New Yorkers to participate in composting pre COVID-19, and it will be twice as hard to get New Yorkers to pick this habit up again. The Curbside Collection Outreach team was a total of 19 people. This includes part time staff. In order to properly educate and re-educate New Yorkers on Composting we would need a staff size at least triple that to effectively communicate the benefits of composting.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Nadine Kruczowy
Big Reuse
20-33 41st ST,
Astoria, NY
11105

NAN A. HAWLEY

252 West 85th Street, Apt. 5-D
New York, NY 10024-3258

(212) 595-9859

May 21, 2020

I have been a dedicated composter since my children (now teenagers) were in elementary school, where parents initiated a composting program within the school cafeteria as well as for family compostables, and I am writing today to ask that New York City not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years. I do not request that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts--just asking that the cuts to GrowNYC and to the NYC Compost Project and partners be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste, preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle -- such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this request to our neighborhood and to our future, and I hope the Council ensures that this important priority is not be left behind in the budget process.

Yours sincerely,

Nancy A Hawley

Testimony to the New York City Council Budget Hearings- May 21, 2020

Save our Compost Program

Nancy Romer, Peoples Climate Movement-NY,

The Covid-19 crisis has upended our lives, killed 16,000 New Yorkers and put hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers out of work. My comments today will be on the looming climate crisis, its similarity to the Covid crisis and what the City of New York can do now.

Scientists warned us about minimizing Covid-19 back in January—had we heeded their warnings we could have saved thousands of lives and jobs. The scientists are warning us about much more devastating consequences to run-away climate change: if we don't act NOW the lives we love, the people we love and the planet we love will be devastated. The scientists tell us we have ten short years to respond and shift away from a fossil fuel-based economy to one based on renewable energy. This can be done while we are recovering from the health and economic devastation of the pandemic and prevent the greatest threat—climate change—from advancing. Our city must take the lead if we can ever expect the rest of the nation and the world to follow.

We are asking the City of New York to advance a Green Recovery. It will require massive investments right now in green infrastructure, real and thorough retrofitting of ALL buildings in NYC to maximize energy efficiency, and dramatically expand solar, wind and composting capacity. This is not the time to pit one important crisis against another. It is the time to create a future that takes the health of individuals, communities and our planet as central to our solutions.

The Peoples Climate Movement-New York stands behind **saving the composting programs** that exist right now and asks that the City of New York expand that program to make it more self-supporting and, ultimately, less costly or incur no costs to the city over time. Closing down the present composting program will be costly and starting it up will be even more costly. **Composting costs can be covered by expanding the program and making it more self-sustaining.** The public outcry for this program can translate into broader education of New Yorkers and effective participation in the composting program now and in the future. Composting sequesters carbon in our atmosphere; putting food scraps into landfill creates methane, a GHG 82 times more potent and dangerous than carbon and creating respiratory illnesses in nearby communities. Because most waste transfer stations and landfill are in low income communities they will be most affected--again.

The people of New York and the people of the planet are crying out for a healthy, safe and decent life. We need to center the recovery in expanding, not contracting,

all the green infrastructure projects available and to honor the wishes of New Yorkers to expand the composting program, sequester carbon, improve the quality of the air in NYC and save lives in the future.

If we think the Covid crisis is bad, which it certainly is, unmitigated climate change will be far worse with fewer “solutions”. The solutions are before us now: keep and expand composting, expand green infrastructure, expand renewable energy. The future of our city and our planet depends on progressive governments taking the lead now. Thank you for leading that fight.

Good afternoon, name is Nancy Tonik, a member of SAVE OUR COMPOST and Upper West Side resident. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our neighborhood, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Good morning. My name is Naomi Zurcher and I am an Urban Forester, a Consulting Arborist and a Certified Master Composter.

In this testimony, I am urging the City not to decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals with the elimination of organics recycling and composting.

I am a Certified graduate of Brooklyn Botanic Garden's Master Composter course, which has enabled me to incorporate that knowledge into the work I was performing in my varied professional capacities:

- as a Consulting Arborist working on the design phase of varied Public Infrastructure projects by incorporating the correct use of compost materials into detailed specifications for soil design;
- as an Urban Forester by guiding, *pro bono*, private clients as well as Block and Community Associations on how to develop a community composting program.

The Master Composter program and its ability to enable citizens and professionals alike has contributed the following to New York City's well-being:

- waste reduction through the empowerment of citizens and the diverse communities they reside in;
- climate change mitigation through the improvement of urban soil and its contribution to urban water resource management – reduced storm water runoff, increased water filtration and infiltration rates, improved and increased groundwater recharging.

The accepted “3R” concept of recycling places “reduce” as the first critical element. Reducing the waste stream is critical to a Zero Waste policy. How then would destroying the decades-long Composter Program benefit the Zero Waste policy? The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from the total elimination of all funding for recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has long-term environmental implications, reducing the City's ability to reach its sustainability goals.

The City is supposed to be concerned about the impact of Climate Change which would very much include urban water resource management. How would

undermining the capacity of NYC's urban soil to facilitate urban water resource management further this supposed Climate Change reduction policy?

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City maintain the ability to continue organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made since the program was instituted.

Organics recycling and composting is an essential ingredient in the City's management of its waste stream. It is also critical to how we should be approaching Climate Change mitigation. I am asking the Council to honestly evaluate cost : benefit before it guts the program. What is NYC gaining – cost - as opposed to what it is losing – all those environmental and community benefits. I am asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City must continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

It is my hope that the Council will consider the value of this important program and that its priority will not be overlooked in the budget process.

Thank you.

SAVE COMMUNITY COMPOSTING in NYC

To: Honorable Ben Kallos

CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov

Re: Community Composting

My name is **Natalie Cheah** and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs.

I have been taking my food scraps to the **82nd Street Greenmarket** for **2** years. It doesn't seem like a long time but I've noticed how much it has cut down the trash I dispose of. I live in a **high rise building** that didn't have access to the Curbside Composting program, and I was happy to have another option for keeping my food waste out of landfills.

In the months since the City has suspended Curbside Composting and Food Scrap Drop-off sites, I've had no options for composting my food waste. I have been storing it in my freezer in the hope that these programs will return, but I have long-since run out of space. It breaks my heart to throw my food scraps in the trash after diligently composting, and it is not acceptable for the City to continue these cuts for the next year or more. The NYC goal of 2030 zero waste to landfills may seem far off but if we don't start somewhere, not meeting that goal is inevitable. NYC is already behind the west coast in compost disposal where each household/building has composting bins easily accessible. Composting should be compulsory as much as recycling is.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely, your constituent,

Natalie Cheah
219 E 81ST ST

For the past four years, my partner and I have been composting by freezer-storing our food waste and bringing it to drop off locations on a weekly basis. It is a cherished part of our daily life, since it allows us to transform our waste into something valuable. But it's also more than this -- it has more than intrinsic value. Composting significantly diminishes the ecological impact generated by organic waste when it decomposes in landfills. When such waste decomposes in landfills, it generates methane, which is a greenhouse gas. As such, diverting organic waste to the composting process not only puts that waste material to good use by transforming it into a nutrient-rich substance that benefits agricultural processes, it also diminishes levels of methane that contribute significantly to human-caused climate change.

In recent history, New York City has been a leader in the movement to move municipal waste systems toward composting. It has led by example, and it has improved the lives of its own communities in doing so. The physical and psychological health of its citizens depend on things like the composting program -- it inherently raises the level of ecological awareness and engagement among the citizenry. I must emphasize: composting is not just "a nice thing to do with your food scraps", it is not a hobby or privilege specific to certain culture groups or dispositions -- it is a *vital system* that *must be part of a sustainable ecological framework for a 21st century city*. To put the NYC composting program "on pause" runs the risk of undoing the precious progress NYC has made toward a sustainable future. It's a challenge to institute new public programs, to educate the public about them and habituate it to them. As such, suspending the program does far more damage than the good that it does in saving public funds. The long-term difficulties, financial and otherwise, that will be caused by the suspension make it the wrong move.

I strongly urge that the compost program be continued without interruption.

Regards,
Nathan Oglesby
1002 Hart St, #2
Brooklyn, NY 11237

Good afternoon. My name is Nathan Shane and I live in Park Slope in Brooklyn. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. I have been composting for over a year now, and I believe strongly that we have an ethical responsibility to continue the composting program as a city.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, I am asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;

- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask, and I hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Good afternoon,

My name is Nathan Toll. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our neighborhood, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Nathan Toll

To: Honorable Robert Holden
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

My name is Neil Meredith and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Neil Meredith
6034 70th Ave. Fl. 1
Ridgewood, NY 11385

Good afternoon, my name is Niall Smart, speaking for myself.

I ask that the City does not undermine our Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and

- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the importance of this ask to our household, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Dear NYC Council members,

I'm a Brooklyn resident that worked in a community garden as a composter before the COVID crisis. Composting sites all over NYC are at risk, yet composting is within reach citywide, and it's good for everything from the local economy to the ecology to community relations. I hope the council will do whatever it can to make composting part of the daily lives of all NYC citizens. It's a tangible way to help the city to thrive on all pistons.

Thank you,

Nick Balaban

My name is Nick Platt and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. Since moving to Brooklyn almost four years ago, I've found a real sense of pride in the City through these programs and the farmers' markets where I drop off my food waste. These simple habits develop a strong sense of community and empowerment. I'm disheartened to have lost this small but impactful aspect of my daily life.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise. In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Nick Platt

Testimony

My name is Nicole Crook. I am a public school teacher and the parent of two toddlers. I grew up in New York City. This is my home but I am terrified to live in a city that would have so little foresight as to stop all compost programs. The future of my children and the children I teach requires NYC to invest in Green New Deal sorts of solutions for they will pay off ten fold or more in the future. I lay awake at night frightened yes by Covid-19 and the havoc it is wreaking on health and society but the climate crisis looms even larger on my mind. Without composting programs tons of food scraps will go to landfills daily, impacting our green house emissions. It is also heartbreaking to think of all the people losing their jobs.

I realize there is an impending financial crisis due to CV19. Investing in sustainable jobs and a sustainable city are the only long-term viable methods to address the finances. Composting is a critical element of the solution.

Thank you,
Nicole Crook

Good afternoon,

My name is Nicole Grossberg and I am the founder of Zero Waste NYC Workshop. Through workshops and other educational events, we motivate and provide resources to individuals to help them go zero/low waste.

In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting. I feel so passionate about composting and how CRUCIAL it is to fight climate change and prevent methane from emitting into the air from unnecessary food waste in landfills.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment

that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to myself, and my organization and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you for your time.

May 21, 2020

Good afternoon,

My name is Nicole Spina and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate financial support for composting and e-waste recycling programs. It is critical to maintain these budgets to achieve the ambitious climate goals the City has set out to achieve, like 0x30 and 80x50. If we make these budget cuts now, we lose time and momentum needed to fight climate change. Climate change may one day put our City in a similar situation we're in now, and we'll regret having cut funding that would have helped to prevent it.

These cuts will directly affect the LES Ecology Center together with the NYC Compost Project partners and GrowNYC Zero Waste programs. The cuts represent approximately \$7 million, and if restored can continue to provide citywide access to these crucial Zero Waste programs. It's essential to retain these programs so as not to lose the existing recycling infrastructure, knowledge and habits that will be difficult to rebuild once eliminated.

Cutting these programs will reverse the progress that we have made by diverting food scraps and toxic electronic waste from landfills. When in a landfill, food waste is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions and electronics leach heavy metals and toxins into our soil and waterways. We can't let the current budget crisis allow us to lose sight of the looming climate crisis and we must continue to divert these materials from landfills to reach our sustainability goals.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future to continue. These programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to community compost and e-waste collection programs.

Sincerely,
Nicole Spina

May 21, 2020

Good afternoon, my name is Nicole Sumner and I am a resident of Greenpoint.

In this testimony, I am joining with fellow New Yorkers to ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. I urge the City to take a long view of organics recycling and not to reintroduce millions of pounds of waste to our landfills. As a member of the Java Street Community Garden, I have seen firsthand the benefits and success of community composting, and with the elimination of city composting the commitment of our neighbors in looking for ways to reduce their food waste from going to landfills.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council not to abandon organics collections during this crisis but to recommit to organics diversion programs that have made significant impacts in our communities. Please do not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

History shows us that temporary suspensions do not have temporary effects. In the wake of the 9/11 attacks, the City suspended plastic and glass recycling in July 2002 to close a budget gap. Plastic recycling was suspended for 12 months and glass for 21 months. Once recycling resumed, rates plummeted and they have still not fully recovered, even now in 2020. Recycling compliance works best when practice and behavior are consistent.

I am asking that the Council restore organics program cuts including curbside collection. Though the brown bin program has yet to reach all of New York City, suspending the program will likely have grave consequences over time.

In the interest of access and equity, I am specifically asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. These programs ensure that all New Yorkers can participate in organics collection and help to raise awareness about the importance impacts of diversion and waste reduction.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our community, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Nicole Sumner

To: Stephen T. Levin
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

My name is Nina Cinelli and I am disgusted to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs.

My husband and I have two young sons, who we are hoping are learning from our current missteps and our strides in the future direction for all.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change.

Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Nina Cinelli
185 Kingsland Ave
Brooklyn, NY 11222

Good afternoon,

My name is Nina Meledandri. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Organic composting has proven to be a successful initiative in under served communities like mine and the benefits are many when combined with education and jobs.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. As we go forward, it is critical to reinforce ALL energy and waste saving initiatives, especially in our youth who will be our next world leaders.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;

- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to me, I have 2 home compost bins and STILL take a considerable amount of organic waste to the GAP Greenmarket each week. I am eagerly awaiting brown bin recycling in my community and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Nina Meledandri

Hello,

I used to walk to the 181st street composting station every week. Composting helped us manage our trash production (we actually had to take out our trash less often because it would take longer to fill and would be less smelly), and it was also an easy thing to do that was environmentally friendly. We hope to continue to have composting, especially as we already made investments in our home in a composting container and composting bags. Thank you!

Nissa Mai-Rose
131 Bennett Avenue

10033

Good afternoon,

My name is Noémie Jennifer Bonnet and I live in Crown Heights, Brooklyn. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our neighborhood and our city, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Noémie Bonnet

To: Honorable Laurie Cumbo
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

My name is Nora Brown and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. Because of our flawed sanitation system, only 9% of recycling in the us has actually ended up being recycled. This statistic has been the same since 2012. Eight years. Because of this terrible statistic and the population of the city we live in, it is essential to continue composting.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Nora Brown
14 years

1024 dean Street, Brooklyn NY

May 21st 2020

Re: NYC Compost Project

There is no denying these are terrible times but the decisions we make now will impact the health and economy of our community for the remainder of history. Life as we know it will change for the forthcoming future and it is a critical time that seems to be missed by the declaration of the budget cut for the NYC Compost Project.

What this budget cut tells our community is that in the midst of a global pandemic; our current governing body and sanitation department does not begin to understand how critical it is to continue programs that are important for our environment and ultimately for our community.

Food scraps and yard waste compose a big percentage of our overall waste and you are suggesting that it is better to send wastes that can be effectively converted for our use into a landfill to continue contributing to the emergence of toxins released into our environment?

In Staten Island, the NYC Compost Project is thriving with an unrelentless following composting food scraps throughout every season. Many people like myself do not have the capability of composting at home and having this program in our borough is a lifeline to leading a conscientious lifestyle to do what I can for our environment.

Cutting this program would be detrimental for the health of our environment that eventually leads to health pandemics as the one we are currently facing. Budget cuts only inform us that you are not learning anything from this current pandemic. Lacking knowledge and motivation to invest in our environment, unequivocally is detrimental for its citizens. Lack of funding for programs that are productive and efficient for our environment just invites several other pandemic risks in the horizon. Mosquitos that would normally stay in tropical areas are now arriving in the United States, anyone remember a few summers ago Zika? A higher number of insect and animal borne diseases such as the current health pandemic are awaiting at our door and by shutting down programs such as community composting only brings these threats a step closer to our door. It is disappointing no disheartening that you are missing the message and so many people are dying and you still do not give a damn.

Good afternoon,

My name is Olga Kachook. I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, I am asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to my neighborhood, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Olga Kachook

Testimony of the Brooklyn Solid Waste Advisory Board



Regarding the Mayor's Executive Budget for FY2021
and related cuts in response to the Covid-19 pandemic

May 21, 2020

This comment is presented on behalf of the Brooklyn Solid Waste Advisory Board (BkSWAB).

Our primary concern and strong recommendation is that **the Council and the Administration should restore modest funding to support community-based compost sites and drop-off sites for organic waste**, even as the Department of Sanitation's curbside "brown-bin" program is suspended for the coming year.

BkSWAB understands that the City and its finances are under unprecedented pressure as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Difficult decisions are being taken under competing humanitarian, economic and environmental pressures, and the well-being of New York City's citizens is, and should remain, the number one priority.

While the decision to suspend the optional brown bin organics collections is regrettable, the city's future must include a comprehensive and effective system – not just a collection of programs – for managing organic wastes generated by its houses and apartments, institutions and commercial businesses, which amount to more than 30% of total waste.

As with the city's recycling system thirty years ago, at the community level a dedicated and growing cohort of New Yorkers is spearheading the diversion of organic waste from disposal to landfill, building the necessary dialogue about the importance of managing organics as resources. That culture shift is already underway and need not be suspended, given the modest amount of city resources necessary to sustain it for the coming year; doing so will preserve the foundation of interest and support for when resources and a plan become available to expand the city's organics management system.

BkSWAB will continue to work, both to support community management of organic waste, and towards the creation of an effective system that will enable New York to harness the considerable resource that is its organic waste.

Thank you for your consideration.

The Brooklyn Solid Waste Advisory Board

Chair: Shari Rueckl; Vice Chair: Celeste McMickle; Secretary: Elizabeth Royzman; Sergeant at Arms: Oliver Wright; Members: Akhmose Ari-Hotep, Anne Bassen, Sarah Bloomquist, Kendall Christiansen, Suzan Frazier, Louisa Freeman, Pablo Garcia, Kevin Jaksik, Rhonda Keyser, Rose Lenoff, Dylan Oakley, Vandra Thorburn, Greg Todd, Phil Vos

Good afternoon, name is Omar Bonet. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and

- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to family, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Good afternoon,

My name is Oren and I live on the Upper West Side. In this testimony, I am asking that the City **protect** its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals rather than decimate them via the proposed elimination of opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills, which are a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by millions, with much of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. **Rather, we are asking that the funds cut to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.**

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;

- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our community and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Good afternoon, name is Sabine Garrido and I am a member of the Smiling Hogshead Ranch Community Garden. We provide an important opportunity for our local community to participate in gardening and composting and to learn about environmental subject matters. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting. Composting is vital in a city the size of New York and has a huge environmental impact. Filling up landfills with organic matter is a disaster and is not cost effective in any way or form.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food

in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and

- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our family and our community garden (Smiling Hogshead Ranch), and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Sabine Garrido

My name is Paige Williams and I am writing because of the city's plan to suspend funding to its community composting programs and zero waste outreach until June 2021. I have used GrowNYC's community compost drop off since 2017. In my goal to reduce the waste I send to landfills, this program has been essential for me as I live in a large apartment building without access to curbside composting.

We need this program more than ever in New York City. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts due to Covid-19, we cannot afford to lose the progress made on another pressing and long-term crisis: climate change. Composting is especially significant to city-dwellers as it allows them to directly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and positively impact the environment. Keeping community composting will uplift community-based networks, support the work of local experts, and keep costs as low as possible.

There has been a great deal of powerlessness in our communities during this crisis. Taking away the community composting programs has only exacerbated that loss. Help restore New Yorkers' sense of agency in their world. Allow them to take affective action against climate change.

Restore funding the Community Composting and Zero Waste programs.

Sincerely,

Paige Williams
43-07 39th Place, Sunnyside, New York

To: Carlos Menchaca cmenchaca@council.nyc.gov

CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov

Re: Community Composting

My name is patri gonzález ramírez and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. My household has been participating in the Curbside Composting program since it expanded to our block few years ago. Before that, we used to take our food scraps a few blocks up where Curbside pick up has been in place for longer. Separating our food scraps for composting significantly cut down on the amount of trash we generated, made our home cleaner, and became a part of our daily lives.

In the month since the City has suspended Curbside Composting and Food Scrap Drop-off sites, I've had no options for composting my food waste. In the middle of this pandemic me and my neighbors have been cooking more at home and have been generating even more food scraps than we did before. **Not having composting has made our cleaning upkeep and trash disposal more cumbersome and laborious.** It breaks my heart to throw my food scraps in the trash after years of diligently composting!

It is not acceptable for the City to continue these cuts for the next year or more. Stop making excuses, there is an abundance of money, just TAX THE RICH!

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

patri gonzález ramírez
Resident of 46th St in Sunset Park

Good afternoon,

My name is Patrick and I'm writing to you about community composting. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Composting has made me realize how much waste I create, and how this waste can be reused to help the environment.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. This restoration will help citizens be more mindful of their waste, as well as dispose of it in an eco-friendly manner.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to us and everyone else in New York City and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Patrick Kim

Hello – our names are Alexandra and Paul Herzan and we are members of the board of the Lily Auchincloss Foundation. Our Foundation is dedicated to the enhancement of the quality of life in New York City and to this end we have been very involved in supporting organizations and causes that make this city livable. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. [

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability and livability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. [Our foundation and our family has devoted a lot of resources and energy to helping those not for profits in the city that have committed to recycling and composting.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;

- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to us, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Alexandra and Paul Herzan

Lily Auchincloss Foundation

Good afternoon, my name is Perry Leung and I am a member of the Queens Solid Waste Advisory Board, Organizing Committee. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting. Composting was a gateway for me to understand the impacts of my daily life to climate change, and I hope the City's services can continue to inspire others in the same way.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, I am asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. I have volunteered with organizations like Earth Matter and have seen the impact they have to getting New Yorkers comfortable and interested in participating in composting programs.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our City, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Perry Leung

Queens Resident

Queens Solid Waste Advisory Board, Organizing Committee Member

Praveen Vajpeyi

May 21, 2020

Greetings!

My name is Praveen Vajpeyi, and I am a resident of Prospect Heights, Brooklyn.

In this testimony, I would like to add my voice to the request that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills – a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

While Prospect Heights was never included in the broader drive across parts of the city to supply residents with the brown compost bin, the local Farmer's Market would collect compost on Saturdays at Grand Army Plaza. That has been stopped and we are struggling to figure out options to compost once more.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

Praveen Vajpeyi

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask for our community here in Prospect Heights, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Wish you all the best to navigate these trying times!

Praveen

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Lisa Puttagio and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. I have been actively composting since it became available at my local farmer's market and have only seen participation in this program grow year after year.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, but we still need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference and I have seen that difference being made first-hand with the overwhelming amount of participation I see in my local neighborhood. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs. If door-to-door pickup is still out of reach, at least restore the public drop-offs at the farmer's markets that have continued to remain open during this time.

Sincerely,

Lisa Puttagio
Woodside, NY

5/21/20

Good afternoon,

My name is Quinn Rol. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to me and my family, and our NYC community at large, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Quinn Rol

Testimony for the Finance meeting on May 21, 2020

"[#SaveOurCompost](#). Continue to fund curbside residential pick up, the nonprofits like GrowNYC and the NYC Compost Project. We can't afford to regress."

- R Lynne Lee

Good afternoon, my name is Racheal Notto. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Recycling and composting is a vital option for cities to do their part in mitigating the climate crisis by reducing landfill bound waste.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. For me, this means I can continue dropping off my organics waste at a GrowNYC drop-off site and I know organizations can continue educating the public on the importance of composting.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to for my community, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

My name is Rachel Becker and I am extremely disappointed to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. **Over the past 5 years composting has become a vital part of my kitchen routine, and I have seen firsthand the waste reduction that can occur. Since COVID-19 hit and we have not been able to compost in my home, we have had to take the trash out around three times as much as normal—or more. Food scraps that could be converted to valuable fertilizer for gardens and tree beds is ending up in landfills, damaging the environment instead of helping it.**

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Rachel Becker

348 West 118th Street, #61
New York, NY 10026

Good morning,

My name is Rachel Boeglin and I am a member of the Queens Solid Waste Advisory Board organizing committee. We are residents, business owners, industry leaders, nonprofits and others interested in solid waste issues affecting Queens communities. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Losing the ability to locally compost organics means the loss of tons of green jobs, at least 100 million lbs of organics sent to landfills rather than turned into something useful, and the unnecessary production of over 42,000 tons of CO₂.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
 - the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will

pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask - and the impact it has on my community of Astoria, to the borough of Queens, and to all of New York City - and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Rachel Boeglin

It is so important for New York to fund composting on a city-wide level. Global warming is a dire threat, and composting breaks down waste aerobically (safely), while landfills break down waste without oxygen exposure (anaerobically). This releases large amounts of dangerous methane into the atmosphere, furthering the advance of climate change. This is being posed as a budgeting issue, but the truth is that we cannot afford NOT to compost, for the sake of our society and our planet. Make the city and the world a safer, greener place by supporting city-wide composting.

Rachel McGivern

Hello,

My name is Rachel Selekman, a Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn, resident. In this testimony, I'm asking that the City not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. I have been bringing my compost for 7 years or so to either my local, community farm, 462 Halsey Community Farm, or drop it off with GrowNYC when I pick up my Fresh Food Box every Saturday. Bed-Stuy doesn't have the brown bin program, unfortunately, so these compost drop off options have been critical.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Rachel Selekman

Dear City Council,

My name is Rachel Thompson and I live in Brooklyn Heights. I was disappointed to learn that the city is suspending curbside compost collection due to budget cuts. With the health crisis, financial downturn, and uncertainty about the future, I understand that composting may not be top of mind, but it is a significant benefit to the city and its citizens. It reduces carbon emissions and can help address climate change. I know that the city council was even recently considering making composting mandatory! Composting has been a significant way in which I can reduce waste and be a better citizen of New York. It is one of those few programs that benefits all of us while requiring so little.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis. I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Thank you,
Rachel Thompson

282 Hicks St #2
Brooklyn Heights 11201

financetestimony@council.nyc.gov

Re: Community Composting

My name is Rasa McKean and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs.

My household has been participating in the Curbside Composting program since its inception. Separating our food scraps and yard waste for composting has significantly cut down on the amount of trash we generate, made our home cleaner, and become a part of our daily lives.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Rasa McKean

69 Orange Street
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Dear City Council,

I am writing to advocate to maintain community composting programs. I understand the city has deep budget concerns. I hope you have thoroughly analyzed the actual savings in cutting composting, as the food waste will still need to be disposed of even if not compared. Good waste in landfills is a major source of methane gas contributing to climate change. Is the small savings worth this?

I will not be able to attend this hearing live because I am a teacher and I will be with students at that time. As a teacher, I know how long it takes to form good habits, and how easy it is to lose them. It took a very long time for us to build our school composting program and teach students to use compost correctly. A few months or a year could mean lost habits that take months or years to rebuild. The same is true for adults. It's not worth this loss.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Blumenthal



May 21, 2020

NYC City Council

250 Broadway

New York, NY 10007

Dear NYC City Council Finance Committee,

I am the Program Coordinator for Guardians of Flushing Bay (GoFB), a coalition of park and water users, environmental advocates, local residents and citywide partners advocating for an accessible and healthy Flushing Bay and Creek. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Flushing Bay and Creek are plighted with massive amounts of combined sewer overflow and contaminated stormwater pollution every year. A robust composting system can divert potential pollutants away from our watershed, encourage environmental stewardship at an early age and generate high performing rain absorbent green infrastructure for our waterfront¹.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills – a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years. We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

GoFB serves communities highly impacted by the COVID-19 crisis, including Corona, Jackson Heights, East Elmhurst and Flushing. How the pandemic is reverberating in these neighborhoods is a warning for the impact that any environmental crisis could have in vulnerable communities where resilience, equitable accessibility to resources and environmental quality have not been prioritized. We ask that the City Council retain all services that encourage resilient and sustainable systems such as municipal composting, rather than roll them back.

¹Using compost can reduce water pollution-final 3-8-07. (n.d.). Retrieved May 21, 2020, from <https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/environmental-services/pdf/miramar/CompostReducingWater.pdf>

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to the communities we serve and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rebecca B Pryor".

Rebecca Pryor

Program Coordinator

Guardians of Flushing Bay

May 21, 2020
NYC City Council Committee on Finance
Testimony from Rebecca Elzinga

My name is Becca Elzinga and I am a resident of the Lower East Side and a student of the 2019 Master Composter class hosted by the Lower East Side Ecology Center through the NYC Compost Project. I am testifying today in support of NYC's community composting and the many programs that make it possible.

The proposed cuts to the FY21 budget are heartbreaking for our natural areas and our communities. Greenspaces are critical infrastructure for New Yorkers and the pandemic has further reiterated that fact. At a time when parks are more utilized (and soon to be less funded) than ever, extra precaution should be taken to care for soil health. Local composting is the best and most effective way to rebuild soils while diverting tons of organic waste from landfill.

Not only does compost strengthen the resiliency of our parkland, it fosters community involvement and empowerment. Park and garden groups create their own compost and rely on free donations of local compost to revitalize their spaces. Our neighborhoods thrive when these community groups have the resources they need to succeed. During this time of unprecedented hardship, the technical support and education that city programs provide will be critical in sustaining these groups and building the next generation of environmental stewards. I cannot overstate the value of programs like the NYC Compost Project, GrowNYC Zero Waste, and DSNY curbside composting; they make me proud to be a New Yorker. Participating in the Master Composter course was an extremely rewarding experience that solidified my commitment to composting for life. It pains me to think of the livelihoods lost by these cuts, and the sudden destruction of New Yorkers' ability to live out their values and reduce their environmental footprint.

New York City cannot be a leader on climate if our natural areas, our compost yards, and our environmental programming are the first to be cut at every turn. With plans for the East Side Coastal Resiliency (ESCR) Project and the potential demolition of the East River Compost Yard moving forward, community trust is at an all-time low. The pandemic poses great challenges for our city, but a climate-centered community-informed response is the only way forward. I urge the City Council to restore funding for composting through a network of food scrap drop-off sites, food-scrap processing at existing DEC-registered sites, and technical assistance for neighborhood compost sites.

Thank you,
Rebecca Elzinga

To: Honorable Councilman Dromm
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

My name is Rebecca Fenton and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. I was delighted to see how easy Grow NYC made composting - I would store mine in the freezer and drop it in the totes at the Jackson Heights farmers market every Sunday. It made me so much more aware of my diet, reduced my regular trash, and connected me to a larger community of New Yorkers who care about our environment and getting to zero waste. I am devastated that the city might take a step backwards on getting to zero waste. It makes life in the city much less appealing.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Fenton

Resident - 3528 80th Street #53 in Jackson Heights

Dear Council,

I am writing to demand that funding to all community based compost programs be restored, including the non-profits GrowNYC & NYC Compost Project.

Gardens are more important every day in NYC. They are oases of green, calm, and peace in our soon-to-be-bustling again city. Already, construction has resumed.

Compost is a critical element for good gardening, and, just as importantly, diverts tons of valuable food waste from our garbage burden.

Please keep NYC an example of the kind of government the world needs right now. Make us #NYPROUD.

I am counting on you to make the right choice.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Perrin

Good evening,

My name is Rebecca Simson Hohl. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, I am asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our family and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.
Rebecca Simson Hohl
Park Slope, Brooklyn

Good afternoon, name is Rebecca Sosa, I am a local Queens immigration attorney. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. We are out of time to intelligently address known climate risks to NYC by common sense programs such as composting, and I urge you allow the composting to continue and even expand.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

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- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;

- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to NYC, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

May 21st, 2020

To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Regina Koehler. In this testimony, I am **asking that the city restore cuts to our community-based composting programs** which by eliminating opportunities for composting would decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to my family and neighborhood, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Regina Koehler

245 West 107th street #5G, NYC

Good afternoon,

My name is Rena Lee and I have worked with GrowNYC, Urban Green Council, and other urban sustainability nonprofit organizations in NYC. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. We've made so much progress in creating networks and systems for transforming the city's abundant organic waste into fertile soils for our parks, gardens, street trees, and we've connected with so many New Yorkers, young and old, about their roles in a sustainable NYC.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity;
- and the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and

recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

I cannot overstate the urgency of this ask to me, my family, and NYC's zero waste community, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you!

Rena Lee

Good afternoon,

I urge the City Council to ensure that the City continues to enable citizens to compost, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years with our food waste.

As Outreach Director for [Cafeteria Culture](#), (CafCu), I sit on the [Brooklyn Solid Waste Advisory Board](#) (BkSWAB), on the Executive Board of [Sure We Can](#), (SWC) and serve as Community Advisor on the Board of [NY State Children's Environmental Health Centers](#) (NYSHECK). I know through my work that waste management is one of the most pressing issues that connects to climate through public health, social, racial, and economic justice. I ask that the City not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting. The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions and one-third of the City's residential waste stream. The budget cuts to the DSNY budget causing a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste **would relegate our NYC organics to landfills and incinerators. Communities from Ohio to South Carolina and even the rural community where I was raised in Virginia will now have to bear the burden of NYC's waste that could otherwise be used as resources.** This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

I know through my work with CafCu, SWC, NYSHECK, and the BkSWAB that low-income communities of color are the hardest hit by climate change and by the massive amounts of garbage running through these communities. I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, I am asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners and to GrowNYC be restored with expansion for community outreach and education to continue to reduce the amount of garbage sent to landfills and incinerators.

The \$7 million of cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and prevent this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
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- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this request to my family and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you,

Rhonda Keyser

210 Carroll Street, Brooklyn, NY 11231

Good afternoon, name is Richard O’Russa and I am a composter and citizen of New York City. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor’s proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, I am asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and

- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you from a concerned constituent.

Richard O’Russa

I write in support reinstating the NYC composting program. In my neighborhood, this has been widely embraced until it was stopped due to Cov id-19. At least one half of all our trash was compostable. Thus my landfill burden was significantly decreased. It should be also be noted that greenhouse gas generation is reduced through composting thus it is important for our environment to compost as much as possible. I also believe that New Yorkers enjoy going to composting sites to contribute to the city's environmental health. Please reinstitute the composting program as soon as possible.

Robert Lin,

Manhattan

Good afternoon, name is Subarna Mathes. By way of this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting. I am enormously proud that the City committed to environmental justice and want to help realize these goals, not erase them.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, I am asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask for the city of New York, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Robert Mathes

I am testifying to say that it is horribly shortsighted to cut the city's organics recycling program at this time.

I am a native New Yorker and the organics recycling program was the most successful waste-stream reduction I can remember. It also produced excellent soil for use in gardens and parks all over the city. I saw first-hand how, when I started saving organic waste for the brown bin, that I was able to cut the amount of garbage I was putting in my bins by two-thirds. In addition, it reduced the amount of organic waste thrown onto the street and in the gutters.

It has not been an expensive program but has been extremely successful and has helped make New York a better city. In addition, it saves money and the environment because all the waste otherwise collected is either trucked out of town or carried by truck to be burnt in incinerators.

The organics recycling program is too important to sacrifice in the wake of the pandemic.

Thank you for your attention.

Robert Neuwirth
N. 1st Street, Brooklyn

May 21, 2020

To Whom it May Concern -

My name is Rob Spalding and I have been composting in New York City for 5 years. It has truly changed my life. I began composting in Prospect Heights (I dropped my compost off every Wednesday at the 7th Ave B/Q). At the time, my building had a mouse and roach problem. As soon as we started composting, the problem went away almost completely. The frequency we took out the garbage changed too - only once every two weeks, only when it was full! Previously it was every three days. It saved me money on garbage bags and saved the city the cost of moving and storing that food waste that could now be put to good use.

One year ago, I moved to Chelsea at the corner of 10th Ave and 23rd Street. Since the first day of my residency, I've been walking to the NYC brown composting bin at the corner of 23rd St and the West Side Highway. A few times, city workers have seen me dump my compost and cheered for me! It's a great feeling to do something for the earth, for my community and to make my apartment smell better! Since the bins were removed, I am constantly taking out my garbage. Not only is this wasteful but it's making my apartment smell bad.

I am a designer that works for a small start up. I know what the power of marketing can do for a small company like mine. I know that the composting program was not marketed correctly, if at all, upon it's introduction. I know this because every friend I convert to composting can't believe they weren't doing it before. I believe this is the reason for the program's underutilisation. When the composting program is reinstated, I truly believe it deserves a strong marketing push from the City of New York to be successful. I believe that once the majority of New Yorkers begin composting, they will see (and smell) the benefits not only in their own homes but in the gardens and public parks their food waste has fertilized.

Please reinstate the compost program to make New York City less wasteful, less stinky, and an even more beautiful place to live.

Sincerely,

Rob Spalding
8656967438

Good afternoon, name is Lauren R. and I live in Cobble Hill. I have been a composter for a few years now, and when I first moved to NYC, I was impressed by the city's composting program. Unfortunately, this has been replaced by profound disappointment in the city's proposal to eliminating composting. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

I urge the City Council to ensure that the City maintain (at the very least) the ability to continue some type of organics recycling and composting and not discard the progress the city has made in the past few years.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, I am asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;

- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to myself and all New Yorkers, and I hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Ronda E. Small
110 Riverside Drive Apt. 10E
New York, NY 10024

May 21, 2020

To the New York City Council Committee on Finance:

My name is Ronda Small. I am a member of the Bnai Jeshurun Environmental Advocates. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not void its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting. Composting is an important part of our synagogue's sustainability efforts. Many of us also compost our organic waste in our homes. My family's organic waste is picked up by the Department of Sanitation from brown containers at our building, which has 160 apartments. This program is a daily reminder to think sustainably about our food. It is an important life-long teaching experience, which makes caring for our environment become second nature to our children.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted. It has potential to have negative long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away all the progress we have made in the past few years.

At this point, we are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. This would at least allow us to carry our compost waste to a community GrowNYC Farmers Market. However, the February 2019 study, "How Much Potential Revenue are New Yorkers Wasting by Trashing Organics?," by the Independent Budget Office concluded that **if the composting program were expanded it could generate \$22.5 million for the City of New York**. How shortsighted to curtail it now!

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill, where they will emit greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work.
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills.
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity.
- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-long habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to us, our organization, and our families. We hope the Council ensures that this important priority be included in the budget going forward.

Sincerely,

Ronda E. Small

Please note this statement by Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer and Councilman Antonio Reynoso:

In a February 2019 study, "How Much Potential Revenue are New Yorkers Wasting by Trashing Organics?," the city's Independent Budget Office calculated that if all of the 1 million tons of food and yard waste generated by New Yorkers annually were recycled into compost, it could produce \$12.5 million in revenue. If the same annual tonnage were recycled into biogas and used to generate electricity, the potential revenue could be as much as \$22.5 million.

We can only realize the untapped financial potential of the organics program if enough New Yorkers separate their leftover pizza crusts and banana peels from their trash and into the city's brown bins. Cutting the program nixes the opportunity for that to happen and washes away years of gains in a single stroke. What the city should do is pursue an "expand to save" model, accomplishing multiple goals at once.

Realizing the increased revenue from organics recycling is dependent upon expansion. An investment in our organics program now will save money in the long run, all while helping our planet. It's a win-win.

Good afternoon,

My name is Roni Pelleg. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut so much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to my family, my neighborhood and the city I call home. I hope the Council ensures that this important priority will not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Roni Pelleg

Good morning,

My name is Rowie Samaco, a born & raised Queens native who has dreams for a sustainable NYC... a city that would be livable and bearable for generations for years to come. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. To undo all the hard work and traction of all these efforts is heart-breaking and really affects the morale of our city's sense of community and environment.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our future generations, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Rowie Samaco

Dear Finance Committee, City Council, and Office of Budget and Management of NYC,

On behalf of myself and my husband, New York City residents, and our Lab/Shul Jewish Community of hundreds more New Yorkers urge you to
#SaveOurCompost!!!

Continue to fund the nonprofits GrowNYC and the NYC Compost Project. None of us can afford to regress for the sake of our children and grandchildren.

Sincerely,

Roxanne Greenstein
380 Malcolm X Blvd., #6D,
NY, NY 10027
roxannegreenstein@gmail.com

Testimony regarding the Mayor's Executive Budget for FY2021 and related cuts in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, May 21, 2020

Good morning,

Our names are Shari and Ryan Rueckl and we are concerned citizens in living in Concord Village in Brooklyn, a 1,023 unit co-op with approximately 2,000 residents. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Prior to May 4, 2020, our co-op filled 14-18 of the 26 gallon brown bins weekly and this cut has significantly impacted residents in all of our 7 buildings. Shari leads our Recycling and Sustainability Committee in hosting education table events annually in each building to remind folks about the programs available and how to dispose of their food scraps properly. This time and effort resulted in very low contamination rates in those brown bins and increases in participation each year.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. This would mean our residents could bring their food scraps to Brooklyn Borough Hall greenmarket once again.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to us and the residents of Concord Village and we hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you,

Shari and Ryan Rueckl
Brooklyn, NY

To: Honorable Barry Grodenchik

CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov

Re: Community Composting

My name is Ruth Ruivivar Esa and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and brown bin collection. I want to dispel the misconception that this issue is not a priority or a critical need for NYC. I am a critical care nurse at LIJ Medical Center-Northwell Health, a fellow at Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments and a proud Master Composter from Queens Botanical Garden. I am a resident of Bellerose, Queens and grew up in this neighborhood and am proud that the brown bin has been available for me for compost curbside collection. However to my knowledge not all neighborhoods in Queens are treated equally to have the brown bins for curbside collection. This is a great time to analyze these gaps. This past year, I participated in a voluntary fellowship with Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments ([ANHE](#)). I represented EPA region II: NY, NJ, Puerto Rico and USVI. Representing NY and doing an assessment of environmental health needs was a daunting task. I am an ICU nurse and a Holistic nurse and wasn't sure how to approach "Public Health" needs. In NY I learned from various communities in BK, Bronx and Queens: addressing violence as a public health issue to recognizing air quality issues and the threat of urban heat island effects. The main issue at the heart of all these disparities was what I realized is the issue irrespective of place: social inequality and lack of resources. As a holistic nurse I find importance in preventive care and getting to the core of difficult issues. I found that "Zero waste" initiatives tied into all my values and what I viewed as an impactful, healthy activity that is essential for community building. This fellowship and the wonderful outreach workers for zero waste initiatives empowered me to understand my Queens community and has shown me that collective action matters. Rather than back away from healthy preventive actions such as reducing waste to landfills- we need to enhance organic waste efforts.

I have worked as an ICU nurse for 9+ years, and in my whole career have never experienced such chaotic times than what is currently going on with the Covid-19 pandemic. Throughout this time I have worked at the hospital caring primarily for all Covid-19 confirmed cases but also on my days off taking the Compost master program online. As a frontline healthcare worker I understand the impact that climate change also has towards long-term public health impacts. It would be counterproductive to retract such an invaluable program and one that truly makes a difference in reducing GreenHouse gases- such as methane. We need to be mindful as ever of our environment during these uncertain times. It is evident to me that behavior change is a reality: if people can abide by stay at home orders and socially isolate,

organics waste collection should be made mandatory. This past year, I have advocated voluntarily for composting in my hospital through speaking out to educate about its importance. With an outreach worker I have tabled events and handed out informational pamphlets regarding zero waste goals- in my experience what I saw was many curious employees at the hospital - some of whom make their own efforts and some who have no idea what it is. At the high school -Institute for Health Professions at Cambria Heights I helped to coordinate a QBG outreach worker to speak to the students on 101 composting. I also worked with their Green science teacher to apply for a Citizens Neighborhood grant to assist in creating an outdoor classroom and potentially start a school composting system. None of this would have been possible without the expertise and guidance of outreach staff at BigReuse and Queens Botanical garden- as budgeted by NYC Zero Waste initiatives. I am writing to encourage you to support forthcoming legislation in the City council to expand our organics collection because more than just a collection-it provides a public health need and education. Your support would help me validate this past year's work I have done voluntarily because I see it as crucial to the future of the youth who will inherit this planet.

The City must prioritize organics collection in order to meet our zero waste and our climate goals. Before these budget cuts, New York City was making major advances in our waste management, moving beyond our toxic waste legacy and making the "NYC zero waste" initiative inclusive to the diversity inherent in NYC. Composting programs are part of less than 6% of the city's budget, yet they have the potential to reduce greenhouse gasses and toxic sludge that can enter the water table. With NYC accounting for 5.7% of the U.S. population and with landfilled food waste accounting for 8% of greenhouse gasses globally, this city's trash has a major impact on the health of the planet and its inhabitants. As an ICU nurse, a holistic nurse and a fellow at ANHE: the organic curbside collection and zero waste initiatives serves as an essential intervention to improving global and planetary health. I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Best regards,

Ruth Esa, RN, BSN, CCRN, HNB-BC

Nurse at LIJ-Northwell Health, Fellow at Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments, Compost Master -QBG

Good afternoon, name is Ruth Nervig and I am with the Gowanus Canal Conservancy. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and

- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our neighborhood, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

council.nyc.gov/testify

May 21, 2020

To: Honorable Stephen Levin

CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov

Re: Community Composting

I've lived in Brooklyn since 1972 and remember when local initiative created glass recycling on Atlantic Avenue. With passing decades the City—wonderfully—has become an active recycler, most recently of compost. Now that program has been suspended or discontinued.

I understand with great concern that the City plans to withdraw funding from Community Composting and Zero-Waste outreach programs. As the city, country, and world are strangled by increasing burdens of trash, let us please mitigate that burden and channel our waste as productively and mindfully as we can. Retreating from local pathways of disposal adds to our increasing appropriation of the city—and planet—as we claw for another tract of green space or low-rise neighborhood to build on, or someone else's yard to dump our waste in. And now we live in lockdown; our disregard for local and global community and our systematic abuse of nature have reaped the whirlwind and smashed down the front door. Let individuals act and community programs thrive to redirect this clogged and shameful tide.

Respectfully,
Ruth Chapman
Teacher
37 Wyckoff St.
Brooklyn, NY 11201

To NYC City Council,

My name is Ryan Bossis, a NYC resident proud of our City's commitment to lead on climate change.

Thus, I'm dismayed to learn that the City is planning to cut the community composting and recycling outreach programs of the NYC Compost Project and GrowNYC.

Although the Mayor's Executive Budget eliminates funding for these programs to address the recent fiscal shortfall, these cuts, outlined in the Citywide Savings Program, do not contribute to a public health strategy for our ongoing COVID-19 crisis.

NYC Compost Project and robust recycling help make the city healthier, safer, and more resilient. They make irreplaceable contributions to the measurable goals of thriving neighborhoods, healthy lives, and a livable climate as stated in the Mayor's One New York plan. If these programs are removed from the FY 2021 budget, these goals are imperiled.

Our city must continue to be a leader in waste reduction and reuse through our innovative community-based approaches. NYC's approach to composting leverages Sanitation, large nonprofits and small community-based organizations to provide different opportunities to compost organic waste. The NYC Compost Project unites nonprofits and activists from all five boroughs, leveraging local knowledge. All of their activities work together to build a coalition in support of composting - enabling strategies that not only reduce organic waste, but redirect finished compost into urban soil building, food production, science education and green job opportunities. While large scale municipal collection efforts may be the easiest to quantitatively measure, programs that encourage home and school compost systems, community garden compost systems and innovative approaches to composting should not be discounted in the value they provide.

Cutting NYC Compost Project and Zero Waste programs in this Fiscal Year 2021, would compound the damage done cuts in previous years to recycling operations, civic education, and compliance, ensuring our city will never approach the Mayor's stated Zero Waste goals. **At a time when public health requires a sustainable city, New Yorkers deserve better. Restore the cuts to recycling education and baseline NYC Compost Project funding starting in FY 2021 as part of your commitment to a healthier NYC.**

Thank you,

Ryan Bossis

Good afternoon,

My name is Ryan Dombal and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate financial support for composting and e-waste recycling programs. These programs are important because they help New York City become a cleaner, greener place for future generations.

These cuts will directly affect the LES Ecology Center together with the NYC Compost Project partners and GrowNYC Zero Waste programs. The cuts represent approximately \$7 million, and if restored can continue to provide citywide access to these crucial Zero Waste programs. It's essential to retain these programs so as not to lose the existing recycling infrastructure, knowledge and habits that will be difficult to rebuild once eliminated.

Cutting these programs will reverse the progress that we have made by diverting food scraps and toxic electronic waste from landfills. When in a landfill, food waste is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions and electronics leach heavy metals and toxins into our soil and waterways. We can't let the current budget crisis allow us to lose sight of the looming climate crisis and we must continue to divert these materials from landfills to reach our sustainability goals.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future to continue. These programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to community compost and e-waste collection programs.

Sincerely,

Ryan Dombal

Good afternoon,

My name is Ryan McDaid and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate financial support for composting and e-waste recycling programs.

Cutting these programs will reverse the progress that we have made by diverting food scraps and toxic electronic waste from landfills. When in a landfill, food waste is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions and electronics leach heavy metals and toxins into our soil and waterways. We can't let the current budget crisis allow us to lose sight of the looming climate crisis and we must continue to divert these materials from landfills to reach our sustainability goals.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future to continue. These programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to community compost and e-waste collection programs.

Sincerely,
Ryan McDaid

Good afternoon,

My name is Ryan Rueckl. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our neighborhood, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Ryan Rueckl

Good afternoon,

My name is Ryan Van Manen, and I am a resident of Astoria, Queens and an alumnus of the NYC Master Compost program through the NYC Compost Project and DSNY. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Diverting organic waste away from landfills is crucial in mitigating atmospheric methane production, one of the prevailing greenhouse gases contributing to unprecedented climate change. The impacts on our communities and city are drastic, and therefore these programs should be funded as a priority.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our neighborhood, city, and world, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Ryan Van Manen

Good afternoon, name is Saadia Khalid. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and

- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to my family and community at large and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you,

Saadia Khalid

Good afternoon, name is Sabine Garrido and I am a member of the Smiling Hogshead Ranch Community Garden. We provide an important opportunity for our local community to participate in gardening and composting and to learn about environmental subject matters. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting. Composting is vital in a city the size of New York and has a huge environmental impact. Filling up landfills with organic matter is a disaster and is not cost effective in any way or form.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food

in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and

- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our family and our community garden (Smiling Hogshead Ranch), and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Sabine Garrido

Dear Speaker Johnson,

I have recently heard that budget cuts include the elimination of the community composting subsidy. This funds the seven nonprofits that make up the NYC Compost Project in every borough, including my home neighborhood in Queens.

The NYC Compost Project provides essential services to:

- community gardeners and urban farmers
- local and citywide greening and volunteer groups
- schools and youth organizations
- agency and institutional partners
- seniors and other residential groups

Composting is the BEST way to reduce waste, grow food, connect to people in communities, and learn green job skills. Their work helps improve the health of our depleted soils and the environment at homes and in neighborhoods throughout NYC. It is a cost effective way to reap multiple benefits including climate change, public health and community health.

Now more than ever, we need the NYC Compost Project to continue to support our community as we work together to create a more healthy, equitable, and sustainable City.

We have already lost so much because of COVID-19. Community composting can easily be done with minimal risks of COVID-19 transmission. People already follow safety practices when composting.

Sincerely,

Sally Brown
Research Professor
University of Washington
Fellow, Soil Science Society of America
Former member National Academy of Science Committee on Soil Science

Good afternoon, name is Sam Goinsalvos and I am a resident of Fort Greene, Brooklyn. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting. Composting is an incredible way for me to be a more responsible, sustainable citizen of NYC, keeping tons of food waste out of our landfills. We have the opportunity to make progress on climate change and be leaders for the rest of the country – let's do it!

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. My community deserves this option. Everyone wants to do their part. We just need a strong partnership with the city.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask for all NYC citizens, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

I am a former employee of GrowNYC's Zero Waste Schools program, and I am one of the many who lost their jobs and whose programs have been all but eliminated as a result of the Mayor's proposed \$106.5 million budget cut to DSNY. To say that this cut is short-sighted is a gross understatement. This is a devastating blow to the City's sustainability and climate resiliency agenda. The people who work on programs that are part of New York City's Zero Waste goals are entrusted with not just teaching people how to sort their trash but more importantly with providing popular education about climate change to New Yorkers. In my role with the Zero Waste Schools program, I gave presentations to thousands of students a year about waste in NYC and its connection to climate change. I'd start off every presentation asking "Who feels personally affected by climate change?" Out of crowds of hundreds of students, maybe 10 would raise their hands. It was not that students were naive or didn't care. Many of them could already define climate change, name its causes, and propose solutions. But most did not understand that their home, *New York City*, is at present risk of sea level rise, intensification of storms, and rising temperatures and that their food waste rotting in landfills is a major contributor to this problem. Hundreds of thousands of NYC students have been empowered to address climate change -- through individual acts like recycling & composting as well as collective ones like organizing to educate the community -- as a direct result of the work of non-profit environmental educators like those on the Zero Waste Schools team. I wonder how New York City can possibly fight for "a livable climate," as *One New York* touts, when the proposed budget slashes the city's green economy workers and decimates many bedrock environmental education institutions that have ensured our youth understand the urgency of climate catastrophe and their place in stopping it. I urge the City Council to ensure that we fund all the programs that have contributed to New York's progress on its Zero Waste goals.

To: Honorable Council Member Costa Constantinides
Cc: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community composting

My name is Sandra Colicino and reside at district 22. I am writing this testimony to demonstrate my dissatisfaction with the decision from the City to eliminate funding for the community composting.

It is understandable that the COVID-19 crisis will definitely leave a mark in our society for years to come and it will tremendously affect the City's finances. However, investing in a citywide program to collect and process composting is crucial for New York City to achieve its zero waste goal until the year of 2030. It is clear that the coronavirus crisis has a gigantic impact, but a bigger crisis will still remain even after the end of this pandemic, which is climate change. In order to alleviate the consequences of climate change, New York City needs a robust community composting system.

I personally made the decision that in the year of 2020 I would commit to the composting issue only to be frustrated by the fact it is suspended for the time being. I urge my council member Costa Constantinides to vote for the restoration of the budget directed to composting and zero waste initiatives in New York City.

Sincerely,
Sandra Colicino
14-19 31st ROAD #1 - Astoria, NY - 11106

SANDRA GOLDMARK

680 West 204th Street #5B
New York, NY 10034

May 21, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed cuts to composting in New York City. We need to continue to fund the nonprofits GrowNYC and the NYC Compost Project – and reinstate municipal composting with DSNY. We can't afford to regress.

Compost is a critical component to reducing waste and protecting our environment and our communities. This short-sighted cut is not the way to move forward. We should make composting mandatory city-wide, and find other ways to address budget shortfalls.

For example, recent weeks have made it clear that 2X per week street cleaning is not necessary in all neighborhoods. Similarly, we should incentivize recycling and composting by creating a "Pay As You Throw" system for landfill. We should offer incentives for communities to support recycling and composting at the local level, creating jobs.

Simply cutting composting is *not* the way forward. In times of crisis, there is an opportunity to lead, and to create opportunities. Let's move forward and build a stronger city, together.

Sincerely,



Sandra Goldmark

5/20/20

Good afternoon.

My name is Sandra Noonan and I am a New York City resident, founder of the group Zero Waste NYC, and a sustainability professional at a mid-sized private food service company headquartered in New York City. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not deprioritize its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. I have been utilizing the city's composting drop off sites since 2018, and dropping off my food scraps at my local Greenmarket has made me enormously proud to be a New Yorker.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions -- from landfills. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted, and will set the City back even further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, I am asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, this amount could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;

5/20/20

- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Just Hauling

Renée Peperone & Sandy Nurse
Managing Directors, Just Hauling Inc.
240 Starr Street
Brooklyn, NY 11237
info@justhaulingnyc.com

21st May 2020

Good afternoon,

We are submitting this testimony on behalf of Just Hauling. Just Hauling, Inc (JH) is a new MWBE environmental justice social enterprise dedicated to expanding organic waste composting in NYC and supporting the growing micro hauling industry citywide. Our goal is to develop local micro processing infrastructure required to grow zero-emissions micro hauling while making the terms of this emerging work healthy, fair, just and accessible.

Today, we are asking the City Council to pass a just budget that does not reverse critical gains to the city's Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. All New Yorkers understand the cost of the COVID-19 pandemic on our city will be high, but we know the cost of the climate crisis will be higher if we do not continue to take immediate action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and realize a zero waste city. By the city's own admission, we have less than 10 years to cut 40% emissions. This is an astounding task and cannot lose any time or jobs created to accomplish it.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration plans to cut the \$28 million in funding for all recycling and composting organic waste activities. This is not only short-sighted, but dangerous given the long-term implications of the city not meeting its sustainability goals.

We urge the City Council to consider the fact that for every dollar that goes to the NYPD and Corrections, other vital agencies get less than 25 cents. We know there is plenty of money available to fund important programs like Summer Youth Employment *and* organics recycling and composting if City Council Members demand we invest in communities and not continue to invest in a fiscally bloated NYPD.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion specifically to engage the underserved communities of color that DSNY has not prioritized for organic recycling and composting. Additionally, we believe the city should ensure composting community organizations and social enterprises are supported in continuing to build the systems and infrastructure to guarantee that all New Yorkers have access to organics

recycling and composting. Grassroots microhaulers and compost workers have been laying the groundwork for success and expanded funding for their efforts is long overdue.

We believe the city should pull the \$7 million from the NYPD's budget to cover the NYC Compost Project, GrowNYC, and partners. We believe this will go a long way in allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste preventing the loss of well established green jobs in the waste sector, and further emitting greenhouse gases.

We cannot understate the urgency of what this request means to Just Hauling and our community, which has never been served by the DSNY curbside organics program. We hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you,

Renée Peperone & Sandy Nurse
Managing Directors, Just Hauling Inc.

Thursday, May 21, 2020

Testimony for Committee on Finance

Subject: Save Our Compost

During this public health crisis, disparities in health and wellness have been exposed. Healthy food and sustainable, eco-friendly community initiatives should not be a privilege, especially as we learn that the human body and the health of the planet are interwoven. Composting is a tool that empowers communities of all ages, all races, all socioeconomic statuses. As a Bed-Stuy resident in Brooklyn, during the quarantine my household has started to reduce food waste and begin composting in the backyard. Initiatives like this, big and small, need to be supported by the city leaders and representatives. Now is not the time to disinvest from taking care of our bodies and our planet. Now is not the time to tighten the budget and close the door on issues and ideas that could change the landscape of New York City for the future we are shaping during this crisis. Please put the people first, put your personal privilege and perspective aside and see how this benefits our descendants for generations to come. We need more investment, not less!

-Santana Alvarado, Brooklyn 11233

#SaveOurCompost

To: Honorable Brad Lander and colleagues
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

My name is Sara Gronim. I urge the City Council and the Mayor to reinstitute funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. I myself have faithfully brought our organic scraps to the collection site at the Saturday Farmers Market at Grand Army Plaza every Saturday for years. Since the Covid-19 pandemic shut down the collection site, I have been appalled by how much more garbage my husband and I generate that is simply thrown in the general trash. I have always been proud to know that our scraps have helped enrich the soil of some farm in the region and thus support regenerative agriculture.

I am a climate organizer with 350Brooklyn and so am acutely aware of all the things we do that accelerate the climate crisis, and all the things we do that can help reverse the trajectory towards the ruination of the planet. Recycling organic matter is one of them.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. We must not fall prey to scare tactics that claim that ever greater austerity is the way forward. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Sara S. Gronim
35 Prospect Park West
13C
Brooklyn, NY 11215

Good afternoon,

My name is Sarah Brunstad and I am a resident of Ditmas Park. I'm writing to ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;

- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to my family and my neighborhood, which is full of beautiful community-owned and personal gardens, and I hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you,

Sarah

I urge New York City to take advantage of this crisis and make green choices for our city. The effects of climate change are even more serious than COVID-19. All opportunities to invest in clean opportunities should be taken. Honestly, one of the blessings of the current crisis is the noticeable decrease in pollution - both in the air and noise. It was really sad that the first cut was to composting. Let's not go down this path!

Sarah Gerstenzang

My name is Sarah Graff and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. I have been taking my food scraps to the Sunday Farmer's Market near Travers Park for 4 years. I live in Jackson Heights, where we don't currently have access to the Curbside Composting program, and I was happy to have another option for keeping my food waste out of landfills. Since the suspension of the program, I have been heartbroken to throw out food scraps that could be used to make compost to repair our city's environment and to reduce the waste going into landfills. I have also learned that the City made extensive investments into community composting programs, and has standing composting contracts. Cutting composting programs wastes the tens of millions of dollars in investments and ongoing contracts with unions and waste handlers, which can't be recouped. It is irresponsible to cut this essential service.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Sarah Graff

3420 79th St. #6D, Jackson Heights, NY 11372

Hi there,

My name is Sarah Paiji Yoo and I am the CEO of Blueland, a NYC based cleaning products company with 14 employees. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Our company composts all of our food scraps and soiled paper, and many members of our team also compost at home.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to us, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Sarah Paiji Yoo

To: Honorable Antonio Reynoso

CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov

Re: Community Composting

My name is Sarah Shapiro and I am disheartened to learn the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. These programs are essential to the well-being of communities and our planet. Composting helps maintain soil health which is now more important than ever, as more New Yorkers are using outdoor space than ever before. Composting helps divert thousands of tons of waste from landfills each year, saving us from thousands of tons of harmful gases being released into our city's air. I have been composting for years now, and I can see that only in a matter of months how much more trash I have because I have nowhere to drop off my scraps. My freezer is completely full of food scraps because I wanted to salvage as much as I could to divert my waste.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise. In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's community composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to community composting programs and zero waste programs.

Sincerely,

Sarah Shapiro

774 Bushwick Ave

Brooklyn, NY 11221

Dear Speaker Johnson,

I have recently heard that budget cuts include the elimination of the community composting subsidy. This funds the seven nonprofits that make up the NYC Compost Project in every borough, including the one that serves my neighborhood in the Bronx.

The NYC Compost Project provides essential services to me and other:

- community gardeners and urban farmers
- local and citywide greening and volunteer groups
- schools and youth organizations
- agency and institutional partners
- seniors and other residential groups

I have benefited from the Compost Project's helpline, hands-on assistance, resources, and educational efforts.

They have been crucial in helping me to use composting to reduce waste, grow food, connect to my community, and learn green job skills. Their work helps improve the health of our depleted soils and the environment at our homes and in our neighborhoods throughout NYC.

Now more than ever, we need the NYC Compost Project to continue to support our community as we work together to create a more healthy, equitable, and sustainable City.

We have already lost so much because of COVID-19. I hope I do not have to add such an important and beloved program to that list.

On a personal note, the NYBG NYC Compost Project helped me by gaining friendships that have the same state of mind toward health and well being. Not only does composting help redirect biodegradable food scrapes from land fill to compost, but indirectly it helps build a person's immune system. Lets not forget that big agricultural pharmaceutical farming is creating nutrition-less food. The food grown on big farms has no micro nutritional value. There is little Zinc,

needed to combat infectious diseases, Calcium or phosphorus. You have large leafy vegetables with very little nutritional value. All farmers should go back to the old fashioned way of farming, natural with composting. (Investigate the work of Zach Bush MD on how modern farming is killing our immune system.

Community Gardens help people that live in apartment buildings get out and work in the sun and get the needed sunlight to help the skin create Vitamin D, also needed for the immune system.

Maybe reducing this project is penny wise and dollar foolish. The benefits gained, psychological, physical, emotional and health far outweigh the dollars saved.

Please reconsider your decision.

Sincerely,

Saverio F. Parapugna

May 21, 2020

To the Council,

Why would the City choose to cut the small amount of funding that exists for community composting in NYC? I have used the NYC Compost Project drop-off in Crown Heights for years and now I have nowhere to drop my food scraps or get free compost for my garden! I know that the people who staffed these sites also taught classes at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden and other places throughout the city and I hear those have been cut too? With Sanitation suspending the brown bin program New Yorkers are going to need community composting more than ever. Please reverse these cuts!

Scott Siegel

I am a resident of East Flatbush, and my area and surrounding communities need our compost programs not only to continue, but to thrive.

Sean McQueen
East Flatbush, Brooklyn

Good afternoon, name is Sean Teran. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting. Composting has taught me how valuable and how much life our food and waste can be extended beyond when we are done with it.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. Restoring this precious program will continue to teach me how to better utilize the resources that we as a community invest in and, over time, continue to heal our beautiful planet.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our community, our families, and our Earth and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Sean Teran

From: Selina Ang <selina.ang@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 21, 2020 7:13 AM
To: Johnson, Corey <Corey.Johnson@council.nyc.gov>
Cc: financetestimony <financetestimony@council.nyc.gov>
Subject: Re: Community Composting

Greetings! My name is Selina Ang and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. I am an advocate of reducing waste in NYC, especially as I work for Ox Verte, a small food company that is mission driven and a Certified B Corp.

I have been taking my food scraps to the local Greenmarkets for 5 years. I live in a Chelsea apartment building that didn't have access to the Curbside Composting program, and I was happy to have another option for keeping my food waste out of landfills.

In the months since the City has suspended Curbside Composting and Food Scrap Drop-off sites, I've had no options for composting my food waste. I have been storing it in my freezer in the hope that these programs will return, but I have long-since run out of space. It breaks my heart to throw my food scraps in the trash after years of diligently composting, and it is not acceptable for the City to continue these cuts for the next year or more.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs

.
Sincerely,
Selina Ang
221 West 29th St #20B, New York, NY 10001

Selina Ang
about.me/selinaang



FY21 Executive Budget cuts to Community Composting and the NYC Compost Project

Dear Speaker Johnson, I have recently heard that budget cuts include the elimination of the community composting subsidy. This funds the seven nonprofits that make up the NYC Compost Project in every borough, including the one that serves my neighborhood in the Bronx. The NYC Compost Project provides essential services to me and other: • community gardeners and urban farmers • local and citywide greening and volunteer groups • schools and youth organizations • agency and institutional partners • seniors and other residential groups I have benefited from the Compost Project's helpline, hands-on assistance, resources, and educational efforts. They have been crucial in helping me to use composting to reduce waste, grow food, connect to my community, and learn green job skills. Their work helps improve the health of our depleted soils and the environment at our homes and in our neighborhoods throughout NYC. Now more than ever, we need the NYC Compost Project to continue to support our community as we work together to create a more healthy, equitable, and sustainable City. We have already lost so much because of COVID-19. I hope I do not have to add such an important and beloved program to that list.

Sincerely,

Sergio D. Luna

Brooklyn NY

Composting is an essential element of reducing waste and maintaining a healthy environment. Instead of requiring expensive collection to languish in landfills, compost is actively put to use creating new foods.

For several years I have been collecting compost in my Upper East Side apartment. It is a healthy, useful situation, please do not discontinue this important aspect of respecting the earth and engendering productive use of precious natural elements.

Thank you, respectfully submitted

Sharon King Hoge

Good afternoon, My name is Sharon Waskow and I am a leader of It's Easy Being Green. It's Easy Being Green is a grassroots environmental neighborhood organization in the Bloomingdale neighborhood of the Upper West Side of Manhattan.

In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. For the last year we have worked with the stakeholders in local buildings to increase participation in the curbside residential composting program. We found that the program was a win-win for everyone involved. Residents, building staff, Boards and landlords expressed enthusiasm for the program because of cleaner hallways, fewer rats attracted to garbage bags on the curb and little or no burden on building staff.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. The NYC Compost Project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste, and to preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to It's Easy Being Green whose members regard their participation in the compost program as the one action they know has a positive effect on the environment. We hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process. We ask that the residential composting program be restored and made mandatory as soon as possible.

Thank you.

Sharon Waskow
Co-leader It's Easy Being Green

Good afternoon, name is **Shaun Dubreuil** and I am with 61 Franklin St. Community Garden in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. We are a community-run garden that focuses on environmental awareness and providing produce and green space to our 100+ members and the public. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Our garden's ability to provide composting to the neighborhood is very limited and we are frequently asked for drop-off capacity. In addition, as an individual citizen with curbside composting in Brooklyn, I have found this service to be invaluable to reduce organics in our waste stream and increase awareness of the regenerative waste cycle.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. Restoring this service will be necessary to manage the organic waste needs of our city.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our community garden and neighborhood, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Shaun Dubreuil

Please consider restoring the compost program on the Upper Westside. Composting is so good for the earth. Without composting we will be using more plastic bags which is terribly hurtful to our planet. By 2050, there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish. Please restore the composting program so that we can help to save our planet.
Thank you!!

Best,
Sherrie



Hello, my name is Shien-ru Tsao, and I am the founder and CEO of Commit to Green, a privately-owned, American social enterprise focused on designing and manufacturing high-end compostable products, disrupting the world of disposable packaging. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Within three short years, we have created a lifestyle brand that advances the sustainability agendas of a diverse customer base ranging from municipalities, public and private institutions, to small businesses and individual citizens, by providing them with the tools they need to successfully implement source separation and diversion programs and meet sustainability goals.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress the City has made in diverting food scraps, yard waste, and valuable recyclables from landfills. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach, and all composting services. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications and will be a massive setback of the City's sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to maintain residents ability to continue recycling and composting, and not toss the significant progress we have made in diverting valuable materials from landfills and incinerators in the past few years.

We are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with an additional expansion of funds for community outreach and education. The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners, and to GrowNYC, together represent approximately \$7 million. Restoring this \$7M to the budget, plus some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to reduce their impact on the environment, reduce long term costs for the City, and live lives that are more environmentally responsible, without massive behavioral change (which we know can be challenging to instill!) With this funding, organic material that makes up at least 34% of the residential waste stream will be diverted from landfills. We should not waste the value of the nutrient resources in our food, and should not waste money and resources shipping this heavy and wet material far from the City, instead of keeping it close by in composting facilities.

Restoring \$7M+ would ensure that:

- at least 8 non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as essential community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to serve their communities, allowing individuals to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least 6 community composting facilities can continue their work of processing organic waste, turning it into usable compost to amend soils and grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity;

- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle, such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living; and
- individual New Yorkers who are already stressed by economic collapse and fear of infection during a global pandemic can continue to take a small daily action, making them feel connected to the world, and recognizing that small actions can make a difference.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our organization, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you,

Shien-ru Tsao

Founder/CEO

My name is Shira Sameroff. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our neighborhood, city and world, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you so much for your work and attention to this crucial matter,

Shira Sameoff

Good evening,

My name is Sierra Schmitz. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to the NYC community and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you,

Sierra Schmitz

Good afternoon, name is *Silvia Cohn* and I am a NYC Compost Project Certified Master Composter. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting. *I have continued my service as a volunteer at community gardens and farms throughout the city and understand the what is needed in order to maintain this composting infrastructure.*

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. *If you do not maintain the community composting infrastructure it will not easily return with renewed funding.*

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Silvia Cohn

(Harlem resident and Master Composter certified in 2018)

Dear Speaker Johnson,

I have recently heard that budget cuts include the elimination of the community composting subsidy. This funds the seven nonprofits that make up the NYC Compost Project in every borough, including the one that serves my neighborhood in the Bronx. I have lived in the Bronx for many years now and having a composting program available to us is extremely important. This program provides us with knowledge about ecology, sustainability, and most importantly, it teaches our people to be more sustainable and conscious about minimizing food waste and landfill issues.

The NYC Compost Project provides essential services to me and other:

- community gardeners and urban farmers
- local and citywide greening and volunteer groups
- schools and youth organizations
- agency and institutional partners
- seniors and other residential groups

I have benefited from the Compost Project's helpline, hands-on assistance, resources, and educational efforts.

They have been crucial in helping me to use composting to reduce waste, grow food, connect to my community, and learn green job skills. Their work helps improve the health of our depleted soils and the environment at our homes and in our neighborhoods throughout NYC.

Now more than ever, we need the NYC Compost Project to continue to support our community as we work together to create a more healthy, equitable, and sustainable City.

We have already lost so much because of COVID-19. I hope I do not have to add such an important and beloved program to that list.

Sincerely,
Sylvia Moya

Dear Council,

I would like to support the continuation of the compost curbside collection. Many of my friends, neighbors and family members have habituated to composting during the past couple of years. With the incredible amount of waste that is generated by New Yorkers, this habit is valuable and will be hard to restore once people lose trust in the cohesiveness of New York city's approach to waste management. With plastic, metal and paper recycling and organic waste collection we have achieved that only a small portion of the waste stream is actually going to the landfill (at least on the individual level for those who do compost).

I ask the Council to preserve the compost program.

Sonya Gimon
MS in Sustainable Environmental Systems, Pratt Institute
Volunteer at Greene Community Garden
Landscape Designer

Good afternoon, name is Sonya Kharas and I am a resident of Fort Greene, Brooklyn. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. I volunteered to collect food scraps at Fort Greene farmers' market until collection was managed by GrowNYC, and now am a regular and grateful user of curbside collection via the brown bins. These past few weeks I have been heartbroken to throw out so many food scraps -- tripling the amount of garbage I used to produce and -- and knowing that I my waste is going into a landfill instead of being turned into a valuable resource for our gardens, tree pits, parks, and other green spaces which have felt essential during this period of pandemic.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to me and my household, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Sonya Kharas

My name is Sophia Hirsch, and I am a resident of south Washington Heights. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. I care deeply about reducing waste from our landfills and decimating these programs has broad negative implications for the future of our city.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. [

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;

- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to my neighborhood, my community, and my family, and I hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you,

Sophia Hirsch

Good Afternoon,

My name is Sophia Isabel Lebowitz. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Organics recycling is one of the most important ways we can divert waste from landfill and stop polluting sacrificial communities. We need composting in New York to reach our zero waste goals.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. Restoration would mean that I am able to dispose of my food waste in a proper and regenerative way. Without a dropoff site, I would not be able to compost all of the waste from my household and it would be sent to landfill to release methane, an extremely harmful greenhouse gas.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask! I hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you,

Sophia Isabel Lebowitz

Good afternoon,

My name is Sophia Li, a journalist (formerly at VOGUE, CNN) based in the East Village. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. As someone who focuses their work on sustainability journalism, sending the over 100 million food scraps to landfills will release methane, 15x more potent than CO₂ as a greenhouse gas.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

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- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and

recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living. We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to us and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you for your time,
Sophia Li

SAVE COMMUNITY COMPOSTING in NYC

To: Honorable Brad Lander

CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov

Re: Community Composting

My name is Spencer Merolla and I am upset to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs.

I LOVE OUR BROWN BIN! I'm proud of NYC's composting programs, the largest municipal composting effort in the nation. We've composted religiously as it's been available. Composting isn't greenwashing, it's one of the few very significant ways households can lower their GHG emissions. Given the year over year reductions we need in order to prevent catastrophic climate change, it is **essential**.

I know that the city faces financial shortfalls now that force difficult choices. But I urge you to maintain funding for community composting so that we don't lose ground in the much bigger and more expensive fight that is upon us-- climate change.

Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Spencer Merolla
539 6th Ave
Brooklyn, NY

Good afternoon,

My name is Tracey Cole and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate financial support for composting and e-waste recycling programs. Both of these programs are so important in our city to combat help combat the excess waste contributing to pollution and climate change.

These cuts will directly affect the LES Ecology Center together with the NYC Compost Project partners and GrowNYC Zero Waste programs. The cuts represent approximately \$7 million, and if restored can continue to provide citywide access to these crucial Zero Waste programs. It's essential to retain these programs so as not to lose the existing recycling infrastructure, knowledge and habits that will be difficult to rebuild once eliminated.

Cutting these programs will reverse the progress that we have made by diverting food scraps and toxic electronic waste from landfills. When in a landfill, food waste is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions and electronics leach heavy metals and toxins into our soil and waterways. We can't let the current budget crisis allow us to lose sight of the looming climate crisis and we must continue to divert these materials from landfills to reach our sustainability goals.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future to continue. These programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to community compost and e-waste collection programs. Thank you for your attention to this very important matter.

Sincerely,

Tracey Cole

Good evening,

My name is Stefan H. Doering. I am not with any organization, but am responsible for composting for our building here in Park Slope, Brooklyn. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. The importance of composting is crucial here in the city and for our building, as it eliminates up to 50% in our landfills, seriously reduces Carbon in our atmosphere, and of course, eliminates rats in front of our building.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. Restoring compost for our building would make a HUGE difference for us all. We'll all feel like we are helping our Mayor and City in getting to Zero Carbon emissions.

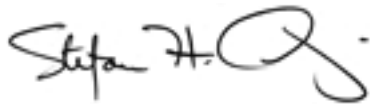
The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

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- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our neighborhood, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stefan H. Doering'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized 'S' at the beginning and a long, sweeping tail that ends in a small dot.

Stefan H. Doering

FY21 Executive Budget cuts to Community Composting and the NYC Compost Project

Dear Speaker Johnson,

I have recently heard that budget cuts include the elimination of the community composting subsidy. This funds the seven nonprofits that make up the NYC Compost Project in every borough, including the one that serves my neighborhood in the Bronx.

The NYC Compost Project provides essential services to me and other:

- community gardeners and urban farmers
- local and citywide greening and volunteer groups
- schools and youth organizations
- agency and institutional partners
- seniors and other residential groups

I have benefited from the Compost Project's helpline, hands-on assistance, resources, and educational efforts.

They have been crucial in helping me to use composting to reduce waste, grow food, connect to my community, and learn green job skills. Their work helps improve the health of our depleted soils and the environment at our homes and in our neighborhoods throughout NYC.

Now more than ever, we need the NYC Compost Project to continue to support our community as we work together to create a more healthy, equitable, and sustainable City.

We have already lost so much because of COVID-19. I hope I do not have to add such an important and beloved program to that list.

Sincerely,
Christine Howe
Brooklyn, NY

FY21 Executive Budget cuts to Community Composting and the NYC Compost Project

Dear Speaker Johnson, I have recently heard that budget cuts include the elimination of the community composting subsidy. This funds the seven nonprofits that make up the NYC Compost Project in every borough, including the one that serves my neighborhood in the Bronx. The NYC Compost Project provides essential services to me and other: • community gardeners and urban farmers • local and citywide greening and volunteer groups • schools and youth organizations • agency and institutional partners • seniors and other residential groups I have benefited from the Compost Project's helpline, hands-on assistance, resources, and educational efforts. They have been crucial in helping me to use composting to reduce waste, grow food, connect to my community, and learn green job skills. Their work helps improve the health of our depleted soils and the environment at our homes and in our neighborhoods throughout NYC. Now more than ever, we need the NYC Compost Project to continue to support our community as we work together to create a more healthy, equitable, and sustainable City. We have already lost so much because of COVID-19. I hope I do not have to add such an important and beloved program to that list.

Sincerely,

Sergio D. Luna

Brooklyn NY

FY21 Executive Budget cuts to Community Composting and the NYC Compost Project

Dear Speaker Johnson,

I have recently heard that budget cuts include the elimination of the community composting subsidy. This funds the seven nonprofits that make up the NYC Compost Project in every borough, including the one that serves my neighborhood in the Bronx.

The NYC Compost Project provides essential services to me and other:

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Now more than ever, we need the NYC Compost Project to continue to support our community as we work together to create a more healthy, equitable, and sustainable City.

We have already lost so much because of COVID-19. I hope I do not have to add such an important and beloved program to that list.

Sincerely,

Gail Howe

Dear Speaker Johnson,

I have recently heard that budget cuts include the elimination of the community composting subsidy. This funds the seven nonprofits that make up the NYC Compost Project in every borough, including the one that serves my neighborhood in the Bronx.

The NYC Compost Project provides essential services to me and other:

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- local and citywide greening and volunteer groups
- schools and youth organizations
- agency and institutional partners
- seniors and other residential groups

I have benefited from the Compost Project's helpline, hands-on assistance, resources, and educational efforts.

They have been crucial in helping me to use composting to reduce waste, grow food, connect to my community, and learn green job skills. Their work helps improve the health of our depleted soils and the environment at our homes and in our neighborhoods throughout NYC.

Now more than ever, we need the NYC Compost Project to continue to support our community as we work together to create a more healthy, equitable, and sustainable City.

We have already lost so much because of COVID-19. I hope I do not have to add such an important and beloved program to that list.

Sincerely,

Stella Liberman

Online Testimony for Community Composting May 2020

Registering to vote and finding a place to bring my compostables were the very first two things I did when I moved to New York two years ago. Since then, I've been able to take my food scraps to the GrowNYC drop-off by the Cortelyou library. Bringing food scraps to this drop-off isn't as easy as the Curbside Composting program, but NYC doesn't currently require my apartment building to collect compost and my building management is resistant to the idea, so I'm reliant on and very grateful for these programs that help me to keep my food waste from the landfill.

During the last few months when NYC suspended these programs, I've sorely missed them. My freezer is filling up fast with food scraps, and I've resorted to trying to find someone with a backyard compost that I can add to. This has been an unsuccessful venture so far — I can only seem to find others like me who are also looking to avoid putting their food scraps in a landfill. I would absolutely hate going for an entire year trying to pull together my own makeshift compost dropoff with some random neighbor.

My personal commitment to composting is strengthened with every new report of our current climate crisis worsening, daily articles describing how our leaders — in our state, the nation, and the world — often back down from the urgent and strong action needed to mitigate the devastating damage we'll face from climate change, and every news update that is shockingly blasé about this serious crisis.

We cannot forget the devastating consequences a worsening climate crisis will have on humanity at an unimaginable scale, even in the midst of a pandemic. Recognizing that expanding funding for composting services during this time would be difficult, eliminating it altogether is unacceptable. I urge you to please maintain funding for the essential services of Community Composting and Zero Waste Outreach in FY21.

Sincerely,
Stephanie Goulet
Brooklyn Resident

To: Honorable Brad Lander
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

My name is Stephanie Lee and I am sad, angry, and distraught to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. Before I lived in a neighborhood with curbside pickup, I diligently separated my organics and brought them to the greenmarket at Fort Greene Park. Recently, it has been wonderful to have this offered at my own coop building. My neighbors and I in my housing coop are all worried about having no alternatives at all to curbside pickup, as we would gladly save scraps in our freezers and take them to drop off sites. Composting is as environmentally important as recycling and we should not waver in our commitment to either.

I understand the dumpster fire that COVID-19 has made of city finances, but I do not understand how we can afford to reverse progress on the even larger crisis of climate change. Community composting is cheap (less expensive than extra police for stupid 4th of July fireworks) and provides ongoing access at the lowest possible cost.

My own worm bin cannot accept all my organics such as onions, garlic, citrus peels, paper towels with vinegar (how I clean my countertops) and on weeks when we cook a lot, there is overflow. Please, I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Lee
708 8th Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11215



Stephanos Koullias <skoullias@gmail.com>

oppositional testimony to restoring FY20 compost funding

Stephanos Koullias <skoullias@gmail.com>

Thu, May 21, 2020 at 4:15 PM

To: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov

Cc: "Freeman, Asher" <afreeman@council.nyc.gov>, "Kokkinos, Niki" <nkokkinos@council.nyc.gov>, "Li, Gigi" <GLi@council.nyc.gov>, Cmcleveland@council.nyc.gov, jyedin@council.nyc.gov, Plntrator@council.nyc.gov, TRosenfeld@council.nyc.gov, dromm@council.nyc.gov, cjohnson@council.nyc.gov, dbragdon@cityhall.nyc.gov, engles@nyassembly.gov, kaminsky@nysenate.gov, salazar@nysenate.gov, egoldstein@nrdc.org, eadams@council.nyc.gov, cvargas@council.nyc.gov, kgarcia@dsny.nyc.gov, banderson@dsny.nyc.gov, nwidzowski@council.nyc.gov, "Bottcher, Erik" <EBottcher@council.nyc.gov>, "Bowen, Brittany" <BBowen@council.nyc.gov>, "Green, Matthew" <MGreen@council.nyc.gov>, Lorna Mason <lornalmason@gmail.com>, Daniel Donohue <djd007nyc@gmail.com>, mgessen@amherst.edu, cmellish@advocate.nyc.gov, Josenia Dominguez <jdominguez@advocate.nyc.gov>, rhuff@advocate.nyc.gov, lakhanc@yorku.ca, bplatt@ilsr.org, Nora Goldstein <noragold@jgpress.com>, Cary Oshins <cary.oshins@compostingcouncil.org>

Bcc: Udo drescher <udrescher@verizon.net>, B Vicenty <sobxeeg567@gmail.com>

I am writing to submit testimony in opposition for the restoration of FY20 compost (organics recycling) funding. I am speaking to you as a veteran of the community-based waste management sector in NYC, a recipient of academic scholarships from both the Environmental Research and Education Fund and the Solid Waste Association of North America (two of the main academic funds sponsored by the solid waste sector) for my graduate studies in Urban Planning (UMass, 2015) and Environmental Law (Vermont Law School, 2017). I also spearheaded a coalition of academics, activists, non-profit organizations, and members of all three SWABS from January 2020 to March 2020, and delivered testimony to the [Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste](#) and [Committee of Environmental Protection](#) on March 4th, 2020, and sent via certified mail to the legislative offices of both committees on March 6th, 2020. [A recording of the testimony is viewable on the NYC Council website](#), beginning at about 2 hours and 20 minutes in.

DSNY's Organics Recycling Program is ineffective, for a several reasons.

The curbside organics recycling program (aka the "brown bin" program) has a capture rate of somewhere between 3% and 10%. The program was launched in 2013 as a pilot, the pilot expired in 2015, and the city continued to roll out the program until 2017 without a robust socialization phase, a phase that is crucial to buy-in, as researched by Dr. Samantha McBride of the Bureau of Recycling and Sustainability at DSNY. In other words, the Department (at large) is ignoring the informed and educated advice of the academic body of work conducted by its own experts.

The Department of Sanitation has delivered about 700,000 brown bins, but claims that 3.5 million NYC residents have access to the brown bin program, which is accounted for by estimating that a certain number of NYC residents have access to "shared" bins and other public drop-off programs. Some drop-off sites, such as community gardens, have never received funding or other forms of capacity from DSNY (NYC residents have to pay out of pocket for the training to become certified Master Composters, a program where trainers, who are on the DSNY payroll without receiving DSNY employee benefits, are expressly censored and forbidden from initiating support for community-based waste management schemes). I'm not sure which is worse: that DSNY's reporting of the city's brown bin program coverage area is dishonest, or that DSNY doesn't seem to care that 3%-10% of 3.5 million is much worse than 3%-10% of 700,000.

Preceding this pilot, the city also funded a limited number of community-scale composting programs, although not in every borough. Further, the city curtailed funding to these programs, and at times prohibited the agents involved in the establishment and operation of these programs from seeking or accepting external funding during the rollout of the curbside organics recycling scheme. DSNY also created a very challenging dynamic for these organizations by placing "coordinators" within these programs as a condition for funding. However, the role of those "coordinators" were often counter-productive to the programs, and in many cases created adversarial relationships.

Over time, DSNY established contracts with a very limited number of cultural institutions and nonprofits to "formalize" the above-mentioned programs. The nature of these formalized arrangements was to offer the training and management of community-based waste management schemes, albeit in a much more circumscribed capacity. These formalized arrangements also stipulated that some of the previously mentioned programs would also conduct outreach for the curbside organics recycling program. This overall pocket of funding is much less than what it costs to operate the

curbside organics recycling program. While the throughput of community-scale composting programs represent much lower tonnage than a curbside scheme, they also have a lower rate of contamination (materials not suited for composting in a compost pile) and a much stronger social resilience (aka buy-in). People that interact with other people when an exchange (or deposit) of materials is made (in this case organics) humanizes, normalizes and reinforces certain behaviors. Case in point: many of us are probably struggling with not being able to share a meal with others right now. Friends, lovers (real and potential), relatives, neighbors... even strangers. Most of us still have access to food, however. The act of eating is hardwired in many of us an act of connection, or conviviality. Eating alone serves a perfunctory role devoid of social exchange. So too it is the act of composting (or organics recycling, if you want to get specific).

One of the many unfortunate aspects of the contractual relationships with these nonprofits and cultural institutions to advocate for the curbside organics recycling program, rather than a community-based recycling scheme, is that their metrics are based on how many people are contacted, not reached in any meaningful (and sometimes in any actual) capacity. They are clientelistic, offering lucrative contracts with organizations that have structural privileges rather than social and cultural capital in community-based organizations that can more effectively speak to the needs and capacities of the communities in which they are based, and whose residents they arguably and more directly serve. In many cases, these contracts have been whittled away from FTE w/ benefits to temporary, seasonal and contract work -- the type of work that undermines social and economic justice. Further, there were no protections for the staff of the programs nested within larger non-profits and cultural institutions, and these staff (unlike DSNY employees) were at the mercy of NYS labor law as "at will" employment. In addition, c these non-profits and cultural institutions acting as directors and contractual beneficiaries were imposed to oversee the community-scale composting programs and their the directors and managers of these non-profits and cultural institutions did not always act in a manner that was to the benefit of the growth of community-scale composting, but rather acted in accordance with the wishes of a few managerial staff at DSNY, in order to secure future contracts. There were no ombudsman type roles to help resolve grievances of staff of any of the programs (whether in the community-scale composting capacity or in an outreach & education role), and their concerns relating to the functioning of these programs were often secondary, or entirely disregarded, in favor of the non-profit or cultural institution securing these contracts from DSNY in the future. In one such case, this led to a member of the community-scale composting community (David Buckle) to take their own life. In other words, DSNY has slowly and systematically disbanded community-scale composting, and the non-profits and cultural institutions placed in charge of these community-scale composting programs have committed abuses of power for the purpose of securing funding from the city.

The city has had long enough to roll out the curbside organics recycling program, and the program has failed its taxpayers. Funding for community-scale composting was, at first gradually, then rapidly, and finally suddenly and abruptly eliminated, without the multiyear funding secured by such visionaries like Bob Lange, former Director of the Bureau of Waste Prevention, Reduction and Recycling (many functions of which are now vested in the Bureau of Recycling and Sustainability). Now is not the time to throw a lifeline to the dysfunctional brown bin program. It is time to let communities reconfigure their organics recycling programs is a way that makes sense for them and, when the city resumes "business as usual" to adequately fund these community-scale programs for the direct benefit of the communities that have invested in establishing those programs.

To: Laurie A. Cumbo
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

I am Stephen R. Armstrong and I oppose the city's proposal to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. The city should be embracing the green future, not turning away from it. These programs save landfill spaces and help to alleviate the forces that create climate change. Urban gardens and farms are springing up all over the city, making it a more livable and functioning place. These places improve life for New Yorkers of all classes and ethnicities.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,
Stephen R. Armstrong
222 Park Place #3B
Brooklyn, NY 11238

Good morning,

My name is Stephen Mushegan and I am a resident of Astoria, Queens. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Since I began composting several years ago I have been able to more the halve the amount of waste I put in the trash on a weekly basis and therefore divert it from a landfill.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our family and our neighborhood, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Stephen Mushegan

To the Members of the Committee on Finance:

As a decade long resident of New York City, it breaks my heart to see what COVID-19 has done to the people and places we love. Unfortunately, this pandemic has also served to make it clear that government is, at best, unprepared to react effectively to systemic shocks. The burden of that inadequate response falls squarely on the shoulders of low wage and minority residents. It terrifies me to think what that means for the unfolding cataclysm that is our climate crisis. If we fail to adequately prepare now, preventable tragedy will be the result.

With that in mind, the mayor's budget is a fatal and horribly timed blow to the very type of preventative measures we must be embracing and expanding. This city's record on environmental issues (e.g. recycling) is already abysmal and embarrassing. Setting it back any further is unacceptable. It is vital to the future economic and literal viability of this city that we retain and expand the green jobs we have.

I implore you to fund and expand composting, to continue solar installations, to ensure implementation of the "Dirty Buildings" bill, and to rapidly and immediately expand safe access to biking and pedestrian activities. On that last measure the city's efforts have been pathetic, particularly relative to efforts around America and the world. Stop waiting for the mayor to be a progressive leader, he has proven he is incapable of that.

It is time to take a hard look at what we choose to fund and what problems those funds truly address or, often, create. Stop asking the most vulnerable to bear our burden. If we are truly in this crisis together, it must be in our shared sacrifice.

Sincerely,

Stephen Zorio
East Harlem

Hello.

My name is Steven Sclafani, a born and bred New Yorker, currently living in Manhattan Valley. I am writing the City Council to ask that you reconsider the budget cuts to the city's Organics Collection program.

Cutting the Organics Collection program would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. It is a short-sighted budgetary win with long-term negative implications- setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

A key benefit to this Organics program which is not highlighted enough is its ability to curb the rat problem in our city. The city should be expanding the program so that all food scraps are off the ground away from rats, not cutting it so that rats continue to overrun our city.

I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years. The infrastructure that has been put in place should not be abandoned. This cannot wait. The infrastructure, along with the formation of new habits and educational outreach, will become obsolete by the time the next budget cycle comes along if this was reinstated then (July 2021).

I feel this is an urgent issue and this should be resolved now and implore the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Good afternoon, name is Subarna Mathes. By way of this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting. I am enormously proud that the City committed to environmental justice and want to help realize these goals, not erase them.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, I am asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;

- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask for the city of New York, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Subarna Mathes

Dear Speaker Johnson, I have recently heard that budget cuts include the elimination of the community composting subsidy. This funds the seven nonprofits that make up the NYC Compost Project in every borough, including the one that serves my neighborhood in the Bronx. The NYC Compost Project provides essential services to me and other: • community gardeners and urban farmers • local and citywide greening and volunteer groups • schools and youth organizations • agency and institutional partners • seniors and other residential groups I have benefited from the Compost Project's helpline, hands-on assistance, resources, and educational efforts. They have been crucial in helping me to use composting to reduce waste, grow food, connect to my community, and learn green job skills. Their work helps improve the health of our depleted soils and the environment at our homes and in our neighborhoods throughout NYC. Now more than ever, we need the NYC Compost Project to continue to support our community as we work together to create a more healthy, equitable, and sustainable City. We have already lost so much because of COVID-19. I hope I do not have to add such an important and beloved program to that list. Sincerely,

Sulan Chin

Wakefield area at Baychester Ave

Good afternoon,

My name is Sunil Devadanam and I am with the 61 Franklin St. Community Garden. We are a community garden based in Greenpoint, Brooklyn dedicated to promoting sustainable agricultural practices in our community. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. This is a major step backwards in the City's ability to innovate and adapt to the looming crisis of climate change.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. It is understandable in the midst of this pandemic that cuts must be made. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;

- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to the 61 Franklin St. Community Garden and the community of Greenpoint. We hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Re: Maintaining Composting in NYC!

Good afternoon, my name *is Susan Boyle, I live in Crown Heights Brooklyn with my husband and two kids. We live in an apartment building with five other families who all are committed to composting.* In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting. *We need to build resiliency in this time of crisis- not undercut it.*

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. *In this time of crisis we need leadership that recognizes our need to rebuild stronger- not set us back in our goals toward resiliency and sustainability.*

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;

- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to *our family and our community*, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Susan Boyle
1024 Dean St. Apt 6
Brooklyn, NY 11238

Good afternoon, name is Susan Grodnick and I am a resident of the Upper West Side. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting. My family composts regularly and we have inspired others on our block to follow suit. The numbers have been steadily growing.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. I am also one of the organizers of a CSA at B'nai Jeshurun and our members regularly bring their food scraps to be composted.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our neighborhood and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Susan Grodnick
145 West 95th Street
New York, NY 10025
susan@grodnick.com

I have been a home gardener for over 20 years, and have been involved in Community Gardening at Staten Island Moravian Community Garden for over 10 years.

It was through the Community Garden (which by the way raises between 800- 1000 lbs of fresh produce for Project Hospitality's Food Pantry each year) that I first learned about NYC Compost Project, and their Master Composter certification program.

I practiced composting at home, and one of the Master Composters who also volunteered at the Community Garden encouraged me to take the Master Composter course. Although the price of the course is quite reasonable, a mere \$40, it requires an intense time commitment: 8 weeks of once a week classroom time, and a full year to do field work in a final project that leads to your certification.

I was a stay-at-home mom for many years, and although I did not feel I could commit to the Master Composter class for a good ten year period, I was always drawn to the idea. Finally in May 2018, Carol Hooper and Natalie Nowlen of Staten Island's NYC Compost Project, convinced me to take the plunge.

As a 40+ year old mom who had been out of school for over 20 years, and out of the workforce for 13 years, I was terrified going into the class. I was worried that I wouldn't be able to keep up with the material, that my younger classmates would wonder what I was doing there, and that I wouldn't be able to complete my commitment to the program.

I could not have been more wrong about my experience. Carol Hooper, Natalie Nowlen and Olivia Golden of NYC Compost Project, proved to be incredibly intelligent and friendly teachers. Our class learned so much valuable information about the science of composting from them; why composting is good for the Earth, our wallets, our city and community. We also visited many Community Gardens on Staten Island to learn how they used compost to grow fresh produce for people with a want and need for better nutrition. We got to see first hand how empowering composting can be, in combination with Community Gardening, for low-income folks, or immigrants, who are striving to build better lives for themselves, their families, and their neighborhood.

On every step of this year long journey, our teachers at NYC Compost Project guided us with knowledge and enthusiasm. They gave us the tools we needed to succeed not only with our personal final project, but in helping us learn how to do outreach with the citizens of NYC so that they could learn the benefits of composting.

One of my favorite parts of the class was when I worked with my fellow MC student in the Fall of 2018. We helped a group of 4th grade science students, together with their teacher Mrs. Pellikan, plant over 1,000 daffodil bulbs on the grounds of PS53. The students were so excited to learn about compost and how it would help the flowers grow healthy in the Spring. Two years later, as the daffodils continue to resurface each year, those same students stop me to let me know how proud they are of their work.

Working with NYC Compost Project helped boost my self-confidence. At the end of my year commitment, I felt a strong sense of accomplishment and was proud to participate in the

Graduation Ceremony. By the time my youngest daughter was getting ready to start high school the following year, my newfound confidence helped me feel ready to return to the workforce after a 14 year absence. I knew I had something valuable to offer my community and I wasn't afraid to share my talent with the world. I have also recently begun the process of researching online learning, so that I can finally obtain my college degree. My experience gaining my Master Composter certification gave me the confidence to do this.

NYC Compost Project holds such value in our community, in some ways that are not obvious to an outsider looking in. Yes, we help "green" NYC, reduce landfill waste and reduce our carbon footprint. We educate the general public on the benefits of using compost, provide free workshops and free compost. More importantly, in my humble opinion, we change people's lives for the better. We provide a low-cost educational experience that empowers people to help themselves, their families and their community. We provide a fun, supportive environment for people to gain confidence that can fuel their desire to better themselves through careers and higher education, which in turn strengthens our economy.

I urge you to continue funding for NYC Compost Project. Thank you for listening and stay healthy.

Susan Larsen
Master Composter Class of 2018, Staten Island NY

Hello,

My name is Susannah Agnone. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not undermine its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. I moved to New York a year ago, and was so proud to live in a big city that prioritized a public composting program that supports the health of local communities and the planet.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to my household, neighborhood, city, and community, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority is not left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Susannah Agnone

My name is Suzannah Schneider and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs.

I am a Master Composter certified by NYC Compost Project Hosted by the Queens Botanical Garden. This opportunity has changed my life. Making compost got me involved in growing food for myself, which meant fewer trips to the grocery store and introduced me to other ways to reduce the waste in my life.

One of the things I love most about the City's composting programs is that I've been able to use the finished compost that I helped make. I received finished compost from the NYC Compost Project hosted by the Queens Botanical Garden that I used to grow food for residents in the 100% affordable One Flushing residence at 133-45 41st Avenue in Flushing, Queens. I work with GrowNYC as the building's Rooftop Garden Coordinator, and compost is an essential element of my garden education syllabus for residents.

Additionally, in the months since the City has suspended Curbside Composting and Food Scrap Drop-off sites, I've had no options for composting my food waste. I have been storing it in my freezer in the hope that these programs will return, but I have long-since run out of space. It breaks my heart to throw my food scraps in the trash after years of diligently composting, and it is not acceptable for the City to continue these cuts for the next year or more.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Suzannah Schneider
GrowNYC
170 Nassau Avenue, Apartment 4R
Brooklyn, NY 11222

To the Honorable Ydanis A. Rodriguez:

My name is Suzanne Hutt and I am writing with the hope that we can SAVE COMMUNITY COMPOSTING!

Ever since I started composting, I have felt like I can make a difference in the future of our planet. I started composting this winter, and I have already seen the drastic difference it has made in cutting down the amount of trash I generate. Composting has greatly affected my lifestyle for the better. I have been taking my food scraps to the drop-off site on Bennett and 187th, and I was so happy to have this local option for keeping my food waste out of landfills.

I was devastated to learn that the city was suspending this program. Now, in the months since the City has suspended Curbside Composting and Food Scrap Drop-off sites, I've had no options for composting my food waste. I have been storing it in my freezer in the hope that these programs will return, but I fear I am running out of space. It breaks my heart to throw my food scraps in the trash after months of diligently composting, and it is not acceptable for the City to continue these cuts for the next year or more.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment!!! Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Hutt
NYC DOE Public School Teacher
Washington Heights

Good afternoon, my name is Sydney Anastasia Yeo. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. As a city with a dense population generating tons of organic waste in a country experiencing a massive waste crisis, there needs to be options for responsible, eco-conscious city residents to drop off their organic waste to be regenerated into compost at community based sites, and avoid overfilling the city's already taxed landfills.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;

- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to my neighborhood, my community, New York City, and our planet, for the sake of future generations. I hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Hello. I moved back to NYC after 4 years in Washington DC and 7 years in San Diego. I was appalled at the lack of a plastic bag ban and the throwaway culture of convenience that most New Yorkers have. However, the city composting program was a saving grace. A true bastion of progressive, climate-solution thinking in a city that is otherwise behind the times. Like the expansion of bike lanes, it gave me hope that NYC was moving in the right direction. Why not reduce overly frequent and inconvenient street sweeping rather than halt composting for a year? You are not only contributing green house gas emissions, but undoing your own hard work of educating NYers about composting and climate. This may be the straw that moves this NYer back out of the city. - Tali Vardi, South Park Slope, Brooklyn

Friday, May 22, 2020

Honorable City Council Members
The City Council Finance Committee
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Re: Restore Funding to the Community Composting Program

Dear Honorable City Council Members and the City Council Finance Committee:

My name is Tamar Samir, and I live in Carroll Gardens Brooklyn. I have lived in Brooklyn since 2007 and in NYC since 1997.

I'm extremely disheartened to learn that the City is eliminating funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. From the NYC website: "One third of what New Yorkers throw away is food scraps and yard waste. Instead of sending it to landfills, we can use this waste to create compost and renewable energy."

My household has been participating in the Brooklyn Curbside Composting program for as many years as it's been available in Carroll Gardens. Before that I was freezing my compost and carrying it to the compost drop off at the various NYC Farmer Markets. Separating our food scraps for composting has significantly cut down on the amount of trash we generate and has become an important part of our lives. We are proud of how little trash we create!

Additionally, I have taught many people the ease and benefits of composting through weeklong programs that I led called "No Impact Week", as part of the No Impact Project. I have seen the pride and relief in the eyes of folks who learned this simple way to make a difference to their community and the environment.

By removing the funding for the community composting programs, the city is removing our agency as citizens to make a difference for our neighborhood, city, and our planet. It will undo years of progress. This is incredibly demoralizing.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the simplest things every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

Removing this funding is short sighted because:

If City or State government cuts back on its carbon emissions policies, how can they enforce businesses and buildings to reduce theirs, when they'll similarly claim economic

hardship? The cumulative effect will be that we can't reduce emissions enough to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

If we eliminate the composting program and chip away at NYC's sustainability goals, then we are greenlighting environmental and economic devastation that will damage NYC and the world in far more significant ways than COVID-19 will.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Tamar Samir
265 Union Street #3A. Brooklyn, NY 11231

Good afternoon,

My name is Tania Wolf; I was previously a Compost Outreach Associate at Big Reuse, one of the NYC Compost Project sites. I want to first acknowledge that this is a very difficult time because we're living under a public health emergency. Because of that, I'm writing to you here today in the hopes that I and members of the NYC community can help you understand the correlation between our next public health crisis (because it is inevitable) and the decimation of NYC's Climate Justice and Zero Waste goals by eliminating opportunities for composting.

Make no mistake: climate change is a health emergency that our communities are facing, particularly frontline, low-income, and Black and Brown communities throughout NYC. By eliminating all opportunities for composting in NYC, we are in effect doing the following to exacerbate the climate emergency:

- Sending 1000+ million pounds of food scraps and yard waste back to landfills, causing an increase in methane - a greenhouse gas emission
- Eliminating all forms of recycling and composting education and community outreach that helps New Yorkers understand the importance of making the change to a more sustainable future
- Taking away the free compost program for NYC residents, most of whom use this to correct the abysmal soil condition in NYC so they can grow their own food and feel a sense of agency over their own healths
- Eliminating local green jobs that would undercut much of the progress the city has made towards sustainability goals in our local economy
- Contribute to the degradation of local soils throughout our city (NYC Compost was used as a soil amendment in almost all NYC parks, NYC trees, community gardens, and more)
- Extinguish any hope that local communities have in gaining critical knowledge of composting, and seeing a movement towards rectifying environmental injustices

The DiBlasio Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications.

Today, I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years. I'd also like to mention that other major cities throughout the US, including New Orleans, have continued to promote their own community composting efforts, despite the difficulty of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing

New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask for our City, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

-Tania Wolf

Good afternoon, my name is Tanya Navas.

In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, am asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to us/our organization [or “neighborhood” or “family”], and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Good afternoon,

My name is Tanya Opilan, and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate financial support for composting and e-waste recycling programs. Through these wonderful programs, my small family got to be a part in fighting the global waste crisis alongside other families and individuals in New York City.

These cuts will directly affect the LES Ecology Center together with the NYC Compost Project partners and GrowNYC Zero Waste programs. The cuts represent approximately \$7 million, and if restored can continue to provide citywide access to these crucial Zero Waste programs. It's essential to retain these programs so as not to lose the existing recycling infrastructure, knowledge and habits that will be difficult to rebuild once eliminated.

Cutting these programs will reverse the progress that we have made by diverting food scraps and toxic electronic waste from landfills. When in a landfill, food waste is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions and electronics leach heavy metals and toxins into our soil and waterways. We can't let the current budget crisis allow us to lose sight of the looming climate crisis and we must continue to divert these materials from landfills to reach our sustainability goals.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future to continue. These programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City **restore funding to community compost and e-waste collection programs.**

Sincerely,
Tanya Opilan
Brooklyn, NY
May 21, 2020

I am writing to submit testimony as a resident of Fort Greene, Brooklyn, where we have benefited from the use of city compost collection for the past 3 years we have lived here. I have read that $\frac{1}{3}$ of the average households' waste is food waste, which can be converted into renewable fuel and precious soil if handled correctly, instead of being trucked to landfills and contributing to greenhouse gas emissions. I can say that for us personally, roughly $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{2}{3}$ of our waste is compostable material, and it would break my heart to simply throw it away.

We are at an unprecedented moment politically, that is to be sure, and I understand that we need to tighten our belts as a city, state, and country. But now is not the time to move backwards environmentally, or to stop investing in our communities - especially not when we continue to fund a militarized police force larger than almost any country's army. 1% budget cuts to the NYPD combined with slashes to environmental, educational, and community programs is disgraceful and does not represent the city I want to live in. Composting programs are just one small example of how we could demonstrate our real values - and one that, if implemented correctly and city wide, could eventually pay for itself.

Thank you,
Tara Noble
tara.irene.noble@gmail.com

Good morning,

My name is Tara Schaubert and I am an active member in my neighborhood CSA. The Sunset Park CSA advocates for equal access to fresh vegetables and has partnered with immigrant farmers for the past decade. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our family. and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Tara L. Schaubert

5/21/2020

City Council Reps:

Please resume NYC's composting program ASAP since it has taken tremendous effort to get started, and if the effort is suspended for long, important progress towards NYCs sustainability goals will be lost.

Sincerely,
Tarik Hussein
City Council district 39
2919 ft hamilton parkway, brooklyn, ny 11218

May 19, 2020

Good afternoon, name is Tariqah Adams and I am a resident of the Prospect Lefferts Garden neighborhood in Brooklyn, NY. In this testimony, I ask that the City of New York not eliminate funding for composting in the DSNY budget. I have been dropping off my compost at the GrowNYC site at the Grand Army Plaza farmer's market (right next to Prospect Park) every Saturday morning for years. I and many hundreds of other Brooklynites rely on this service to be socially and environmentally responsible.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, I am asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to drop off food waste for composting in order to prevent this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- The City could continue vital education and outreach needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this request to me and the communities surrounding Prospect Park in Brooklyn. I hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Sincerely,

Tariqah Adams, MBA

To whom it may concern,

I'm aware that on May 21st the City Council is discussing the Mayor's budget and composting is on the agenda. Being from New Zealand living in New York City, composting is one of the only ways i feel like i am doing my part for the environment in this urban environment.

It is an absolutely critical step toward New York becoming one of the most sustainable cities in the world and one that will inspire other cities around the Globe to do it too. Can you imagine a world that stays clean and green after we all go back to normal? This will help continue that dream.

We have to stand strong on this one. I believe you will do the right thing.

Thank you,

Taylor

Council Member Antonio Reynoso
Pertaining to Community Composting

Dear Honorable Antonio Reynoso,

My name is Taylor Sullivan and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. In the months since the City has suspended Curbside Composting and Food Scrap Drop-off sites, I've had no options for composting my food waste. I have been storing it in my freezer in the hope that these programs will return, but I have long-since run out of space. It breaks my heart to throw my food scraps in the trash after years of diligently composting, and it is not acceptable for the City to continue these cuts for the next year or more.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Taylor Sullivan
Williamsburg Community Member
309 Bedford Ave. 11211

Good afternoon, my name is Teresa Pesek, and I am a constituent in Park Slope, Brooklyn.

In this testimony, my family and I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Composting transformed my life, I know it seems like a grandiose statement, but 10 years ago, had the GROWN NYC program not been in Union Square with their free compost drop-off, I probably wouldn't have started composting. If it were not for that program, I would not have known to advocate for organics recycling at the national portfolio of senior living, golf & ski resorts, that I had once managed when I was a private equity executive. I am no longer in private equity today, because I believe I can make good with our planet by becoming a sustainability advisor - and it all started with that first bag of compost 10 years ago.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. I understand the city's budget is under stress because of the pandemic, and in times of crisis, we must make sacrifices. But I would argue, that the cost savings the city will realize from cutting all avenues of organics recycling not only undermines the years of hard work that the collective community has invested in, you would be handicapping one of the most tangible, most transformative programs that have the rare ability to educate generations of environmental advocates across all ages, all incomes, that can ignite the desire to heal our planet by reconnect city dwellers with the dirt that provides us with food. That impact goes far beyond what we can possibly measure in economic terms and is the exact remedy for the Mayor's bold ambition to create a healthy, livable city for ONENYC,

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and

- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to my family and my community, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Teresa & Preston Pesek

105 8th Ave, Brooklyn, 11215

To Whom it may Concern:

I am a resident of Roosevelt Island.

I am writing you to please restore funding for our community composting programs.

Your continued support would allow continued funding for the nonprofits GrowNYC and the NYC Compost Project.

They not only help our community every Saturday at our local Farmers Market (pre-COVID-19 pandemic), but will continue to help us toward a greener planet.

This is SO important in urban settings like ours.

Please continue to put money towards funding for our compost program as well as other Green-friendly programing.

Most sincerely:

Thom Heyer

#SaveOurCompost

Good afternoon, name is Thomas Wolfe. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and

- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our neighborhood and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Thomas Wolfe

455 Ocean Ave., 11226

To: Honorable Brad Lander
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

My name is **Tim Forker** and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. **You probably know it has taken the City a very long time to build any kind of composting into its solid waste management system. One of the early building blocks has been community composting, as well as the nascent curbside collection of organics. In these uncertain times, it is important to keep a thread of this development alive, so it may be regrown to a fuller composting system in the coming years. I have been composting via the Greenmarket drop offs for years, only stopping when the curbside collection of organics was started in my neighborhood (Park Slope). I have also used the Lower East Side Ecology Center's vermiculture services, which are not only cutting edge, but also immensely important as public education and demonstration of the methods and utility of urban composting. I understand that running Sanitation's "4th truck" to collect organics seems unaffordable at this time, although I would point out that in my area the organics bin replaced the "regular" garbage volume by at least 50%, which I would think allows planning for restructuring the collection system. In any case, if the 4th truck for now is sacrificed, it is all the more important to keep the composting drop-offs going.**

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Tim Forker
551 4th St., #2L
Brooklyn, NY. 11215

I am a long-time user of the composting service at the Inwood Greenmarket and hope that this crucial project can be revived asap! We have all pitched in to reduce waste in this quintessentially ecological way instead of contributing to the landfill with organic matter that should be returned to the soil.

The Mayor's proposed cuts to this program will be a serious blow to sustainability, which we cannot afford at this time. It is a penny-wise, pound-foolish approach.

Timothy Frasca

I'm writing to comment on the future of the Community Composting program. I've taken part in city-wide composting programs for several years now. Initially, I would bring compostable materials to a community dropoff point; since then, I've also made use of a composting bin provided to the building in which I live. While I understand the budget crunch the city is facing, it's also both depressing and frustrating to see the city potentially backsliding on what seemed to be a very useful and forward-thinking policy. I am hopeful that some measures can be found to keep Community Composting around in both the near and short term.

Thank you.

Tobias Carroll
Brooklyn, NY 11222

Testimony by Toby Sheppard Bloch

Regarding the Mayor's Executive Budget for FY 2021 and proposed cuts to community composting in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

May 21, 2020

I am a resident of Glendale, Queens and am testifying in opposition to the proposed cuts to composting in the 2021 Executive budget.

For several years our neighborhood has been fortunate to have been a pilot area for curbside organic collection. In that time I've observed a reduction in rodents and other animals foraging food in the community driveway, as well as less putrescible liquids leaking out of the Sanitation truck collecting garbage. In addition to mitigating climate change, diverting organic waste from the solid waste streams reduces pests and odors, and was a welcome innovation.

Moreover, the City's community composting efforts have further supported our efforts to reduce the waste our household generates. Our 10 year old joined me for an educational event at the Queens Botanical garden where she learned about soil structure and health, stuck her hands in a bin of compost to find worms and rolie pollies, and gained a comfort with compost.

A member of our local community garden participated in the Master Composter class at the Queens Botanical Garden and built a triple bin system and tumblers at the garden. While these facilities were installed before there was curbside collection, they remained in operation and have become a fantastic community resource since curbside was suspended, with neighbors bringing food waste there for processing.

I have participated in the QSWAB Organizing Committee which represents a diverse group of Queens residents, business owners, nonprofit representatives, and interested New Yorkers who share a common goal to serve as informed advocates to our Borough President and Queens City Council Members around issues of resource recovery and recycling with the goal of helping New York City reach its ambitious zero waste to landfills by 2030 goal.

According to DSNY's 2017 *Waste Characterization Study*, nearly 68% of what New Yorkers throw away could be saved, recycled, and put to productive use. This is especially true of the 34% of materials that are organic -- food scraps, food-soiled paper, and yard waste -- which could be turned into compost, a nutrient- rich substance that improves soil health for our street trees and gardens, reduces soil erosion, and sequesters carbon to mitigate climate change.

Once trashed, however, New York City further wastes -- nearly \$420M per year -- exporting co-mingled residential refuse and recoverable material by truck, barge, and train to landfills around the country where they are burned or buried. The release of greenhouse gases from

these sites, including methane and CO₂, have the opposite effect of compost's beneficial properties: it worsens climate conditions for all of us.

There is a better way.

Until recently, New York City supported programs that helped New Yorkers be active participants in the City's 0x30 mission, including residential curbside organics collection or brown bins, GrowNYC food scrap drop-off sites, and NYC Compost Project partnerships. Along with e-waste recycling, these programs cost New Yorkers about \$27.4M per year, far less than what we spend transporting these materials to landfills (\$166M) -- and with far more positive results.

While the QSWAB Organizing Committee recognizes that budget shortfalls precipitated by COVID-19 require the City to identify across-the-board funding cuts in order to prioritize public health and safety, we feel strongly that the money saved by suspending community composting via the New York City Compost Project partnerships and GrowNYC food scrap drop-offs is easily surpassed by what we will alternatively pay to collect, transport, and discard these materials outside our City to towns across the region and country. Additionally, we urge our leaders to consider the secondary impacts of these short-term suspensions, including poor air quality and climate emissions from increased truck traffic with their own long-term public health costs as well as covering unemployment-related expenses for the over 100 New Yorkers now working in New York City's organic resource collection and recovery sector who will soon be without jobs. More difficult to quantify, but equally important, the impact on the public's interest in participating in future organic recovery efforts once programs restart a year or more from now. The result? Decades of time and money invested in public education lost in a matter of months.

As such, we believe that the New York City Council and the Administration restore modest funding to community-based composting and drop-off sites that collect and process organic materials, while recognizing that the Department of Sanitation's curbside "brown-bin" program may need to be put on temporary pause.

In the future, we recommend that the City invest in a comprehensive study of how to best incentivize mandatory rather than voluntary organics separation protocols for residents, institutions, and commercial businesses that help New Yorkers reduce at the source organic waste production and ensure that, when they do discard, they do so with greater awareness of the costs to themselves, the City, and society-at-large.

The Queens SWAB looks forward to partnering with our elected officials to ensure the proper reduction, reuse, and repurposing of organic material away from landfills and back into the soil where it properly belongs. Currently, NYC composts 308,600 pounds of organic material each day. Perhaps, in the near- future, we can better activate this nutrient-rich material to grow food for the millions of newly food-insecure New Yorkers resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic in a virtuous win-win circle for us all.

Thank you for your consideration.

Toby Sheppard Bloch
89-03 Rutledge Ave
Glendale, NY 11385

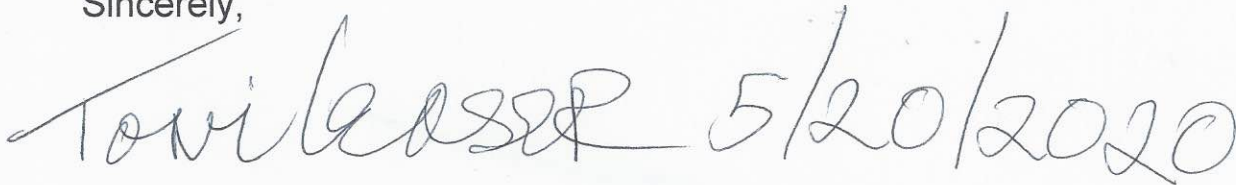
tsb@me.com
718-501-5962

Toni Ceaser
21-15 34 Avenue 6C
Long Island City, New York 11106
718 274-3527
trtn@aol.com

Dear City Council Members,

Composting is vital to our city. Compost revitalizes our soil. So much of the soil in the five boroughs is depleted. I am a certified Master Composter. I invested a year of my time to get certified years ago. As a community activist I knew how vital soil is to the health of our community, country and world. That is why I devoted the time to get certified and still do to be involved in this vital work. Without healthy soil we have fewer trees and green spaces that can clean our air of pollutants. It is vital to all life. It saves us from enlarging landfills. Prior to COVID-19 we were going in the correct direction. I respected the plan. To do anything else but continue in supporting major food scrap collecting and composting is irresponsible. Let's do the right thing and keep moving forward with composting throughout the city.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Toni Ceaser" followed by the date "5/20/2020". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid.

Toni Ceaser

Good afternoon,

My name is Tracey Cole and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate financial support for composting and e-waste recycling programs. Both of these programs are so important in our city to combat help combat the excess waste contributing to pollution and climate change.

These cuts will directly affect the LES Ecology Center together with the NYC Compost Project partners and GrowNYC Zero Waste programs. The cuts represent approximately \$7 million, and if restored can continue to provide citywide access to these crucial Zero Waste programs. It's essential to retain these programs so as not to lose the existing recycling infrastructure, knowledge and habits that will be difficult to rebuild once eliminated.

Cutting these programs will reverse the progress that we have made by diverting food scraps and toxic electronic waste from landfills. When in a landfill, food waste is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions and electronics leach heavy metals and toxins into our soil and waterways. We can't let the current budget crisis allow us to lose sight of the looming climate crisis and we must continue to divert these materials from landfills to reach our sustainability goals.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future to continue. These programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to community compost and e-waste collection programs. Thank you for your attention to this very important matter.

Sincerely,

Tracey Cole

Good morning/afternoon,

My name is Tracy Garay and I live in Willimasburg, Brooklyn. I am a weekly contributor to the Grow NYC compost collection in McCarren Park. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. [Option to add 1 sentence of importance of organics/composting to you or your organization, and/or your organization's importance to the community.]

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. [option to add one sentence at what this restoration means for you/your organization specifically]

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;

at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;

at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and

the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle -- such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to us/our organization [or "neighborhood" or "family"], and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Tracy Garay

Hello, my name is Tree Abraham, a resident of Park Slope, member of the 615 Community Garden, and enthusiastic composter. In this testimony, I ask that the City not divest from its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Living in this neighborhood, the compost program is one of the things I am most proud of having access to and participating consistently in.

With the current administration, too many of the environmental regulations necessary for the health of our society and the future viability of the planet are being dismantled for short-sighted economic gains. Especially with the global impact of COVID-19 on jobs and the stock market, it has become easy for governments to justify back-pedaling climate commitments at a time when they are critically needed for mitigating the burgeoning threats to the ecosystems which sustain us and thousands of other species.

I urge the City Council to ensure that we at least maintain the ability to continue an organics recycling and composting program for those who have integrated it into their daily practices. Consumer green habits are slow to form and when they do, communities should feel a responsibility to celebrate their progress and support their efforts.

If you are not able to restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts, please restore funding to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, with expansion for community outreach and education. Compost is one small act of many that we need to be building up to deal with the burgeoning pressures on waste management.

Know that your decision is viscerally felt by those affected and will not be forgotten. My roommate has continued to fill our freezer with compostable food in the hopes that it will be restored, which is leaving little room for other food storage. I am reminded each day of what we had and what has been taken and it will influence the image I have of my city and its leaders if the budget is not amended.

I hope you continue to keep safe in this time while not forgetting what comes after it.

Tree

Good afternoon,

My name is Trish. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. I have taken advantage of the curbside organics pickup since it was first rolled out in Windsor Terrace, and it hugely limited the amount of trash my household sent to landfill.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years. We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

I hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you,

Trish Daly

--

Trish Daly
Brooklyn, NY
11215

Good morning,

My name is Tyron Machhausen.

In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our neighborhood, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Tyron Machhausen

FY21 Executive Budget cuts to Community Composting and the NYC Compost Project

Dear Speaker Johnson, I have recently heard that budget cuts include the elimination of the community composting subsidy. This funds the seven nonprofits that make up the NYC Compost Project in every provides essential services to me and other: • community gardeners and urban farmers • local and citywide greening and volunteer groups • schools and youth organizations • agency and institutional partners • seniors and other residential groups I have benefited from the Compost Project's helpline, hands-on assistance, resources, and educational efforts. They have been crucial in helping me to use composting to reduce waste, grow food, connect to my community, and learn green job skills. Their work helps improve the health of our depleted soils and the environment at our homes and in our neighborhoods throughout NYC. Now more than ever, we need the NYC Compost Project to continue to support our community as we work together to create a more healthy, equitable, and sustainable City. We have already lost so much because of COVID-19. I hope I do not have to add such an important and beloved program to that list. Sincerely,

Uju

Obianuju Mbamalu

ritambamalu@gmail.com

Good afternoon,

My name is Ursula Hershey, and I am a member of my local community garden and Brooklyn resident. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has the potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintains the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to my family, my neighborhood, and my community, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Ursula Hershey

Good afternoon,

My name is Valentine Sargent and I am an avid composter and climate justice advocate. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. These plans allow NYC to progress and become a more equitable city. These opportunities are essential for residents to build a connection to the natural world and understand the importance of healthy foods and the value in a restorative culture.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. The positive impacts on the community make for a healthy NYC that is accessible to all. This program reaches many lives; people that have an awareness of the greater world and a willingness to collaborate.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

This is a service I consider essential for residents, especially in times of crisis when communities are hit with food insecurity. I hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you,
Valentine Sargent

My name is Valerie Kaufmann and I live in Manhattan. As a New Yorker, I am deeply concerned by the proposal to cut funding for vital social services and programs while retaining the bloated funding of the NYPD and Department of Corrections. Covid-19 has disproportionately impacted Black, Brown, and low income New Yorkers; the NYPD and DOC disproportionately impact these same communities. If we want New York to come back from this crisis a stronger and safer place to live, we need to invest in what our city needs- healthcare, housing, and employment.



Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management
Thursday, May 21, 2020
250 Broadway, 14th Floor
New York, New York 10007

Department of Sanitation Budget Hearings

My name is Vandra Thorburn. I am the founder and president of Vokashi – the original small business compost collection service which meant unfortunately that we were set apart from DSNY’s Compost Project. For many years I have testified at Sanitation Hearings about the need for DSNY to reallocate its “waste export dollars” toward the development of community-based composting and recycling initiatives.

While we are encouraged by the actions of CM Powell and CM Reynoso to introduce legislation that would support laws to mandate separation of organics from the waste stream and implement mandatory community-based composting and recycling centers, we are deeply disappointed at the proposed executive plan budget decisions. Separation of organics and e-waste should be the law just as the separation of other recyclables: paper, metal, glass, and plastic; batteries and other hazardous waste.

Just at a time when we should be ‘reimagining’ waste management for environmental, economic, health and social justice reasons, the Department of Sanitation increases its budget for Waste Export (see attached figure from DSNY report).

Actual FY18 expenditures were \$372,958,000; Actual FY19 expenditures were \$409,772,000 an increase of **\$36,814,000**.

The adopted budget for FY20 of \$412,781,000 has now been increased by \$7,880,000. That plus an increase of \$37,579,000 for general administration practically equals the proposed executive plan cuts of \$41 million for the variety of recycling and community programs. What sense does that make? Where is the savings?

This just goes to show the mendacity of DSNY which has favored **waste export** over community-based waste management programs for years! Even decades!

Respectfully submitted,
Vandra Thorburn

For additional information on the Department's budget and its various programs, please refer to the Fiscal 2021 Preliminary Budget Report for DSNY at: <https://council.nyc.gov/budget/wp-content/uploads/sites/54/2020/02/827-DSNY.pdf>

Table:1 Department of Sanitation Financial Plan Summary

<i>Dollars in Thousands</i>	FY18	FY19	FY20	Executive Plan		*Difference
	Actual	Actual	Adopted	FY20	FY21	FY20-FY21
Spending						
Personal Services	\$1,016,437	\$1,031,740	\$1,041,712	\$1,008,934	\$1,002,980	(\$38,732)
Other Than Personal Services	702,525	730,630	734,142	826,102	742,317	8,175
TOTAL	\$1,718,963	\$1,762,369	\$1,775,853	\$1,835,036	\$1,745,297	(\$30,557)
Budget by Program Area						
Civilian Enforcement	\$5,679	\$5,191	\$5,746	\$5,746	\$5,746	0
Collection & Street Cleaning	770,627	794,259	784,950	765,169	747,274	(37,676)
Enforcement - General	15,356	15,649	16,885	16,269	16,175	(710)
Engineering	7,480	10,015	8,357	8,372	8,405	48
General Administration	143,390	142,186	131,486	260,810	169,065	37,579
Legal Services	3,821	4,069	3,990	3,861	3,903	(87)
Long Term Export	3,801	2,690	1,994	2,326	1,061	(933)
Public Information	2,470	2,663	2,437	2,383	2,386	(51)
Snow Removal	105,818	82,381	111,068	59,096	101,414	(9,654)
Solid Waste Transfer Stations	15,418	21,052	25,731	25,594	25,589	(142)
Support Operations - Motor Equipment	97,440	98,302	92,898	97,728	97,913	5,015
Support Operations- Building Management	29,819	31,957	30,567	32,624	31,272	705
Waste Disposal - General	14,914	18,506	18,143	18,995	16,406	(1,737)
Waste Disposal - Landfill Closure	71,661	61,781	73,130	64,726	62,312	(10,818)
Waste Export	372,958	409,772	412,781	417,614	420,661	7,880
Waste Prevention, Reuse, and Recycling	58,309	61,896	55,692	53,723	35,716	(19,976)
TOTAL	\$1,718,963	\$1,762,369	\$1,775,853	\$1,835,036	\$1,745,297	(30,557)

Testimony for funding for community composting and recycling outreach programs
Vanessa Ventola
May 21, 2020

Good Afternoon Councilmembers and listeners,

My name is Vanessa Ventola and I am testifying in support of funding for community composting and recycling outreach programs. The preservation of GrowNYC's Zero Waste Programs and the 26 year old NYC Compost Project is essential to reducing waste, building community, and changing the minds of New Yorkers about their impact on the environment and each other.

I began composting in 2011 during an internship with the Western Queens Compost Initiative. Since then, I have been privileged to work with some of NYC's most loved environmental institutions including a season with GrowNYC's composting program, and over 4 years with the NYC Compost Project hosted by the Lower East Side Ecology Center and by Queens Botanical Garden.

I want to speak about the tremendous impact of the NYC Compost Project. During my time there, I taught the NYC Master Composter Course, workshops, and trainings, and provided hands-on technical assistance to community spaces interested in composting. I would estimate, that individually, I met with thousands of New Yorkers, each year, and helped to change minds and attitudes about waste management. I worked with dozens of community-based organizations to promote sustainability and facilitated programs for students in pre-K through college. And my experience working with the NYC Compost Project was in no way unique.

Later today testifiers today will remind you of the beneficial environmental impacts of composting. Cities around the country look to NYC for inspiration and advice. By cutting funding for community composting and recycling outreach, we would send a message that we do not take innovative waste management seriously.

You may be familiar with the tagline of the NYC Compost Project - Rebuilding our soils, neighborhood by neighborhood. I hope that I have made the case that these programs do much more than divert waste from landfills and produce compost, which by the way, there is overwhelming demand for from residents and community groups.

Cutting this funding will result in more waste to landfills, less locally made compost, hurt and betrayed community members, and undoubtedly, less support for organics collection when it is restored. We cannot let this happen.

Thank you.

Vanessa Ventola

Good afternoon,

My name is Victoria Adler, and I'm a Queens resident, public school teacher, and mother. Last year I helped found the Queens Climate Project, a non-profit group devoted to promoting clean energy solutions in our city and state. We're made up of community members just like me - regular folks who want our city (and our children) to have a future. The stakes are so high, and NYC just isn't moving fast enough, or taking on the climate crisis for what it is...a crisis.

I was enraged to learn that the city plans to slash the budget for organics recycling and composting. I implore the City to protect its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and continue to support composting programs.

The city has made major progress in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills, and the Mayor's proposed budget would undercut all of this. I understand that the city needs to make budget cuts, but it also needs to make swift, bold changes to reduce its carbon emissions. Eliminating composting programs is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, releasing greenhouse gas into our skies and setting the City back further from its sustainability goals. Today we urge the City Council to ensure that NYC **continues organics recycling and composting and builds upon the progress we have made in the past few years.**

We realize it is not possible for the Council to restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. This is an austerity budget, and these unusual times demand sacrifice from all parties. Rather, we are asking that the city restore the cuts to the NYC Compost Project/partners and to GrowNYC, with a corresponding expansion of community outreach and education. My particular community - Jackson Heights - is full of avid composters, and many coops have back yards; community education would allow greater numbers of people to create their own compost bins, and ultimately save money for the city. However, for those of us who can't make private bins, the city should continue to provide weekly drop-offs.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;

- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask! I speak on behalf of Queens Climate Project, my Jackson Heights and Queens community, and all New Yorkers. I hope the Council ensures that composting continues to be funded in this year's budget.

Thank you!

Victoria Adler

Good afternoon,

My name is Victoria Guillem. I am a Brooklyn resident and I have been recycling my organics through GrowNYC drop off stands for the past couple of years. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Organics recycling is important to me because it allows me to prevent my food waste from going to a landfill and emitting harmful methane gas as it decomposes and instead have it be turned into compost, a natural fertilizer to grow vegetables.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills — a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our community and environment, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Victoria Guillem

May 21, 2020

Good afternoon, my name is Vikram Shankar and I am a resident of Greenpoint.

In this testimony, I am joining with fellow New Yorkers to ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. I urge the City to take a long view of organics recycling and not to reintroduce millions of pounds of waste to our landfills. Since the brown bin pickups were suspended, it has pained me to have to throw away my food scraps into the trash – and has significantly increased the volumes that I have to put out during the week for pickup.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council not to abandon organics collections during this crisis but to recommit to organics diversion programs that have made significant impacts in our communities. Please do not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

History shows us that temporary suspensions do not have temporary effects. In the wake of the 9/11 attacks, the City suspended plastic and glass recycling in July 2002 to close a budget gap. Plastic recycling was suspended for 12 months and glass for 21 months. Once recycling resumed, rates plummeted and they have still not fully recovered, even now in 2020. Recycling compliance works best when practice and behavior are consistent.

I am asking that the Council restore organics program cuts including curbside collection. Though the brown bin program has yet to reach all of New York City, suspending the program will likely have grave consequences over time.

In the interest of access and equity, I am specifically asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. These programs ensure that all New Yorkers can participate in organics collection and help to raise awareness about the importance impacts of diversion and waste reduction.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our community, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Hello

I am writing to share my frustration about the announced decision to cut funding to the NYC Compost Project. I started to volunteer at the Red Hood compost site in June last year and I was immediately hooked.

The community there is so amazing: the staff and the volunteers working together towards the same goals: to help divert food scraps from landfills, to do something for the planet and fight climate change. Joining the program was the best thing that happened to me last year. I was so proud to be part of this thing, to be part of the solution and to spread the word about composting.

I do not want those benefits gone. NYC's compost program set an example for other cities in the country to follow. That's what we do in New York. So I am asking you to reconsider the decision to cut funding for such an extraordinary project. I understand the need to for the emergency budget measures with the potential long lasting effect of the pandemic on the City's finances. But there has to be another way. Please do not abandon the compost program and all of its benefits for the environment and the communities. It would probably take years to recover from such a decision.

Your sincerely

Vincent Leon

162 Huntington Street, Apt 4R
BROOKLYN, NY 11231
404 229 1787

To: Honorable Bill Perkins - D09perkins@council.nyc.gov

CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov

Re: Community Composting

Thursday May 21, 2020

Honorable Bill Perkins,

My name is Virginia Little and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs.

I have been taking my food scraps to the GrowNYC drop-off at the Columbia Greenmarket for years.

I have also volunteered with the NYC Compost Project Hosted by both the LES Ecology Center and the Red Hook Community Farm Compost Operation and was encouraged to see all the job opportunities in the field of organics recycling and urban agriculture. The level of commitment and purpose of the enthusiastic staff was so encouraging

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. **We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.**

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Virginia (Gini) Little

Harlem Zero Waste Initiative - <https://www.instagram.com/harlem.zerowaste.initiative/>

205 W 123rd St, Apt 4

NY NY 10027

To: Honorable Helen Rosenthal
CC: financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: Community Composting

My name is Vivian Y. Ohtake-Urizar and I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. Community composting and zero waste outreach programs are important actions toward addressing climate change.

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Vivian Y. Ohtake-Urizar
121 W. 92nd St. #4F
New York, NY 10025

Good afternoon,

My name is Viviane Solomon and I am a 12th grader at the Lycée Français de New York on 75th and York. It is a bilingual K-12 school which has recently begun a garden for elementary students, with plans to soon enable high school seniors to grow their own plants. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. The Lycée has a composting program which sees that the majority of waste at the school skips landfills. In the cafeteria, students are taught how food waste can play an important part in the food cycle, all the while benefiting the environment especially in these dire times of climate change.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our schools, communities, and city, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority is not left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Viviane Solomon



**Green Map
System**

292 East Third St, #1A
New York, NY 10009 USA
Tel: +1 212 674 1631

Wendy E Brawer
Director
web@greenmap.org

GreenMap.org
Think Global, Map Local!

May 20, 2019

To members of NYC City Council

As a longtime sustainability professional, I have composted my food scraps since 1999, thanks to LES Ecology Center. We partnered on a Green Map of Composting in Manhattan which tripled the drop off rate at Union Sq and their other locations around 2008.

Since then, composting has become a true gateway to **sustainable, climate smart culture change** for tens of thousands of NYC families. NYC is on the frontline for climate change and composting is critically important behavior to reinforce! Supporting community composting organizations has a significant impact on NYC's 80x50 and other climate goals. If you care about climate change, public health and engagement, you will

Immediately restore funding to cost-effective community-based composting programs.

Pass the CORE Act and radically reduce waste and the cost to NYC of managing it.

Make composting mandatory across NYC, and allow it to be processed in NYC Parks and other locations.

SYEP matters too! Restore this budget too, please.

Find a cheaper flood protection alternative to the ESCR (such as adding a flood wall on the west side of FDR Drive) and use this money for building our youth's future as well as for composting.

Sincerely,

Wendy Brawer, Director, Green Map System

Good afternoon,

My name is Wendy Fung. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Composting has helped reduce waste in NYC and can continue to do that in the years to come.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to us, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Wendy Fung

Please save NYC's COMPOSTING

My name is Wendy Sax. I am a New Yorker, writing to you as a individual on my own behalf, on behalf of my apartment building neighbors, and as a participant in the work of the nonprofits Grown NYC and NYC Compost Project. I and many of my neighbors were actively participating in NYC's composting program. Among other benefits we all noticed a positive reduction in our overall output of garbage which made a difference in how much we were polluting the atmosphere.

In this testimony I'm asking that the City please return to its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans - and thereby help "**flatten the curve**" on **CO2 emissions** (lowering climate change adversity)--by restoring opportunities for composting.

Composting (along with eliminating eating the meat of cows, according to the U.N. and W.H.O respective reports) are among the few actions individuals have in their hands to lower the risk of adversity from climate change. With individuals participating we can accomplish this. In addition the way we organize ourselves as a major world city matters to the rest of the world, as we are often leaders of positive change and possibility.

Please do not give up on the threat of climate change and Zero Waste plans while in the immediacy of Covid. Time is running out on the window for environmental action.

Just like the Governor and Mayor put into the hands of each individual a stay-at-home order to do so on behalf of other vulnerable citizens--please do not take away the power of individuals to take action on behalf of the climate, while governments and several businesses pay little to no attention to the time, which is running out.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills—a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. For me, composting provided hope for a better future for myself, children and grandchildren-- a hope that we can come together to do something easy and positive to ensure survival of generations.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;

Please save NYC's COMPOSTING

- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our neighborhood and GrowNYC organization and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Wendy

Good afternoon, name is Whitney Smith-Burghes and I am a 20 year resident of NYC and a Director of Sustainability at Cosentini Associates in midtown. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. I have been composting in NYC for over 10 years either via greenmarkets or now via DSNY organics collection. It allowed me and my family to be a nearly zero waste home.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;

- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to me, my friends and my family, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Whitney Smith-Burghes

Elvia Pyburn-Wilk
394 Lincoln Place B2
Brooklyn, NY 11238

May 15, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Elvia Pyburn-Wilk and I am a resident of Prospect Heights, Brooklyn. I am writing regarding the conversation about whether to suspend organic waste collection in New York City.

I want to thank the City Council for allowing this dialogue. I am a fervent supporter of citywide composting and recycling and would like to urge the council to support all municipal composting programs.

The environmental costs of dumping organic wastes into landfills are well-known and cannot be overstated. When taken to landfills, food scraps cannot decompose and instead release dangerous gasses into the atmosphere, groundsoil, and groundwater.

Fiscally speaking: composting currently generates \$50,000 in annual revenue, which does not quite cover the amount collection costs. Still, the cost is mininscule in the scheme of the city budget. However, with some small but smart changes, composting could become wildly profitable.

In a February 2019 study, "How Much Potential Revenue are New Yorkers Wasting by Trashing Organics?," the city's Independent Budget Office calculated that if all of the 1 million tons of food and yard waste generated by New Yorkers annually were recycled into compost, it could produce \$12.5 million in revenue. If the same annual tonnage were recycled into biogas and used to generate electricity, the potential revenue could be as much as \$22.5 million.

Eliminating either recycling or composting programs even temporarily is harmful to the environment in ways that cannot be counted. But if you calculate it according to profit and loss, it is such a minor budget item that eliminating it will *not balance the city budget*. Not even close.

Neighborhood composting initiatives cannot make up for municipal composting schemes. Community gardens and private composting sites are already overburdened. I urge you to consider the long-term impact over what appears as a short-term minor financial gain. Moreover: increasing rather than reducing organics collection is the fiscally responsible choice.

Best regards,



Elvia Pyburn-Wilk

Greetings:

My name is William C. Tucker and I live in New York City. I ask that the City not destroy its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undermine the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, and that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you, yours,

William C. Tucker
116 Pinehurst Ave., Apt. J53
New York, NY 10033

May 21, 2020

Testimony Regarding NYC Budget 2020 – Compost Allocation

Good afternoon, my name is Winifred Armstrong. I am a 50-year resident of Park West Village, a 7-building, 5000-resident complex on the upper west side of Manhattan, a former president of our tenants' association, and a founder and director of the Bloomingdale Neighborhood History Group.

Owners and renters have worked with the management and the 4 condo boards to establish a successful program of compost collection and pick up with the City Sanitation Dept. The Dept. provided excellent briefing and materials to instruct residents in the use of this service, and hundreds if not thousands of residents proudly complied. Even before that, hundreds of residents took compost to the local Friday Farmers market at 97th Street and Columbus Avenue.

The current officers of our Park West Tenants' Association have asked Park West Management to include the three remaining buildings in the City compost program.

In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. I also urge the NYC Council to prioritize the implementation of Local Law 97, continue solar installations, and to push for infrastructure projects from the NYC Climate and Community Stimulus Platform.

City Composting Programs

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions and consequences from poorly-managed transfer stations in EJ neighborhoods. The Administration plans to slash the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This short-sighted action has the potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

While this program must be expanded to include a mandatory organics program inclusive of environmental justice communities and NYCHA residences, **today we are urging the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.**

Today, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education, and that there be equitable distribution of organics and e-waste drop-off sites throughout the City. And in the near term, we also request to see the growth of the City's organics collection to a mandatory residential organics program for everyone.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way toward allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that: at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work; at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills; at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living. We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to **our 5000 residents and our neighborhood** and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Climate Works for All

The COVID-19 crisis has impacted our climate and jobs at the same time, necessitating that we invest in green infrastructure projects to put our communities back to work in good union jobs that move us towards our climate goals.

First, the City must fully fund the implementation of Local Law 97 in order to tackle the biggest source of carbon emissions in the most polluting buildings, and create 40,000 good jobs in the process. The City must also press on with its solar goals and prioritize environmental justice communities for solar jobs. In the very near future, a citywide composting program is an essential service that would also provide good jobs for impacted communities while reducing our waste burden.

The City should tap into available resources, including those authorized via the federal CARES Act, existing FEMA funds, municipal liquidity grants, as well as state and federal workforce development grants.

Thank you for considering these urgent budget items - we *really* do not have any more time to waste in meeting our climate goals.

Winifred Armstrong, 400 Central park west, new York, n.y. 10025

Cc: City Council member Mark Levine, Park West Village Tenants Association. 400 Central Park West Condo Board, CB 7,

May 19, 2020

Good afternoon,

My name is Kelsey Woodworth. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not eliminate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by decimating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

Abundant and beautiful gardens are planted every year out on Governors Island at Earth Matter that generate produce for GrowNYC. These gardens are critical to the city's urban farming and education for the hundreds of children who visit and learn about gardening each there. As a volunteer with Earth Matter I can attest that the composting center and gardens bring not only joy, but a positive green way forward for those who tend and visit the space.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills – a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today, I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years. If we want to be the progressive and environmental city we aspire to be, we cannot eliminate these programs.

I am not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. I'm asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education, as mentioned above.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask on behalf of my family and entire Brooklyn community, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

With gratitude,
Kelsey Woodworth

Testimony by the Chair of the Queens Solid Waste Advisory Board Organizing Committee

Regarding the Mayor's Executive Budget for FY 2021

and proposed cuts to community composting in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

May 21, 2020

Please accept this comment presented by the Chair of the Queens Solid Waste Advisory Board Organizing Committee (QSWAB).

The QSWAB Organizing Committee represents a diverse group of Queens residents, business owners, nonprofit representatives, and interested New Yorkers who share a common goal to serve as informed advocates to our Borough President and Queens City Council Members around issues of resource recovery and recycling with the goal of helping New York City reach its ambitious zero waste to landfills by 2030 goal.

According to DSNY's 2017 *Waste Characterization Study*, nearly 68% of what New Yorkers throw away could be saved, recycled, and put to productive use. This is especially true of the 34% of materials that are organic -- food scraps, food-soiled paper, and yard waste -- which could be turned into compost, a nutrient-rich substance that improves soil health for our street trees and gardens, reduces soil erosion, and sequesters carbon to mitigate climate change.

Once trashed, however, New York City further wastes -- nearly \$420M per year -- exporting co-mingled residential refuse and recoverable material by truck, barge, and train to landfills around the country where they are burned or buried. The release of greenhouse gases from these sites, including methane and CO₂, have the opposite effect of compost's beneficial properties: it worsens climate conditions for all of us.

There is a better way.

Until recently, New York City supported programs that helped New Yorkers be active participants in the City's 0x30 mission, including residential curbside organics collection or brown bins, GrowNYC food scrap drop-off sites, and NYC Compost Project partnerships. Along with e-waste recycling, these programs cost New Yorkers about \$27.4M per year, far less than what we spend transporting these materials to landfills (\$166M) -- and with far more positive results.

While the QSWAB Organizing Committee recognizes that budget shortfalls precipitated by COVID-19 require the City to identify across-the-board funding cuts in order to prioritize public health and safety, we feel strongly that the money saved by suspending community composting via the New York City Compost Project partnerships and GrowNYC food scrap drop-offs is easily surpassed by what we will alternatively pay to collect, transport, and discard these materials outside our City to towns across the region and country. Additionally, we urge our leaders to consider the secondary impacts of these short-term suspensions, including poor air quality and climate emissions from increased truck traffic with their own long-term public health costs as well as covering unemployment-related expenses for the over 100 New Yorkers now working in New York City's organic resource collection and recovery sector who will soon be without jobs. More difficult to quantify, but equally important, the impact on the public's interest in participating in future organic recovery efforts once programs restart a year or more from now. The result? Decades of time and money invested in public education lost in a matter of months.

As such, we believe that the New York City Council and the Administration restore modest funding to community-based composting and drop-off sites that collect and process organic materials, while

recognizing that the Department of Sanitation's curbside "brown-bin" program may need to be put on temporary pause.

In the future, we recommend that the City invest in a comprehensive study of how to best incentivize mandatory rather than voluntary organics separation protocols for residents, institutions, and commercial businesses that help New Yorkers reduce at the source organic waste production and ensure that, when they do discard, they do so with greater awareness of the costs to themselves, the City, and society-at-large.

The Queens SWAB looks forward to partnering with our elected officials to ensure the proper reduction, reuse, and repurposing of organic material away from landfills and back into the soil where it properly belongs. Currently, NYC composts 308,600 pounds of organic material each day. Perhaps, in the near-future, we can better activate this nutrient-rich material to grow food for the millions of newly food-insecure New Yorkers resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic in a virtuous win-win circle for us all.

Thank you for your consideration.

Wylie Goodman, Chair, Queens Solid Waste Advisory Board Organizing Committee

NYC Needs Compost

Good afternoon,

My name is Xiaoyi Di. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our beloved city, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Sincerely,
Xiaoyi Di
Brooklyn Resident

SAY YOUR PRAYERS
POLAR ICE CAPS!

DEADLY
METHANE GASES

I LOVE IT!
75° IN
JANUARY.

I LIVE IN MORTAL
FEAR OF MY OWN
TRASH.

YIS
2010

TIME Magazine
9/15 article by
JUSTIN
WORLD

METHANE IS RELEASED FROM TRASH IN LANDFILLS.
IT IS 25 TIMES MORE DANGEROUS THAN CO₂
COMPOSTING REDUCES METHANE... COMPOST NOW!

Testimony Subject: Please #SaveourCompost

Good afternoon, my name is Zhenia and I am writing on behalf of the Maple Street Community Garden which is situated in the neighborhood of Prospect Lefferts Gardens in Brooklyn. For the past 4 years, I have supervised a compost project for the garden which processed roughly 12 tons of food scraps each year with the help of roughly 25 consistent volunteers. We were not able to open our compost project in April after the winter break due to Covid-19.

In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for composting. I speak from personal experience and as a supervisor of my garden's compost initiative when I say it has been so important for our community to have a place to recycle their organics. Aside from Grand Army on Saturdays and Ditmas Park on Sundays, there is nowhere else within a mile that people can walk to and drop off their food scraps.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling education and outreach and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. I personally was trained by NYC Compost Project and have very close mentorship ties with them. The staff there has helped my garden to build new compost bins, dropped off many bags of leaves when we were out (a necessary addition to a healthy compost recipe) and even brought their Master Compost students to our garden for a field trip to showcase our amazing partnership and progress.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- At least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and

- The City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to the Prospect Lefferts Gardens neighborhood, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you,

Zhenia

Maple Street Community Garden

237 Maple Street

Brooklyn NY 11225

Organics Recycling/Composting Testimony

I am writing to urge you to preserve the city's collection of organic waste and composting program. We so rarely feel empowered by our daily choices, and this gave us a chance to feel that we were really making a difference in our own lives and in the lives and well-being of others. The composting program was such a hard-won accomplishment, and it serves both a practical use of reducing waste and fighting global warming as well as a psychological purpose of engaging people with environmental issues and changing habits for the long term good. Not only will stopping the program be damaging to the environment, it will waste the years and efforts that have gone into the building of this program. Please do everything you can to have it reinstated!

Sincerely,

Judith E. Fletcher

Good afternoon, my name is Grace Alignay, and I am with the NYC Fair Trade Coalition, a grassroots organization that promotes fair trade businesses and retailers in New York City and educates consumers on the importance of the adoption of socially and environmentally sustainable practices. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;

- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this request to our local and global communities, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Good morning!

My name is Helen Hood and I'm a resident of Brooklyn and a member of climate advocacy organization 350Brooklyn. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

Roughly 30% of NYC's waste stream is compostable matter and I hate to see us move backwards in our progress on this issue when we should be moving aggressively forwards. I know this is a tough time for the city, financially and otherwise, but I would much prefer cuts, if they are needed, come from areas not related to our extremely important environmental goals.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. I know for me and most New Yorkers, we have very few options for composting that aren't prohibitively inconvenient, and without city composting most will not be able to compost if they want to.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to my family and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you, and I appreciate all your efforts on our behalf in what must be an extremely trying time for city officials!

All the best,

Helen Hood

Good afternoon, name is Jamie Askin and I'm a resident of Manhattan on the Upper West Side.

In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. We have so much to gain from this and so much to lose if we lose the program.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, I am part of a concerned community asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to the Upper Westside, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Good afternoon,

My name is Jocelyn Chase and I am with 462 Halsey Farm in Brooklyn and I volunteer with Grow NYC. The focus of the city garden being used communally to afford the community fresh produce instead of private beds makes it an imperative part of the community. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to me, this community, and the city as a whole, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Jocelyn Chase

Good morning,

My name is Kal Vachev and I am with Food & Water Watch – an environmental organization that mobilizes people to build political power to move bold and uncompromised solutions to the most pressing food, water, and climate problems of our time. We work to protect people's health, communities, and democracy from the growing destructive power of the most powerful economic interests.

In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Composting is essential to NYC. It reduces greenhouse gas emissions, builds healthy soil and air and creates green jobs in communities.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of composting organic waste and recycling education and outreach. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City maintains the ability to continue some sort of organics composting, and not toss away the progress made in the past few years.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop lifetime habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Kal Vachev

Good afternoon,

My name is Kenneth Colosky, and I am horrified to learn that the City is planning to eliminate financial support for composting and e-waste recycling programs.

From my window, I literally witness tons of food scraps being turned into beneficial soil to help renew our community.

My family and I have been able to drop off food scraps to be composted and turned into beneficial soil for years. The program has been extremely successful for the community as I witness many people bringing their food scraps to the collection sites and multiple large barrels get filled each time. Then I see it, right from my window, being delivered to the compost yard and being turned into beautiful and healthy soil. Its a beautiful thing for us, the community, and our future. Our garbage did not stink, our building was cleaner, and we were delivering tons less waste to the land fills.

The compost yard is a model for future programs that could revolutionize the way New York City handles our waste.

However, now it is all being threatened to be eliminated, after years of success.

These cuts will directly affect the LES Ecology Center together with the NYC Compost Project partners and GrowNYC Zero Waste programs. The cuts represent approximately \$7 million, and if restored can continue to provide citywide access to these crucial Zero Waste programs. That is a bargain price for such a beneficial program that is future looking. It's essential to retain these programs so as not to lose the existing recycling infrastructure, knowledge and habits that will be difficult to rebuild once eliminated.

Cutting these programs will reverse the progress that we have made by diverting food scraps and toxic electronic waste from landfills. When in a landfill, food waste is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions and electronics leach heavy metals and toxins into our soil and waterways. We can't let the current budget crisis allow us to lose sight of the looming climate crisis and we must continue to divert these materials from landfills to reach our sustainability goals.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future to continue. These programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to community compost and e-waste collection programs.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Colosky

May 21, 2020

Good afternoon, my name is Lael Goodman and I am a resident of Greenpoint/Williamsburg.

In this testimony, I am joining with fellow New Yorkers to ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. I urge the City to take a long view of organics recycling and not to reintroduce millions of pounds of waste to our landfills. It is disgraceful that a world class city such as New York would consider cutting this important program. I use the brown bin and the community compost organics recycling option every week, and in my capacity doing outreach around the city have literally spoken to hundreds of people who love this program, and hundreds more who are considering giving it a try.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today I urge the City Council not to abandon organics collections during this crisis but to recommit to organics diversion programs that have made significant impacts in our communities. Please do not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

History shows us that temporary suspensions do not have temporary effects. In the wake of the 9/11 attacks, the City suspended plastic and glass recycling in July 2002 to close a budget gap. Plastic recycling was suspended for 12 months and glass for 21 months. Once recycling resumed, rates plummeted and they have still not fully recovered, even now in 2020. Recycling compliance works best when practice and behavior are consistent.

I am asking that the Council restore organics program cuts including curbside collection. Though the brown bin program has yet to reach all of New York City, suspending the program will likely have grave consequences over time.

In the interest of access and equity, I am specifically asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. These programs ensure that all New Yorkers can participate in organics collection and help to raise awareness about the importance impacts of diversion and waste reduction.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing

New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;
- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our community and planet, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

I demand to consider the consequences of your actions because composting is essential to our environment and community.

[With the new budget, Mayor Bill de Blasio is about to end all composting in NYC for at least the next fiscal year.](#)

There are short term and long term consequences to this.

Short term, for as long as composting is suspended, NYC will send more waste to landfills and incinerators.

Currently, NYC composts 308,600* pounds per day. With composting suspended, these 308,600 pounds will instead need to go to landfills and incinerators, where they will release greenhouse gases.

Long term, it likely will take years for our composting programs to recover. We have a precedent for this.

After 9/11, NYC temporarily stopped recycling glass and plastic to save money. It reintroduced plastic recycling in 2003 and glass in 2004, but it took years for the capture rates to rebound to pre-9/11 numbers.

Composting is essential to our environment and community. We cannot afford to regress.

If you care about composting in NYC, please let Mayor Bill de Blasio know.

*According to the [Department of Sanitation's latest annual report](#), DSNY collects 308,600 lb of organics (food scraps, yard waste, and other material) for recycling (composting or anaerobically digesting) every day.

Maria Bezlepina

Naaja King
180 Sterling Place
Brooklyn, NY 11217

May 21, 2020

New York City Council
Committee on Finance

Re: Community Composting

I understand that this is a very economically challenging time for the City, as well as all of it's residents and businesses right now.

However, if there is anyway to save Community Composting, this would be good for the City and the environment in the long run.

While I was saving organic waster for composting, I created significantly less trash. I used less plastic bags to contain my trash. The majority of my waste went to be recycled via paper, metals/plastics/glass and organics.

Since we have been doing Safer at Home, I have noticed the difference in the uptick of my trash creation without being able to compost.

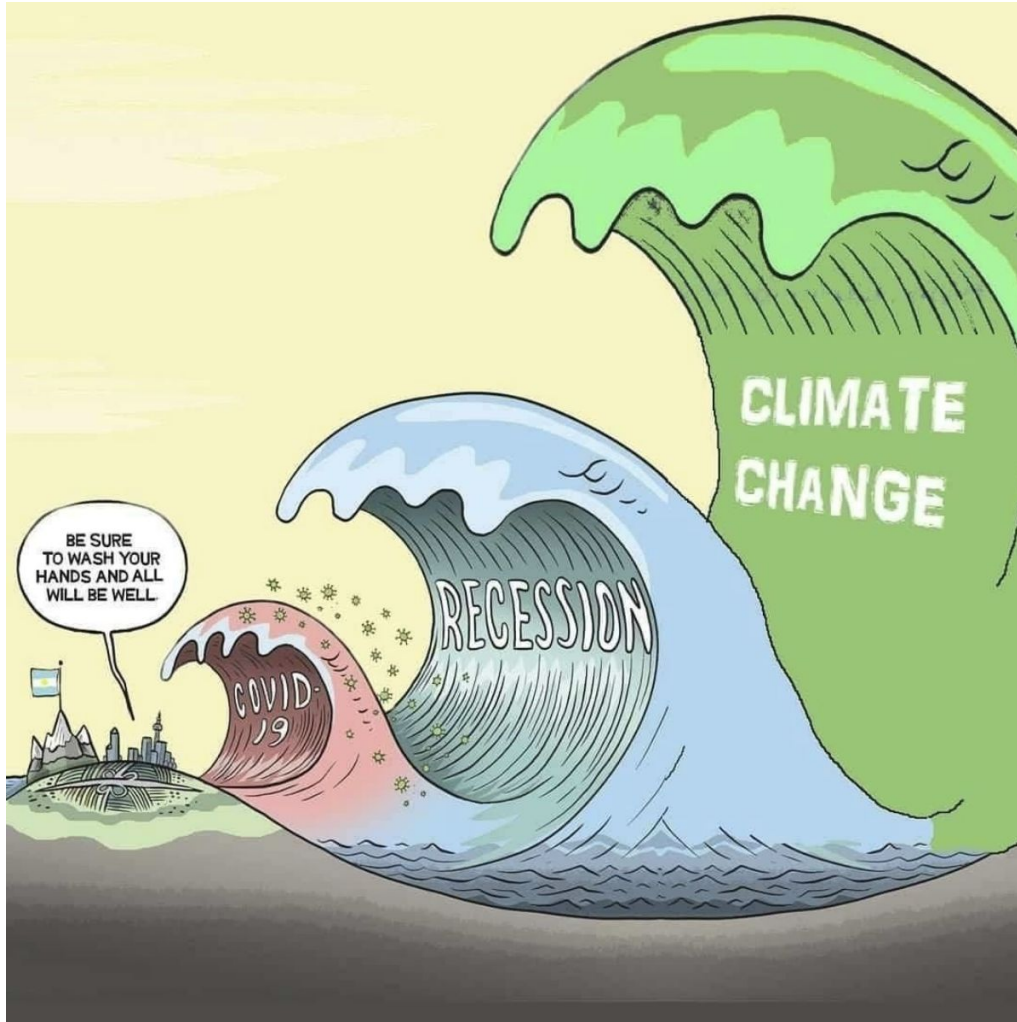
If the individual pick ups in the brown containers is too costly right now, what about adding more drop off sites if that could be more cost effective? Maybe a partnership with restaurants could be formed because restaurants must have a lot of organic waste. Maybe drop off points could be coordinated with restaurant pick ups?

And maybe a partnership with Community Gardens? Until it became unsafe, the garden in Fort Green on Lefferts Place allowed drop offs. I happily made the 2 mile round trip walk to drop off my organic waste when that option was available. Maybe the extra compost could be stored in a space outside the gardens until pick up?

If this can save space in landfills, that is better for everyone!

I ask that the City keep the Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,
Naaja King



Original art from Mackaycartoons.net

Hello,

My name is Corinne Nicole Rivera and I was born and raised in our resilient city of New York.

I've been sitting in on the virtual city council budget meetings and know that it is with a heavy heart that these cuts are being proposed in response to our city's financial catastrophe. While short-sighted, I do

understand why we're planning to cut the organics brown bin program until May 2021. Why would we continue to pay for a program where trucks would pick up bins that are only a quarter of the way full?

From an environmental perspective, diverting even a fraction of our food waste from landfill does make a difference when it comes to the release of methane gas (a toxic pollutant that is 84 times as potent than CO₂). From an economic standpoint, we were losing money on organics transportation; a cost not offset by the savings from our landfill contracts. I hope we realize that we missed the opportunity to save money by the lack of proper education and communication from the city. Our city-subsidized community gardens and NGO's picked up the slack around informing citizens, and yet we're proposing to cut all of their funding. States that have mandated compost have not cut their collections programs due to COVID and continue to save money.

The city has made it clear that its priorities are health and food security. However, I have yet to hear a city council representative paint a holistic argument that directly links organic waste to both of these.

I'd like to highlight a few things:

30% of our waste facilities are in the South Bronx, an area that was not allowed to participate in the brown bin program. We will be sending 300,000+ pounds of food waste more to landfills each day now, which pass through these facilities before being sent on barges to the Carolinas. This means an increase in truck traffic highly concentrated in these areas. We know through scientific studies that the increase in truck pollution directly impacts human health. There

are higher cases of asthma and lung cancer in communities close to waste facilities; pre-existing lung conditions have resulted in higher coronavirus deaths among these populations.

The DSNY cuts will also prevent continued funding for rodent prevention. We're about to have millions of pounds more food waste in our trash bags for rats to eat, again highly concentrated in these waste facility areas that expose low-income and high-risk populations to other types of disease and rotten smells.

When the city suspended recycling post 9/11, it took 10 years to get anywhere near the same diversion rates. If we don't fund local community food waste drop off sites, NGO's, and also cut 12 million in waste education, I doubt we'll ever save money (even if it's mandated we only have to look at how well our ban on plastic bags has been with no education), and we certainly won't make our goal of zero waste to landfills by 2030 or even lower our greenhouse gas emissions.

The city is cutting 124 million in youth programs leaving 100,000 kids with no structure or job opportunities this summer and beyond. When it's hot and these kids have nothing to do will we then justify our minimal cuts to the NYPD and new officer hires when they take care of the "riff-raff" despite crime rates down? Can't we get creative? Can't we give these youth green jobs within the parks department? We're cutting funding for tree planting (basically cutting our own oxygen and natural carbon sinks), so can't we support our youth in this recession by also helping our local environment? Surely we can cut new officer funding to do this.

I'm worried it'll take another hurricane Sandy (which yes, is coming), in order for us to re-prioritize global warming. I'll end this testimony discussing the benefits of compost and explain why soil is our greatest tool for reversing climate change.

From a physiological standpoint, part of the reason people don't give mental energy to climate change is that it feels distant; polar bears in the Arctic, fires in Australia, the year 2100. Providing people free opportunities to compost their food waste allows them to better connect with climate solutions. If you compost, you feel the weight of your waste when you go drop it off. You actively feel satisfied knowing that all that waste isn't going to a landfill to turn into methane gas. It is our collective food waste rotting in landfills that warms our planet and intensifies "extreme weather" events we're seeing more frequently around the world. As a city of islands, we will be among the regions hit hardest.

Good habits only form when there is a reward. Composting our food waste rewards us in several ways. As mentioned, it reduces methane gas release, but when we turn our food waste into compost and add it to soil it actually works for us. Compost is a soil additive that generates nutrients and biodiversity. Healthy soils help plants grow stronger roots which increases their ability to draw down carbon from the air and put it in our ground. Soil is the biggest carbon sink in the world; in fact, if we rehabilitated the earth's dirt into soil, we would be able to draw down enough carbon to bring us back to safe pre-industrial levels of planetary warming.

What else does soil do? Unlike dirt, which is lifeless and dead, soil can hold both carbon and water. This helps our land with climate resiliency. When there is a heatwave, our soil is better equipped to withstand drought because it has water reserves. If there is a flood, the soil can absorb the water which helps to lower the flood damage to infrastructure.

Before I continue, I'd just like to mention that we can turn food waste into biogas, a fossil fuel alternative, that we can then sell. It doesn't make sense to me why we wouldn't increase the value of our waste by doing so.

In short, if we make it mandatory to divert food waste from the city we:

- Save money on landfill contracts
- Lower methane gas emissions
- Provide individuals an option to empower their sense of making a difference in reversing global warming
- Prevent increased rat and pest numbers
- Lower truck traffic which pollutes facility areas and impacts human health
- Have the option to create biogas, a fossil fuel alternative we can sell
- Restore soil, which draws down carbon from the atmosphere, and saves freshwater and energy
- Create more green jobs
- Bring us closer to our city's promise of zero waste to landfills
- Support the circular economy

- Expose people to the universal climate solution that is regenerative agriculture, even in the urban space.

I know that we have to cut the brown bin program. I then implore you to continue funding local compost initiatives. With 12 million in waste education cut, we will never teach the public to compost on a massive scale if we don't continue funding free compost options. This will not be a choice we will be proud of down the line; especially once we all realize the financial and environmental cost.

I ask that the CORE act proposed by council member Powers be passed. Localized food and electronics drop off sites are the only step forward. They will prevent transport emissions, reduce electronics chemical waste, empower local communities, and set the foundation needed for when the city does make organics collection mandatory.

If our priority is health and food security for our New Yorkers, then the CORE act must be passed and funded.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Corinne Nicole Rivera

May 21, 2020

Hi, Good Morning, City Council,

I don't want NYC to scrap its Zero Waste goals by getting rid of composting. Ideally, I'd have a backyard where I could process my compost, but I was grateful that GrowNYC gave me the option to have my food waste handled responsibly.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut the progress NYC made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by more than \$100 million, and nearly \$30 million of that comes from cutting all funding of recycling education and outreach, and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term consequences.

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that NYC, at least, maintains the ability to continue some sort of composting, and not toss away the progress.

We are not asking that the Council restore all of the organics program cuts. Instead, I want cuts to the NYC Compost Project, its partners, and GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education.

The cuts to those 3 entities represent about \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source-separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfills.

This smaller amount would ensure that:

1. At least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work.
2. At least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills.

Please don't scrap the composting program.

Thank You,

Peter Garafalo
Melrose, South Bronx

My name is Phebe Pierson and I am devastated to learn that the City is planning to eliminate funding for community composting and zero waste outreach programs. **As a former farmers market manager who worked at GrowNYC, I saw firsthand how valuable community composting is for our city. Through GrowNYC, I learned so much about the benefits of composting on our environment and as a waste reduction and greening tool for our growing city. Community compost has no downsides; it's a win-win for the city, for residents, and for the environment. Let's not shoot ourselves in the foot now by removing funding for this vital city resource.**

Now more than ever, community composting programs are essential in NYC. Recognizing the urgent need for budget cuts and cost-savings due to COVID-19, we cannot afford to reverse progress on the larger, longer-term crisis: climate change. Composting is one of the most basic things that every person can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a positive impact on the environment. Maintaining funding for community composting will provide continued access to essential composting service for New Yorkers at the lowest possible cost by uplifting community-based networks and tapping into local expertise.

In this time of great uncertainty, we need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. The City's Community Composting programs give people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. We need this kind of hope during our current crisis.

I ask that the City restore funding to Community Composting and Zero Waste Programs.

Sincerely,

Phebe Pierson

Former GrowNYC employee, avid community composter
Communications Manager at the Earth Institute, Columbia University

348 West 118th Street, #61
New York, NY 10026

Good afternoon, name is Alina Angelica Butnaru and I am a new member of my local community garden The Ring. I have been collecting my food scraps for the last 4 years to turn into compost by the city. The Riverside-Inwood Garden provides this community with a beautiful patch of green and colorful oasis as well as one of the only composting sites left in the city. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. Composting and Recycling is now as important as ever to keep our community moving into a cleaner future. NYC has been a pioneering city to provide these opportunities to divert food scraps out of landfills.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

Today we urge the City Council to ensure that the City at least maintain the ability to continue some sort of organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

We are not asking that the Council restore all \$28 million of organics program cuts. Rather, we are asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners, and to GrowNYC, be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. NYC residents need to have this option, it brings joy and community to every member involved.

The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

This comparatively small amount of funding in the big picture would ensure that:

- at least eight non-profit organizations that rely on City-funding to provide organics collection and processing services, as well as community education, could continue their good work;

- at least 170 food scrap drop-off sites across all five boroughs can continue to divert this potent source of greenhouse gases from landfills;
- at least six community composting facilities can continue their work of processing the food waste to turn into usable compost to grow food in community gardens and urban farms during a time of food insecurity; and
- the City could continue vital education and outreach, needed to ensure that all New Yorkers, including all of our school children, understand why and how to compost and recycle – such training in the schools is a small investment that will pay off for decades by helping our children develop life-time habits of sustainable living.

We cannot understate the urgency of this ask for our city, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.

Good afternoon,

My name is Crysta Gentile. I'm a Brooklyn resident and committed to sustainability and reducing the impacts of Climate Change on New York City. I'm very disheartened by the City's proposal to cut funding for compost. If the COVID crisis has taught us anything, it's that we need to increase all efforts to address climate change, inequality, and the other looming crises facing our city. In this testimony, I ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting.

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress New York City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. **This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.**

Today I urge the City Council to ensure that the City maintain the ability to continue organics recycling and composting, and not toss away the progress we have made in the past few years.

I am asking that the cuts to the NYC Compost Project and partners and to GrowNYC be restored, with expansion for community outreach and education. The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

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I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to our City, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you,
Crysta Jentile



P.O. Box 310482
Brooklyn, NY 11231

May 24, 2020

Daniel Dromm
Chair
Committee on Finance
New York City Council
250 Broadway, Suite 1826
New York, NY 10007

Re: Testimony for Committee on Finance – Opposition to Funding Cuts to NYC Curbside Composting Program

Dear Chair Dromm,

I am writing to express my displeasure and sadness that curbside composting service is suspended and is at risk of being permanently ended. I understand that NYC is in uncharted waters due to Covid-19, but even during these times our changing climate will not be taking a day off.

For several years, Red Hook Conservancy (RHC), in partnership with the NYC Compost Site at the Added Value Farm in Red Hook, has been working to protect our parks, support the environment, and the Red Hook community. From the compost site we receive mulch for street trees and compost to feed and support street tree growth. Furthermore, until the recent change, we had been working with Domingo Morales, Senior Organics Community Coordinator, and his team at the compost site, to remove invasive plant species in Red Hook and restore soils with mulch. This multi-year project also enabled us to educate RHC volunteers who hailed from corporate, schools, and nonprofits sectors, on the importance of composting to the sustainability of our community. Ending curbside food pickup is not just a blip in the day to day NYC sanitation collection process but has cascading effects for Red Hook. Without regular mulch and compost to care for and protect our street trees, Red Hook will be at even greater risk for flooding. Street trees serve an important service by reducing storm-water runoff. I ask every councilmember and the Mayor, to support the curbside composting program and the resultant organic matter that is produced. Our community depends on the composting site, our street trees are better for it, and our climate does not stand a chance if we fail to act.

Thank you for considering our testimony,

Marlene Pantin
Executive Director
Red Hook Conservancy

Good afternoon, name is Elizabeth Powers. I live in the East Williamsburg community and rely on local community composting. I am also a former volunteer with Earth Matter, a non-profit composting group in New York City. In this testimony, we ask that the City does not decimate its Climate Justice and Zero Waste plans and goals by eliminating opportunities for organics recycling and composting. I'm a long time composter (more than 10 years!) and rely on this program to reduce my waste footprint to reduce my carbon impact on this city and this Earth!

The Mayor's proposed budget would undercut much of the progress this City has made in diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills -- a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Administration is slashing the DSNY budget by \$106.5 million, with more than \$28 million of that coming from a total elimination of all funding of recycling and composting organic waste. This is short-sighted and has potential to have long-term implications, setting the City back further from its sustainability goals.

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The cuts to the NYC Compost project and partners and to GrowNYC together represent approximately \$7 million, and with some additional funding, could go a long way to allowing New Yorkers to continue to source separate food waste and preventing this major waste stream from going to landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

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We cannot understate the urgency of this ask to me and my community, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority not be left behind in the budget process.

Thank you.